

# Dorksen

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game (62-54 Smithies on Jan. 3) interrupted the Smithies' postgame prayer to let a player know he got away with too many fouls.

These examples are not meant to pick on a few schools, but point out some of the questionable behavior.

Smithville coach Michael Snowbarger has witnessed the good and occasional bad that fans can bring to the games.

"It's been great," Snowbarger said of the fan support. "At times maybe some people have gotten overly involved at an athletic event."

"I think people just have to stop and remember sometimes that they're at a high school event, but for the most part it's been great to see the fans' support. We have a great community that really supports its teams."

Basketball coaches are obviously not going to see much of what's going on in the stands during games, but wrestling is a little different with breaks between matches and obvious fan interaction. Stanley said he has asked his crowd to tone it down a few times in the past.

"I don't ever want our fans being disrespectful or discourteous," Stanley said. "I don't want us to antagonize another team, and at the same time I don't want our kids acting like idiots."

"We've won some lopsided duals, but I always bring the kids in before we shake hands and tell them 'Be classy, be humble.' I don't even want them smiling when we shake hands."

Players and fans alike will sometimes get caught up in the action of hotly contested sporting events and maybe say some things they regret. But there's a saying, "Don't have rabbit ears," which means people should let some things go.

The games do mean a lot and some of the outcomes and plays will be talked about for years to come. But bone-headed moves like poking a pregnant woman, or being a fan who's kicked out of a gym, are also not soon forgotten.

It's OK to get excited and be a fan, but people should stop and think if they're carrying things too far. Sports fans should ask themselves if the kids they're cheering for would applaud how they're behaving in the stands.

**WCAL LIKE A FAMILY** — In all my athletic travels, starting as an athlete at Char-don and as a sports reporter for nearly two decades throughout Ohio, I've never witnessed a high school league with more diehard fans than the WCAL.

I would doubt if another league in the state has had the same stability as the WCAL, which has included the same eight teams since 1970. And most of the teams have been in the league together going much further back.

Proximity between the schools — the farthest drive is about 40 miles from Chippewa to Hillsdale — makes every game or match one for backyard bragging rights.

Many of the athletes are second- or third-generation WCAL participants and many of the parents and/or grandparents see people from neighboring schools at work, church, the grocery store, etc. So it sure makes people feel better when they can puff out their chest a little while wearing a shirt proclaiming loyalty to Waynedale wrestling, Smithville basketball or Norwayne football, after the Bobcats' title this fall.

Like any big extended family there are going to be some feuds, but they are usually managed OK in the WCAL. But win or lose, it's a special league for teams to compete in.

**SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE** — Two more area athletes have announced they're accepting college scholarships this week.



Grimes

of intent at the high school as her parents, Denise and Rich Grimes, looked on along with coach Terry O'Hare.

■ Hillsdale softball player Erin Ebert said she'll sign to attend NAIA school Walsh University on Monday afternoon.

**SEASON HEATS UP FOR SPONSELLER** — It's getting to be crunch time for sophomore 165-pounder Colt Sponseller and his Ohio State wrestling teammates.

The sixth-ranked Buckeyes (13-2, 4-1 Big Ten) are winding down their regular-season schedule with a 26-17 win at No. 17 Michigan Friday night and a home dual against No. 8 Illinois today at St. John Arena at 2 p.m.

Sponseller (26-3, ranked No. 2 in the nation) defeated Michigan's Justin Zeerip 16-5 Friday in a match broadcast on the Big Ten Network.

That sets up a huge matchup for Sponseller against the Illini's No. 15 Roger Smith-Bergsrud, who upset Sponseller in overtime in last year's Big Ten Championships.

The former three-time West Holmes state champ ended his freshman season at 16-4 and came up just short of the NCAA Tournament, but has been a man on a mission this season.

The "Relentless" tag applied to Sponseller as a Knight has been commonplace throughout the NCAA as the middle-weight has been a takedown machine.

The Big Ten Meet is fast approaching March 7-8 at Penn State, with the NCAAs to follow.

■ Clint Sponseller, Colt's older brother, has an 8-9 record for Kent State at 149. Clint has battled injuries, including two sprained hands and a knee injury, but is trying to finish strong. The fifth-year senior won a 6-1 decision against Ohio U's Kevin Christensen Friday in the Golden Flashes' final home match of the season.

**ZUERCHER PAYING HER DUES AT BGSU** — Waynedale product Kelly Zuercher has a good news/bad news situation as sophomore center on the Bowling Green women's basketball team, but she's continuing to make it a positive experience.

The good news is that the Falcons are 21-2 and riding a school-record tying 21-game winning streak into today's home game against Central Michigan at 3:30 p.m.

The bad news is that because the Falcons are so talented, the former Daily Record Player of the Year has had a hard time getting much playing time. Zuercher is averaging 2.0 points a game in 14 games, including four points in a 70-53 win over Toledo Thursday.

I talked to Kelly's older brother, Waynedale football coach Matt Zuercher, this week and he said Kelly is enjoying her time at Bowling Green.

"I think it was hard at times for Kelly as a freshman, being away from home for the first time and adjusting to college, but she's really come a long way this year as a sophomore," Matt said. "She's gotten a lot better as a player, too, but that's an awfully talented team she's on. She's working hard and knows that like a backup in any sport, she's one play away from really getting significant minutes."

**Aaron Dorksen's weekly look at area, state and national sports appears on Sundays in The Daily Record. Dorksen can be reached at 330-287-1621 or adorksen@the-daily-record.com**

## Cloverleaf opening

Cloverleaf High School is accepting resumes for the position of head football coach. Successful head football coaching experience at the high school level with playoff experience is preferred. Forward resumes by March 1 to Craig Walker, Athletic Director, Cloverleaf High School, 8525 Friendsville Road, Lodi, Ohio 44254.



Ebert

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"It felt real good," said Peter-sheim, who improved to 27-11. "(Burge's) a good wrestler."

"It was nice to get that win after what he did last year at County to our people. ... I liked the pressure of wrestling that match, it gets me pumped up."

It should be noted that Burge was a good sport in defeat against an opponent he could run into the next two weeks at the sectional and district meets.

Vitallo continued the winning ways by scoring a hard-fought 4-3 win over Northwestern sophomore Logan Hershey, Siegel pinned Chippewa's Ryan Wiley in 5:23 and second-ranked Jonathan Beam put Smithville's Greg Franks on his back three times en route to a tech-fall.

Waynedale had 225 points after Jon Beam's win and needed just a triumph in one of the last three bouts to set the scoring mark.

However, the Bears lost in the 189 third-place bout and Smithville's Matt Kelbly beat Devon Mullins 16-6 in the 215 title match, leaving it up to an unlikely hero in junior heavy-weight Brandon Gove.

Gove is a junior move-in from West Holmes, although he didn't wrestle there. He's had to battle teammate Wade Cleaver in wrestle-offs each week and earned only a few starts this season, but made the most of this week's practice win by pinning Hillsdale's Cody Cline in the third-place final.

"I wasn't gonna let him get me this time," said Gove, who was pinned by Cline to start the day. "I had to get it done. It was my win, it was my time I guess. I really wanted that third place."

Fortune started the Huskies' title run with a 20-5 tech-fall of the Bears' Joey Hamilton, Topp had four takedowns in a 13-4 win over Smithville's Jay Van Sickle, East edged Chippewa's Mark Bramley 7-2, Schaefer pinned Chippewa's Justin Schafraath in 1:51 and Neundorf pancaked the



Dan Starcher photo

**Chippewa's Bryson Hall has Waynedale's Tony Weaver in a pin combination during their 152-pound championship bout at the Wayne County Athletic League meet on Saturday.**

Smithies' Paul Kelbly.

"I'm proud of our kids, we won a lot of big matches and I think we're starting to peak at the right time," Huskies coach Spencer Hershey Sr. said. "Waynedale wrestled their butts off, give them credit."

"To break a record that's stood that long is impressive. I thought their team last year was one of the best Wayne County's ever seen, but it just goes to show you can lose kids and still be able to fire right back the next year."

Schaefer was all smiles after receiving the MVW trophy, but hopes his biggest prize will come at the state tournament he's predicted to win.

"This was a good win today against Schafraath," said Schaefer (27-2). "He was real strong on his feet and a tough kid. ... I'm really trying not to think about the ranking, it's just a number. Anything can happen on any day and I'm just trying to win each time out."

The Smithies and Chippes earned some big wins themselves, placing seven and six grapplers, respectively, in the top three.

Matt Kelbly never stopped attacking in his major decision over Mullins, notching seven takedowns.

"It feels good, but I wouldn't be anywhere without my drilling partners working hard with me in practice," Matt Kelbly said. "We had a good week in practice and I was just the lucky one today."

Bryson Hall is the leader in the Chippes' practices and his hard work paid off with a 10-0 title win over Waynedale's Tony Weaver at 152.

"We've been working hard and we're finally starting to win some matches," Hall said. "Chippewa hasn't done real good in awhile, but we're hoping to change that."

The Chippes gave their home fans a big thrill early in the finals when 112-pounder Hanna Hall pinned Smithville's Travis Fleming in a third-place bout. Hanna is believed to be the first girl to place in WCAL history.

"I'm just really happy to win that match," said Hanna, who was smiling from ear to ear. "It's been a long, tough season, but it's worth it."

Norwayne had a pair of light-weights lead the way. Seventh-ranked Dustin Grier topped Waynedale's Tyler Harter 8-1 in the 103 final, while 130-pounder Matt Bouman used a late escape to edge Widder 5-4 at 130.

**Aaron Dorksen can be reached at 330-287-1621 or adorksen@the-daily-record.com**



Dan Starcher photo

**Smithville's Jay VanSickle (front) yells out as Northwestern's Tyler Topp holds on during the WCAL Meet Saturday at Chippewa. Topp won a 13-4 major decision.**

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