

The Hard Court Herald



Volume 21, Issue 1
September, 2005

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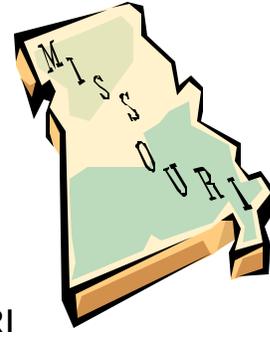
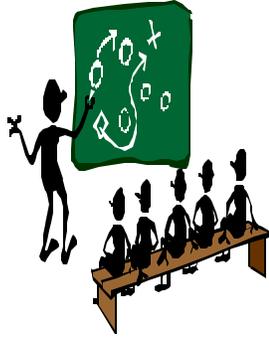
A LETTER FROM YOUR MBCA PRESIDENT

It is so hard to believe that we are back in school and the planning for the upcoming season is underway. What happened to having a summer break? I guess that is a topic in itself.

There are many changes happening around the state in basketball and with our coaches association. We have name changes of universities, tournaments added and dropped, shoot-outs started, new coaches, coaching retirements, Hall of Fame inductions, technology advancements, new board members, new awards to recognize players, coaches, and support staff, and a new season to get involved with MBCA. Members have an association to be proud of and we all need to be proactive in our efforts to keep it going. In keeping with our mission (to promote the game of basketball around the state) we have given more recognition to coaches, players, and support staff than ever before. The website and news letters have been upgraded and we will finally have our own display in the Missouri Hall of Fame.

My hope for this season is not just to win a game or two, but to see the coaches around the state really become involved with some part of the MBCA. There are many ways to be involved with MBCA that might really benefit from new ideas and efforts. Please talk about MBCA with your coaching friends and discuss ways to improve on what we do or start new programs that will benefit us as members. District representatives need to be active in their districts to involve, inform, and get feedback from members. Together we can make this a great season for MBCA.

-----*Sean Williamson*



CLINICS AROUND MISSOURI

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(MSHSAA rules meeting held the evening on Thursday evening)

Clinic Director: Lee Rashman
Contact Lee at 573-884-8884 for more information

If I Ruled the World (or at least the basketball portion of it)

By Shane Matzen

Hard Court Herald Editor

As I talk to other coaches through just the ordinary life of being a coach (clinics, games, camps) and the unordinary (e-mails, mosports.com, etc), I find we all have opinions on what would be better and what should change about this game we all hold so dear. Fortunately for me, I have this forum. So, with due respect to those who disagree, here are five things about our game that I have strong feelings about:

1) Free throw shooting rebounding alignment

This has been a hot button point with a lot of coaches ever since we went back to the “the ball must touch the rim” rule. I understand the intent of changing the rule back to the way it was pre-1990s: take some of the physicality out of the game. To me, that’s a noble and understandable cause. However, we have a problem: there is no advantage to being the defensive team anymore on a free throw attempt. At least the old way, the low men on the lane could have a moment or two to establish good block-out position before the ball came off the basket. Now, it’s a crap-shoot as to where the ball is going to bounce because most high school kids don’t have the fast-twitch reflexes to establish that position between the time the ball hits the rim and comes down. I’m not advocating changing back to players moving into the lane when the ball is released. I AM however, in full support of having our players do what the collegiate women do now: that is have the lower players assume the space just ABOVE the block. With only six players being allowed on the lane, there is room for this change and the advantage would go back to the defense.

2) The “charge arc”

Most purists are against anything being done to the high school game that in any way whatsoever resembles what is happening in the NBA. However, the arc that is now painted on the league’s lanes just below and in front of the basket is an idea whose time has come in my opinion. With shot-blocking becoming a bit of a lost art (players that can swat them into the stands and players that can’t just foul), most coaches have made it a priority to have their defenders step in front and “assume the position” in order to gain possession. Taking charges under the basket is in my mind a double-whammy: You are risking injury to both players (the offensive player generally is in the air with a lot of momentum and the defensive player is getting ready to take the brunt of this momentum while being in a position to injure an already air-born opponent) AND you are taking away the reward to the offensive player who has made a move that has gotten him to the basket and in a position to score and that effort is scuttled by a defender who generally takes a charge AFTER the shot has been released. The arc takes all the decision-making out of the officials’ hands and makes the game safer.

3) The shot clock (or lack thereof)

There’s a lot of rumbling about high school basketball going to a shot-clock. Some states are experimenting with it and some are on the verge of implementing it full time. I have a simple question for them: “Why?” I have a pretty good idea of their answers to my question, but I can answer them this way: Try taking a stop watch with you to a typical high school basketball game. I challenge you to find more than 10%-20% of possessions that last longer than 30 seconds. The emphasis on ballhandling it seems to me has changed over the years from a team standpoint to an individual one. We have kids nowadays that can dribble the basketball like it’s on a string. However, we have few teams that can keep possession for anything resembling a 1985 Villanova-style team. One of my pet projects this summer has been converting some of my old high school VHS tapes to DVD for posterity. A funny thing I noticed...we used to pull the ball out and hold it around the 3:00 mark of games on a nearly consistent basis if we were up by a basket or two. Two chief reasons probably were the cause: we had been drilled to do it and the defenses back then didn’t pressure the way they do now. I hate to say this, but it sometimes rings true: it’s almost better to take a quick shot and have an attempt at scoring than hold it too long and turn it over. That may be poor coaching mentality, but it’s honest. The idea of having possession of the ball just doesn’t seem to have the importance to young players anymore. At least in my case, I find myself stressing it constantly.

4) Residency

I don’t know anyone that wouldn’t agree with me on this one. That is, kids should live in the area bounded by district rules and guidelines in order to play for their school. There are a lot of issues involved with this...open enrollment in certain areas and desegregation in St. Louis to name a couple of major ones. However, even with open enrollment there are boundaries for these large areas and in the St. Louis case, the city is now split up such that kids in a certain area of the city can only attend a certain school in the suburbs. MSHSAA is a reactive organization. That is, it is run and policed by its members. Most schools are not going to turn in their brethren so as to not become a pariah in the eyes of others. And, the people who are affected most are those that benefit most: the schools that take in these wayward souls and the parents who think being recruited and belonging to a school that “wants” their son or daughter. If there is nothing but benefit and no risk, why do the right thing? I hesitated before placing this point in my article, but

I went ahead and did it because I figured the only people I would offend would be those that aren't following the rules in the first place.

5) Summer baseball

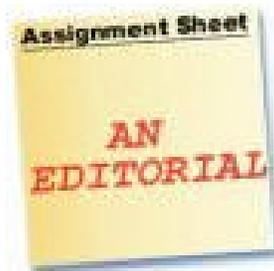
I hope that as you are reading this you are able to have the relationship with your school's coaching staffs that I do. Overall, at Marquette High School, we support all our kids in their efforts to belong to as many sports and organizations as they can. I may be old-fashioned, but I had a great childhood growing up in Eldon, MO. The memories of belonging to my high school basketball team and being the editor of my school newspaper will be with me forever. In that sense, I have major bias towards the high school experience as a whole. What I tend to find (not in all cases, but a lot) though are some of my players being squeezed in the summer and not getting the support they need to pursue all their interests. I try my best to offer several camp, shootout, skills workouts and open gym opportunities so that all my players have an opportunity to be involved in our program as their summer plans dictate. It seems though that each summer more and more of my basketball/baseball players are coming up missing from my many activities for the ENTIRE SUMMER. I've sat down with these players before the summer began and explained to them all the dates and plans we had and given them ample opportunity to plan out their summer to hopefully give us at least a portion of their time. What I've found though in response to my being up front and very early with my calendar is that if they have the audacity to miss a single weekend to go play in a shootout with our basketball team that it might result in suspensions from their baseball teams up to two weeks. Like I said, I'm old-fashioned in my beliefs about the high school experience. There's something special about being in a gym with 2000+ people packed in on a Friday night. To miss a handful of games out of a 50+ game summer baseball schedule to do something with your high school team and be suspended on top of it to me is absolutely ludicrous. I've even offered to call the baseball coaches myself for my players to try and work out an equitable schedule and have been told that it would make the situation worse for my guys. I know this is not a situation that I alone have dealt with. It seems to be talked about more and more each year by us basketball coaches. If anyone has a solution to it, I'd be all ears.

If anyone has opinions on these topics or other hot-button issues, don't hesitate to let me know. This is our forum here at "The Hardcourt Herald". As editor, a board member of the MBCA and the St. Louis boys representative on the MSHSAA basketball advisory board, I would love to hear your thoughts and opinions. You can reach me here through the newsletter at: hardcourtherald@hotmail.com.

Final Hits...

It is with sincerest apology that I make mention of Ken Ash and the Show-Me State Games. Prior to last April's Academic All-State Banquet, Ken and his organization were gracious enough to take over funding the Academic All-State Boys and Girls Players of the Year scholarships. I failed to make mention of this generosity in last spring's newsletter and I want to make public my admission of apology to Ken and the Show-Me State Games. They have been great for all Missourians and are now key fixtures for all of us here in the MBCA. In addition, Ken and the SMSG have agreed to continue on funding our Academic Players of the Year scholarships in future years as well. You can get all the information you need on the Games by going to their ad enclosed in this newsletter.

Lastly, I want to address the issue of our new forum here online. We went online for a couple of reasons: 1) Cost. We will be able to realize substantial savings bringing you the newsletter through this venue. With most, if not all, of us in coaching having access to the internet now through home, school or public institutions such as libraries, all of us should be able to find and peruse the information contained here whenever we need to. 2) Value. We can bring you more now than ever before. As time goes on, I would like to expand the newsletter with more features, articles (by others as well as myself) and information that can be updated whenever we need to. We should be timelier and better able to serve you now since we don't have space issues to consider in going to print. I hope you are able to find us easily, bookmark us and enjoy what we bring you. Don't ever hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns. Thank you for being or becoming a part of our organization. The MBCA is here for our athletes and us. If you don't belong, you can't help either.



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Top Prep Stars Strut Their Stuff in All-Star Games By Kyle Neddenriep and Jeff Mahoney



It was more than just a night for the basketball stars on Friday at Hammons Student Center. There were plenty of those to be sure, with 60 of the top graduated high school seniors from around the state on hand for the St. John's Sports Medicine Missouri Basketball All-Star Games. But it was also a night to show off other talents, as Willard's Jonathan Huskisson did by singing the national anthem in the middle of Friday's festivities. "It was a chance to show people that I have other skills other than basketball," said Huskisson who scored 11 points and the go-ahead basket with 30 seconds left as his Blue team won the Class 4-5 game 99-94. "It's a rush to get out there in front of everybody and do that. I took a breath where I shouldn't have, but otherwise it was pretty good." Friday was also a chance to honor several contributors to the state basketball scene as 12 new members were inducted into the Missouri Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame, including Roy Green of Kickapoo, Kirk Hanson of Central Bible College, Greg "Denzil" Morris of Nixa, Lynn Nance of Southwest Baptist University and Gary Keeling of Bolivar. Andrea Salmon of Jefferson City and Rich Rogers of Parkway West were honored as winners of the Kevin "Cub" Martin Memorial Missouri Assistant Basketball Coach of the Year. Martin, who died last May, was a Nixa graduate and assistant coach at the school for 12 years.

On the court, it was as much about style as it was winning, like you'd expect in a mid-summer all-star game. "It was a blast," said Ash Grove's Shane Nicholson, who scored 11 points as his Blue team defeated the White 64-58 in the Class 1-3 boys game. "In the first half, we tried to do too much one-man stuff and in the second half we did a better job of getting up and down the floor and playing as a team." Nicholson's Blue squad included just six players, but four from the area. The game MVP was Hartville's Caleb Moon, who scored 19 points and grabbed five rebounds. His team trailed 32-27 at halftime before pushing the tempo in the second half. "That's how I like to play and that's how we played at Hartville," said Moon, who will play this season at North Central Missouri, a two-year school.

Friday's other games saw the White team win the Class 1-3 girls' game behind a game-high 21 points from Cardinal Ritter grad and Drake signee Jordann Plummer. The Blue team defeated the White 80-53 in the Class 4-5 girls' game behind 19 points and five steals from Republic graduate and College of the Ozarks signee Josie Sparkman. Eric Jones of Webster Groves won the slam dunk contest, clearing a seated Blake Ahearn of Southwest Missouri State in the finals to beat Lafayette's Matt Lawrence. Buffalo's Cortney Shewmaker won the girls' 3-point contest, defeating Glendale's Nancy Thronsberry in the finals. In the boys' 3-point contest, Lafayette's Landon Shipley defeated Zach Roling of Jefferson City in the finals. Jordann Plummer of Cardinal Ritter was named winner of the Darla Pannier Most Valuable Player Award, scoring 21 points in her White team's 63-51 win.

CLASS 1-3 BOYS BLUE 64, WHITE 58

Blue 11 16 28 9—64

White 12 20 13 13—58

Blue -- Moon 19, Wemlinger 16, Farmer 15, Nicholson 11, Grubbs 3. White -- Wilmes 4, Jenkins 7, Stonebruner 13, Frazier 11, Ratliff 7, Maggard 4, Campbell 12.

Class 4-5 boys: The best was saved for last in the late contest as Nebraska recruit Marcus Walker of Kansas City O'Hara scored 22 points to earn MVP honors for the Blue. Trailing by one in the final minute, Walker dished to a cutting Huskisson under the basket, putting the Blue up 95-94 with 30 seconds left. Walker capped the win with a steal and pass to Rogersville's Tim Brown, who touched it to Casey Noll of Oakville for a game-ending dunk. "It was a good experience to come here and play with guys from around the state and see what kind of ball they play," said Walker, whose O'Hara team beat Huskisson's Willard squad 81-77 in overtime in the Class 4 state championship. Kickapoo's Shane Laurie led the White team with 18 points.

CLASS 4-5 BOYS BLUE 99, WHITE 94

Blue 29 16 20 34—99

White 22 22 25 25—94

Blue -- Huskisson 11, Noll 8, Walker 22, Brown 5, Fuermeyer 10, Shipley 17, Hill 8, White 11, Pickett 7. White -- Ijames 4, Jones 8, DeClue 6, Laurie 18, Estridge 15, Stegeman 7, Lawrence 12, Whittaker 11, Nurse 7, Turner 6.

Class 4-5 girls: Republic's Josie Sparkman led all scorers with 19 points bringing home the MVP for the Blue team in a fast paced 80-53 win over the White team. Midway through the first quarter, the Blue team's T.J. Quick knocked down a 3-pointer giving the Blue team a 10-8 lead. Quick then came up with a steal at the other end of the court before finding Sparkman for the easy lay up during a 16-0 run that ended with the Blue team leading, 23-8. "We were playing at a very fast pace," said Sparkman, a College of the Ozarks signee. " (Quick) got up the court fast and was able to find me. "The third quarter was much the same for the Blue team. Rolla's Obiageli Okafor scored her team's first six points despite collecting four fouls in the first half. Glendale's Nancy Thornsberry lead the White team in scoring with 13 points, including three consecutive 3-pointers in the fourth quarter. "I just got that fire in my eye," the Missouri Southern University signee said. "I wanted to come out in the second half and change some things. I guess it didn't work out in my favor."

CLASS 4-5 GIRLS BLUE 80, WHITE 53

Blue 17 25 23 15—80

White 8 13 15 17—53

Blue - Hake 15, Okafor 15, Gregory 10, Quick 7, Adams 11, Sparkman 19, Shewmaker 3. White - Bowen 6, Thornsberry 13, Blunt 11, Kovac 3, Eagleman 9, Walker 11.

Class 1-3 girls: Drake University signee Jordann Plummer was Cardinal Ritter's team MVP all four years she was there. She'll add one more to her shelf after garnering MVP honors as the White team won 63-51 over the Blue in the Class 1-3 girls' game. With under six minutes to play in the first half, Plummer, who had a game-high 21 points and nine rebounds, drove the right side of the lane stopping on a dime from 6 feet and nailing the jumper. The shot gave the White team its first lead, since early in the first quarter, 21-19. "I wait till my defender stops," said Plummer, who played in her first game since a foot injury sidelined her four months ago. "Then I use a hard dribble to get around them. "Her teammate Jessie Toler, a Dadeville graduate and College of the Ozarks signee, added 17 points in the victory.

CLASS 1-3 GIRLS WHITE 63, BLUE 51

Blue 11 10 14 16—51

White 8 18 19 18—63

Blue -- Chinn 11, Oswald 6, Shiflett 9, Dubbert 17, Creed 2, Norwine 6. White -- Toler 17, Peirce 3, Myers 11, Keller 6, Plummer 21, Studanski 3, Scott 2.

Nixa's longtime scorekeeper honored

Anyone associated with high school basketball in the Springfield area long enough knows, or at least recognizes Greg "Denzil" Morris. He can tell stories from 1978 like they happened yesterday, complete with names and details only a true basketball fan could remember. Most of them involve Nixa, from where he graduated in '74. Morris doesn't seek out attention, he simply loves the game of basketball, and high school sports in general. So when he was told he was going to be inducted into the Missouri Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame for 31 years of service as a game administrator and scorekeeper at Nixa, he was more than a little surprised. "I was totally shocked," said Morris, who was one of 12 individuals honored as the newest members of the MBCA Hall of Fame at the St. John's Sports Medicine Missouri All-Star Basketball Games on Friday night at Hammons Student Center. Amazingly, Morris has been at the controls of the scoreboard at every Nixa boys' home game, except for one, over the last 31 years. "I don't like sitting in the stands for a home game," he said. "It almost feels like I'm naked." Morris was a student manager for the Nixa boys' team during his senior year, as the Eagles finished second in state under coach Don Price. He enjoyed it so much, he stayed on as scorekeeper the following year and has been there ever

since. Morris said he's only missed "about seven" Nixa road games during that time and has also kept the clock since Nixa started a football program in the early '80s. "I like being around the kids, I love basketball and the administration at Nixa has been great," Morris said. "There's nothing better than high school sports -- I think that's the biggest reason that I've done this for so long. "I wish every kid could have the great memories that I've had doing this." Jay Osborne learned quickly how important Morris was to the program when he became the head boys' basketball coach at Nixa 13 years ago. "Denzil has been so loyal to the program for so many years," Osborne said. "It's hard to find a person with his honesty and integrity."

THE HARD COURT HERALD

the official publication of the Missouri Basketball Coaches Association

Advertising rates

Full Page: \$500

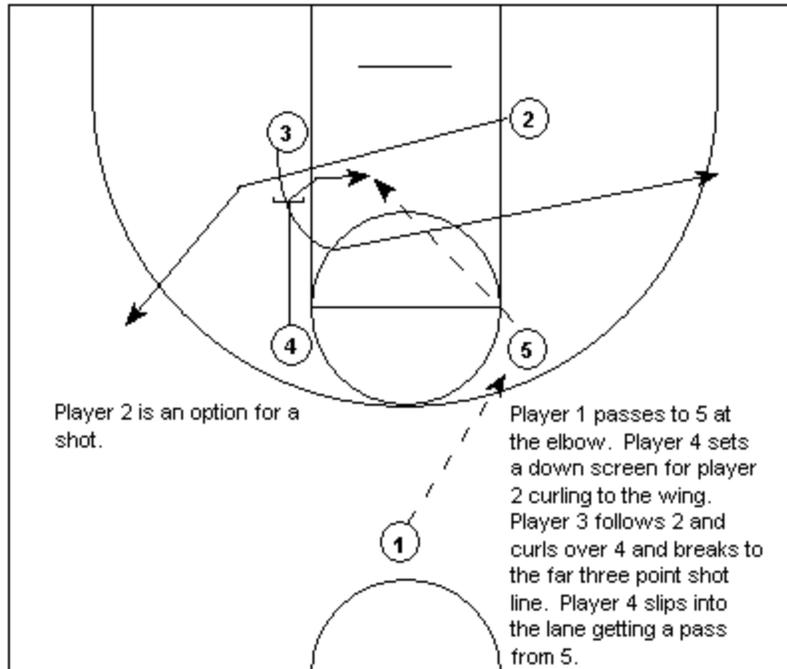
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COACHES' CLIPBOARD

Play of the month
"Lanark" (quick hitter)



This edition's "Play of the Month" courtesy of the Playanizer CD. The CD and other useful coaching aides can be purchased through their web-site at: <http://www.teamanizer.com/>

Suggested Reading: **Prof Blood & the Wonder Teams: The True Story of Basketball's First Great Coach by Chic Hess, Ed.D.**
(copies can be ordered through: www.profblood.com)

Web-Site of the Month: **Hoop Tactics** (www.hooptactics.com)

To contribute to the Coaches' Clipboard (plays, drills, books, quotes, web-sites, etc.) or to submit any other item for "The Hardcourt Herald (article, article idea, etc.), contact Shane Matzen at hardcourtherald@hotmail.com.





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I would like to become more involved in the MBCA and its activities. I will volunteer my services if needed with the following:

Nominating__ Legislative__ Hall of Fame Games__

Academic All-State__ Newsletter__

Suggestions for the MBCA Board to consider:

