

Players, volunteers make fall league a success

Many local youth basketball players were at their best on and off the court on seven consecutive Sundays, Sept. 27 through Nov. 8, during the Dirigo Fall Basketball League at eastern Maine sites.

The first five weeks were at the Skehan Gym in Hampden and the last two at Husson University's Newman Gym in Bangor. More than 125 games played at both sites.

As I watched the boys and girls high school and middle school teams play each Sunday, it was interesting to see that most of the teams were made up of players from the same schools, with a few exceptions.



BOB CIMBOLLEK

Teams traveled as far away as from Jackman, Greenville, Calais, Cherryfield, Millinocket, Winslow and Sabattus along with other traditional Eastern Maine areas — now designated as North teams — along with teams from Greater Bangor.

Many players, coaches, parents and fans drove many miles to take part in the league.

The coaches volunteered their time and efforts and their high school coaches should give them a big thank you. High school coaches have to follow Maine Principals' Association sports season rules and can't coach or watch their players in fall games.

High school coaches still benefit from fall basketball as the main difference between fall basketball and spring basketball is that the fall teams are mostly made up of school

teams and the spring teams are made up of all-star teams preparing for the state AAU tournament to qualify for the AAU National Tournament in Orlando, Florida.

The coaches, players, parents and fans behavior and sportsmanship were outstanding and very positive during the Dirigo Fall Basketball League games. In all of the games played in Hampden and Bangor, only two technical fouls were called.

The officials, most coming from the Bangor area, accepted just \$25 per game. One traveled all the way from Millinocket. Most did two games each Sunday while some even did three or four.

The two sites ran the gate and concessions as fundraisers, which paid for the use of the facilities. The sites also provided the timer and the home team ran the scorebook.

I saw players and teams improve from Sunday to Sunday. The entire program at the sites I supervised were positive experiences for the officials, players, coaches and fans.

Another big positive from the league occurred on Sunday, Nov. 1, when the Seventh Annual Taylor Charity Tipoff Tournament raised more than \$35,000 for family programs dealing with domestic violence and abuse. The tourney was held at seven different sites around the state with 200 teams from Saco to Bangor competing.

Teams raised money individually while parents and fans paid by donations at the gate where each team received credit for the funds. The team that won the event was the team that raised the most money, not the team that scored the most points or won the most games. The Old Town Junior Coyote

girls seventh- and eighth-grade team won the event not only at Husson, but for all the sites in the corporate division by raising over \$4,000.

Others pitched in for this great cause as Husson donated its gym, provided the timers and did the setup for the games. Officials also donated two games and site supervisors donated their time.

The student work crews at Husson and the Hampden Recreation Department did outstanding work and I'd like to express my sincere thanks to them as well as directors Shelly Abbott at Hampden, Jason Harvey at Husson and Trudi Gilen, site supervision of the charity event.

Bob Cimbollek is a retired high school basketball coach and athletic director.

Missouri's Pinkel talks about leaving

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

An emotional Missouri coach Gary Pinkel fought back tears at his news conference Monday at Mizzou Arena after his announcement last week that he would retire at the end of the 2015 season for health reasons related to a battle with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer.

Pinkel said he will miss his players the most when he leaves after 15 seasons at Missouri.

"The toughest thing about this ..." said Pinkel, choking up, "is my players. I'm going to miss them. Being around them, scolding them when I have to, hugging them and touching them every day. I'm going to miss being around my players."

"I told my players, 'I'm going to have your phone forever and you're going to have mine.' Call me any time."

The 63-year-old Pinkel will remain as coach through Dec. 31 or until the school hires his replacement. Pinkel informed his players Friday that he would be resigning in order to focus on his health.

Pinkel was diagnosed with lymphoma in May and first underwent treatments in May and June.

Among those in the audience at Monday's press conference was Michael Sam, who starred at Missouri before becoming the first openly gay player to be drafted by an NFL team.

Pinkel is the most successful head coach in the history of the Missouri program, leading the school to a 118-71 record, including the 20-16 come-from-behind win over Brigham Young on Saturday as the 5-5 Tigers snapped a



JASEN VINLOVE | USA TODAY

Missouri Tigers head coach Gary Pinkel watches his players before a Nov. 5 game against the Mississippi State Bulldogs at Faurot Field in Columbia, Missouri.

four-game losing streak. Before becoming Missouri's coach, Pinkel spent 10 seasons at Toledo and compiled a 73-37-3 record. His career mark is 191-108-3.

"When you get cancer, it's so numbing," Pinkel said Monday. "I'd been so blessed with my health. You're driving around for a week, you look at yourself in the rear-view mirror and say, 'You've got to be kidding me.' For me, it was profound. I've seen all these different people getting treatments. I've heard, coming down the road, someone saying, 'Would you rather die on a football field or on a beach?' I'd rather die on a beach."

TCU's Boykin questionable

TCU quarterback Trevone Boykin is questionable with an ankle injury for Saturday's game against Oklahoma, according to Horned Frogs coach Gary Patterson.

The Heisman Trophy candidate suffered the injury during last Saturday's contest against Kansas. Patterson said he hoped to know more about Boykin's status on Tuesday.

Foster Sawyer filled in at quarterback against the Jayhawks after Boykin's injury and would draw the start if Boykin can't play.

Saturday's contest between the two 9-1 teams is basically an elimination game per the College Football Playoff system. Oklahoma was ranked seventh in last week's poll and TCU was ranked 12th.

Basketball

Tar Heels still No. 1 in poll

North Carolina, after opening with victories over Temple and Fairfield, is No. 1 in the first Associated Press regular-season men's college basketball poll released Monday.

The Tar Heels were the pre-season No. 1 for a record ninth time. North Carolina received 37 first-place votes from the 65-member national media panel. Kentucky, with eight first-place votes, is No. 2 and Maryland, with 14 top votes, is third. Kansas is fourth with five first-place votes.

Defending national champion Duke is fifth, followed by Virginia, which had the other first-place vote. Iowa State, Oklahoma, Wichita State and Gonzaga round out the top 10. Villanova is No. 11, followed by Arizona, Michigan State, Indiana, California, Utah, Vanderbilt, Notre Dame, Connecticut, Baylor, Purdue, Butler, LSU, Michigan and Oregon.

Tuesday night's Champions Classic doubleheader at Chicago's United Center may shake up next week's rankings. Kentucky meets Duke, and Kansas faces Michigan State.

Enman

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Speirs also said Enman has done an exceptional job running the highly regarded Greater Bangor Open.

"He has been a constant professional. He's a great man who has done a great job," said Kebo Valley Golf Club pro Pieter DeVos.

Rob Jarvis, who has been Enman's assistant pro since 2000, said he has been a "great mentor to me and an even better friend and person in my life. He has always let me spread my wings."

"My one fear is that the golfers never know all he did for the golf course, like the maintenance barn, state-of-the-art irrigation system and the new 75 motorized golf cars we got this year," said Jarvis.

Enman, a former basketball player and golfer at Bangor's John Bapst High School, has observed many changes during his tenure.

"There are certainly more people playing now," said Enman. "In the early 2000s, when the Tiger Woods thing took off, there were a lot more people playing at that time. It has dwindled since then."

"But there are a lot more women (30-40) playing these days," added Enman, who said golf is much more of a business, and more expensive, than it once was.

"The costs are astronomical compared to what they used to be," reiterated Enman. "Equipment is so much better and golf courses are certainly in better shape than they used to be."

He recalled that when Bangor Muni was first built, they had snap valves to water the greens and the tees. They didn't water the fairways.

"Everybody loved that. Drives would roll forever," quipped Enman. "But if you have a hot, dry summer, there wouldn't be much grass in the fairways or in the rough."

Golfers haven't changed much, although he did say "they used to be out there for the fun of it, but they expect a lot more now."

"They all want to play up to their capabilities. If they don't, they get upset," said Enman.

His career highlights have been numerous, topped by hosting the 1978 U.S. Amateur Public Links Golf Championship, a United States Golf Association event for the nation's top amateur

golfers who play at public courses.

"The USGA came here three years before the tournament to help set up the golf course. They told us what we needed to do to get the golf course ready. At that time, the course was absolutely in primo condition. But it certainly cost an awful lot of money to get it that way."

He has enjoyed watching the likes of several up-and-coming PGA pros play the GBO, such as World Golf Hall of Famer Lanny Wadkins, PGA pro Sean O'Hair and Champions Tour player and former PGA Tour member Jeff Sluman.

"(The GBO) was one of Wadkins' first tournaments as a pro. I remember it like yesterday. He shot a 74 and then shot a 64 and a 63 and won in a playoff. He played at 17-under-par the last two days," recalled Enman.

Enman used to play golf with Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Sandy Koufax when Koufax lived in Holden and called him "a wonderful guy who was quite competitive."

Enman also enjoyed renewing acquaintances with GBO regulars such as Eric Egloff and Don Robertson and said major influences on his career in-

clude Kelly and George Small, who used to caddy for him.

"I've met a lot of really nice guys and have picked up things from them," he said.

Enman was pleased to have some input into the construction of the Kelly Nine, a nine-hole layout that was finished in 1988 and has made Bangor Muni one of three courses in Maine that offer at least 27 holes.

He praised the city of Bangor and its Parks and Recreation Department directors for their support of the course.

Enman and his wife, Jackie (Lamb), have two children, Matt and Katie, and three active grandsons.

"We go to their games and will have a lot more time to do that. That's important to me right now," he said.

Enman and his wife spend their winters in Florida, where he works a few days a week at a golf course.

He knows the city of Bangor will go through a hiring process, but he hopes they put Jarvis at the top of the list because, "he's put in his time, he's very smart and knowledgeable, and he loves the Bangor Municipal Golf Course. He would be a great one to bring on."

Classes

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games that have the additional benefit of reducing travel.

The combination of changes already has resulted in increased crossover games around the state between teams from different classes and conferences.

Perhaps the most discussed case in the lead-up to the five-class proposal being approved involved four former KVAC Class A schools — Bangor, Edward Little of Auburn, Lewiston and Oxford Hills of South Paris — that now are in Class AA.

While those schools have played an entirely KVAC Class A schedule in recent years, the new format required cooperation with the Southwestern Maine Activities Association — home to the other Class AA programs — to provide them a sufficient number of Class AA games within their 18-game regular-season schedules.

The SMAA previously had a closed basketball schedule — meaning its teams could schedule games only within its conference — but negotiations during the offseason among the KVAC, the SMAA and the Western Maine Conference created a scheduling cross-pollination of sorts, with the SMAA making its Class AA and A schools available for games against KVAC Class AA North and Class A South foes and the WMC providing some games for KVAC Class B South teams.

For example, Bangor will play two games each against KVAC AA foes Edward Little, Lewiston and Oxford Hills as well as two games each against Class A North rivals Brewer and Hampden Academy and one game each against Class A North schools Lawrence of Fairfield and Messalonskee of Oakland.

The Rams' remaining six games will come from SMAA programs Cheverus of Portland, Deering of Portland, Gorham, Portland, Thornton Academy of Saco and Windham.

Bangor's games against KVAC Class A foes enabled it to retain key rivalries as well provide for some shorter road trips, while the games against SMAA foes will allow the Rams to play other opponents they might face during tournament play — Cheverus, Deering, Portland and Windham are joining Bangor, EL, Lewiston and Oxford Hills in Class AA North.

Schedule changes are not

be limited to Class AA, as other schools have taken advantage of the opportunity to play opponents from different classes in an effort to maintain local rivalries and reduce travel cost and time.

One example is Greenville, a Class D South team that this year has returned to the Penobscot Valley Conference after a stint in the East-West Conference. As a result, the Lakers will play nearby Class C opponents such as Piscataquis of Guilford and Penquis Valley of Milo in addition to an otherwise Class D schedule.

Greenville's schedule last winter, which included games against the likes of Buckfield, Richmond, Rangeley and Greater Portland Christian, required seven road trips longer than two hours, compared to just two this year.

Tourney time

The other major change stemming from the five-class format is the tournament itself.

Those changes will be minimal for the Classes B, C and D North tournament at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor, where the schedule essentially will remain the same as in recent years.

The schedule has been expanded at venues in Augusta and Portland to accommodate the addition of Class AA North and South regional tournaments, with the North at the Augusta Civic Center and the South at the Portland Exposition Building and Cross Insurance Arena in Portland.

Regional quarterfinals will start two days earlier this year in Augusta and Portland, with Class AA first-round games in both cities set for Wednesday and Thursday of the week before February vacation. Class AA semifinals will be held the following Tuesday with regional finals on Friday evening, Feb. 19.

In addition, the afternoon session on Tuesday, Feb. 16, will have games at both Portland venues, with Class B South girls' quarterfinals at the Expo and Class AA South girls' semifinals at the Cross Insurance Arena.

The Bangor venue will host 44 tournament games, including the Class B state finals on Feb. 26. Fifty-six games are slated for Augusta, including the C and D state finals on Feb. 27, while Portland sites will host 42 games, including the Class A state games on Feb. 26 and the Class AA championships on Feb. 27.

Opening night for varsity games around the state is Dec. 4.

UMaine

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the defense in difficult spots early, then a pass interference penalty aided a 54-yard, second-quarter scoring drive by the Phoenix.

Later, after the Bears rallied to get within a point in the fourth quarter, the defense faltered. Elon surged 66 yards on eight plays, during which Malcolm Summers gained 56 yards on six carries to score a big touchdown.

"We got our butts kicked a couple times running the football," Cosgrove said.

Decloux misses game

Senior place-kicker Sean Decloux, who had been inconsistent on field goals of late, did not dress for Saturday's game.

It appears his recent issues may have stemmed from a previously undisclosed lower body injury.

"He's been hiding an injury [from the public]," Cosgrove said.

"We made a decision to stick with him [previously] and he felt good on those Saturdays. We didn't compromise him, I think this week it was just a situation where he couldn't go," he added.

As a result, sophomore Sam Lenson made his collegiate debut against Elon. He kicked a 28-yard field goal to put UMaine on the board in the third quarter.

However, he missed an extra point that would have tied the game with 8:14 to play.

"We had good juice coming within a point and missed it," Cosgrove said. "We were still in the football game."

Husson

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opponent, Castleton (Vermont) University. Salve Regina beat the Spartans 32-14 on Sept. 19 and Husson topped Castleton 40-7 on Oct. 3.

Husson is coming off a 20-7 win over Mount Ida in which

freshman Cory Brandon made his first start as quarterback, replacing the injured Joe Seccareccia. Brandon completed 12 of 21 passes for 110 yards and one touchdown.

He will go into the game having completed 22 of 37 passes for 264 yards and two TDs. He hasn't been intercepted. Sophomore John Smith has rushed for 1,457

yards on 262 carries and 17 touchdowns.

Robenson Saintard has caught 33 passes for 290 yards and six TDs.

Ellis Throckmorton and Bryant Wade lead them in tackles with 67 and 60, respectively.

Salve Regina has been paced by junior quarterback Brandan Basil (155-of-266,

2115 yards and 27 TDs). Sam Pascale (229 carries, 1448 yards, 12 TDs) is the Seahawks top running back and Alex Hulme (62 catches, 1018 yards, 13 TDs) is the leading receiver.

Linebacker Danny Ives had a team-high 75 tackles. Ethan Gambale had 15 tackles vs. Western New England.