

# Sports

Wilkes-Barre Fats

## We'll All Miss Jim Nicholas

BY LEE L. RICHARDS  
Sports Writer

I don't remember when or where it was I first met Jim Nicholas, but we struck up an immediate friendship that lasted until his untimely death last week.

I do remember Jim's first week as principal of Lake-Lehman High School. He was quite concerned about restoring the athletic program and giving his students something to be proud of. He always believed a strong academic program went hand in hand with a strong athletic program.

He knew, after he had an opportunity to assess the situation that it was going to take time to build a solid program. It was no secret the Knights were lacking in self-pride. About the only successful aspect of the school was the band.

Jim felt if the athletes had the best of equipment, facilities and coaching, the rest would take care of itself. The winning came slowly, but it did happen. Lake-Lehman wasn't going to be a 'breather' in any sport once Nicholas' game plan took effect.

First, he restored the self-respect. Then he went about building school pride back into the entire student body. Pride in their classwork and pride on the athletic fields. Sure he made changes. He got people into the leadership roles that would produce excellence through discipline. Some of his methods didn't get accepted right away, but over the course of time he made believers out of a bunch of people.

Several things Jim did impressed me. He was organized and always seemed to have a plan. Everything he did had one purpose in mind: what would benefit the students the most.

I can't help but think of the bumper stickers Lake-Lehman fans had on their cars "Lake-Lehman Home of Champions."

Nothing gave him more satisfaction than when Lake-Lehman would defeat Wyoming Valley West. He loved it. The little school from the Back Mountain beating the giant from the West Side.

Another trait which impressed me was his ability to communicate with his students. I'd enjoy having lunch with him and one of his former students would come up to say hello. He'd smile and ask about his family or how he was doing in college or in his new job. He'd always offer encouragement. That former student would walk away feeling 10 feet tall.

Jim Nicholas commanded respect, but he worked long and hard to earn it.

When we'd talk about Lake-Lehman getting whipped in some athletic event, there were never any excuses, but he'd always manage to find a positive point about his young folks.

Another characteristic which he had was he never ducked an issue. He was a legitimate leader, but he always shared the credit with people around him.

I don't know if the Lake-Lehman people really appreciated all that he contributed to the school. He created a winning chemistry in the field of athletics and in the classroom. He seemed to always be one play ahead of the one he was about to call. He wanted the best for his students and didn't worry about the cost. No task was too big and he'd fight right down to the wire if it was going to help his students. He had a certain style!

I doubt if the recent athletic accomplishments enjoyed by Lake-Lehman would have happened if he wasn't the principal. After all, he got the right coaches to provide the necessary skills for the athletes to reach their fullest potential. Lake-Lehman athletics isn't regarded as rinky-dinks anymore. They've gained the respect of a lot of folks.

Sure he had his critics, but don't we all? He demonstrated again and again his system had one purpose and one purpose only, performance in the classroom and in athletics.

Meanwhile, where does Lake-Lehman go from here? Athletically speaking, it can go one of two ways. It can continue to be competitive or it can revert back to the days before Jim Nicholas walked through the front doors with his game plan to restore the self-pride.

He did too much and worked too hard for the board to allow the athletic program to slide back to second class status now. For the sake of his athletes, students and parents, I hope the board can find an individual to build on the foundation laid by Jim.

Several people asked me last week what kind of person was Jim Nicholas? I could only respond, he was my friend and he was a winner! Lake-Lehman was lucky to have had him.



**ON THEIR WAY TO DISTRICTS:** Members of the Dallas High School varsity 440 relay team are competing in today's District II meets in the hopes of qualifying for States. Pictured are Robin Pawling, Judy Krispin, Cathy Newhart and Denae Schoner. (Dan Walsh photo)



**ENTERING DISTRICTS:** The 1600 meter relay team from Dallas High School is ready for action today's District II competition with a good chance of qualifying for the State meets. Pictured are Robin Pawling, Judy Krispin, Denae Schoner and Amy Aston. (Dan Walsh photo)

## Cindergirls Fall

The best the Lake-Lehman cindergirls could take in the tri-meet with Wyoming Valley West and Bishop Hoban, Monday, were a second, a third, two fourths and four fifth places while bowing 131-10 to Valley West and 114-26 to Bishop Hoban.

Wyoming Valley West girls continued undefeated with Kelly O'Kane a four time winner. The Lady Knights took a second in the 400-meter relay with Janusz, Spencer, Kuschke and Mills. Mills placed third in the 200-meter dash. Janusz placed fourth in the discus and Reed took fourth place in the javelin.

Fifth places were garnered by Kuschke in the long jump, Michaels in the high jump, Austin in the 1600-meter run and Reed in the fifth.

The losses dropped the Lady Knights to 2-8.

Baseball

## Varsity Wrapups

L-L Girls

Lake-Lehman's Jill Solinski pitched a one hit game against Wyoming Area to lead the Lady Knights to a 19-3 win, then came back on Monday afternoon and hurled a no-hit game over five innings as Lake-Lehman trounced Seton Catholic 22-4.

Billy Jo Sorber started in the game against the Eaglettes but was relieved by Solinski after giving up three walks. Solinski struck out 11 and walked only four in picking up the win.

Kelly Wandel and Pam Solinski led at the plate. Wandel knocked out a double and a triple while P. Solinski hit a single and a triple and earned three RBI's.

In the game with the Wyoming Warriors, Solinski struck out nine and walked four. The Warriors' Adrienne Placek hit the lone single against Solinski.

The Lady Knights went in front by five runs in the first inning, then scored four in the second and third innings and two in the fourth and fifth innings before the game was called under the 10-run rule.

Wandel, Gail Austin, Kim Fey, and Rebecca Clifford provided the

punch at the plate for the Lady Knights.

The two wins ran the Knights record to 8-0 in league play.

Dallas Girls

Debbie Shone gave up only four hits, fanned four and helped win her own game by driving out two doubles and two singles in a 29-5 game against Bishop O'Reilly.

Sheri Ciccarelli led with the power at the plate knocking out four hits including a double.

The game was called at the end of the fifth inning under the league's 10-run rule.

Dallas Boys

After blanking the Queensmen 8-0 on Friday to break a five-game losing streak, the Dallas Mountaineers were nipped 6-5 by the league-leading Wyoming Warriors on Monday.

With the score tied 5-5 at the end of the top half of the seventh inning, the Warriors James Kutzer went to first when hit by a pitched ball. Mike Klimas singled him to third and Kutzer scored on Mike Molesky's single to give Wyoming Area pitcher Mark Sickler the 6-5 win.

Each team had six hits with Jim Lord taking the loss for the Mountaineers when he came in to relieve

Steve Federici. The loss dropped the Mountaineers to 1-6.

It was a reverse story on Friday when the Mountaineers knocked out 15 hits for eight runs against Bishop O'Reilly while Dallas pitchers Steve Thomas and Rich Gdovin gave up only a total of four hits. Thomas fanned nine and Gdovin struck out three for the Mounts.

Dallas took a 1-0 lead in the first inning when Tim Grove hit a single, stole second and crossed home plate on Jerry Rollman's sacrifice fly. In the second inning, the Mountaineers scored when Darren Breining hit a single and stole second, then scored on A.J. Bittner's single with two out.

The Mountaineers rallied for four runs in the third inning when Breining hit a sacrifice fly to score Steve Federici. Art Coolbaugh then knocked out a two run single scoring Rollman and Walt Grabenstetter, both of whom hit singles to take to the bases. Dave Thomas hit a single to bring in Coolbaugh to give Dallas a 6-0 lead.

Dallas scored a run in the fourth and another in the top half of the sixth while holding the Queensmen on the bases.

## Dallas Girls Win Four

Judy Krispin set the pace for the Dallas Mountaineers with four wins in the meet with Nanticoke Area and GAR. The Lady Mounts downed the Trojans 82-59 and took the Grenadiers 120-14.

Krispin took firsts in the 110 and 300 meter hurdles and on the 400 and 1600 meter relay teams. Cathy Newhart, Amy Aston, D. Schoner and Robin Pawling had three wins each. Pawling was a member of the winning 3200 meter relay team with Sitkowski, L. Kroll and Aston; also the 400 meter relay team and the 1600 meter with teammates Aston, Krispin and Schoner.

Schoner copped a first in the 400 meter dash, a first in the 400 meter relay and another first in the 1600 meter. Aston, who won the woman's division in the recent Nesbitt Hospital 5-Mile Run, was a member of the winning 3200 meter team, took first in the 800-meter run, and was a leg

of the winning 1600 meter relay team.

Newhart was on the winning 400 meter relay team, took the 200-meter dash and the 100 meter dash. Felicia Tucker placed first in the shot put and Harvey of Dallas took the long jump. Denise Sitkowski placed first in the 3200 meter run.

Earlier in a meet with Lake-Lehman and Crestwood Judy Krispin led the Lady Mounts to two wins, defeating Lake-Lehman 119-20 and Crestwood 74-66. Krispin won the 100-meter hurdles, 300-meter hurdles and was a member of the winning 400 and 1600 meter relay teams.

Tucker took the shot put and Cathy Newhart won the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash and was on the winning 400-meter relay team. Aston took the 1600-meter run, 800-meter run and was a member of the 1600 meter relay team.

Schoner was on the 1600-meter relay team.

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