

Sports

Football rowdiness

Hey, what's going on here?

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Correspondent

Increasing incidents on and off the football field during this season brings to mind a series of questions — questions concerning who is to blame for these incidents and, if there is any, solutions.

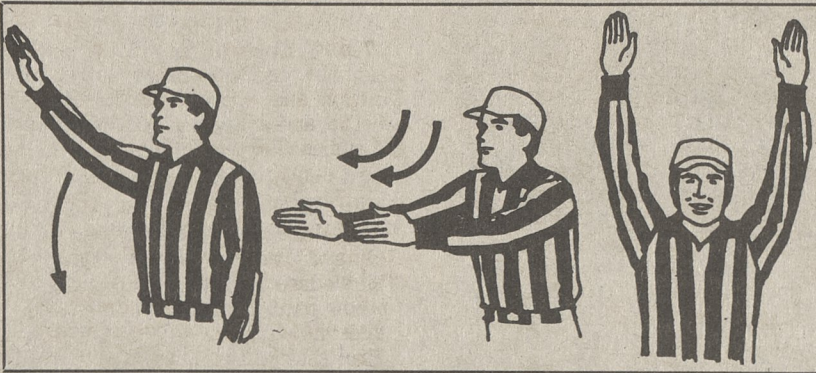
When a boy becomes a member of a high school varsity team what are his responsibilities? Who is in control on the sidelines? Who is in control on the playing field? What is the coach's responsibility? What are the officials' responsibilities? Are they impartial when officiating, and, last but not least, what about the behavior of fans and parents of the players?

Is it possible that the correct or logical answers to the above questions have never been understood in today's competition, do all of the above play a role in some of the incidents, most of them behavior, or could the proper interpretation of one or two answers at the beginning of a season eliminate what could become a more difficult problem as the season goes on.

This season there has been much more criticism of officials than we have heard in the past. Most of it is

heard on the sidelines, that is from the fans, and occasionally, there have been complaints from coaches. Most of these complaints come after bad calls on the field, failure of officials to note that two or three players from one team gang up on one player from the opposing eleven. In fact this was very noticeable in a recent game when three players on a winning team started punching a young player on the other team. An official, who, by coincidence, lived in the winning team's district, turned his head and looked into the stands, despite repeated calls from players and coaches of the young player's team. At another game, between an undefeated team and a team with only a few victories, the officials consistently called penalties against the losing team, apparently paying no attention to the coach's complaints. Why?

Is there a reason that today's officials consciously or sub-consciously favor the top teams? Do they worry about the winning coach's attitude? Are they looking to be selected for the playoffs and have nothing to gain from a losing team's coach? Do officials assigned to games between teams on or near the bottom go into the competition



with a negative attitude? Do they realize these games are every important to the kids playing on those teams. And even though they are friends, is it wise that team coaches and certain officials wine and dine together during football season or does this action raise questions in the minds of fans? These are but a few incidents occurring this season.

Bob Thomas of Wyoming Valley West, who is in charge of assigning the officials for the Wyoming Valley Conference games, explained the process used. Each year before the start of the football season, the conference schools' coaches attend a meeting where they can cross off the names of applying officials they

don't want, after reviewing all of those who have applied.

Those remaining on the list are voted on by the coaches and elected by a majority vote. Normally, any of the officials on the list can be assigned to any game unless an athletic director has made a request that a certain official not be assigned to their games.

"We try to honor such requests," said Thomas. "Sometimes we don't have a lot of officials and have to send what we have. In some instances, an official has been given a contract for a certain game and unless he agrees, it is too late to withdraw him."

All action on the playing field is in

control of the official — not the coaches, not the athletic director — only the officials and the head official has the final word. Is it possible the officials are not taking their responsibility seriously enough this season? Could some of the incidents have been prevented if offending players, regardless of the team, had been ejected from the game? Trouble was prevented recently when officials stopped the Wyoming Seminary/Williamson game at the first half. Their action, in all likelihood, prevented serious problems.

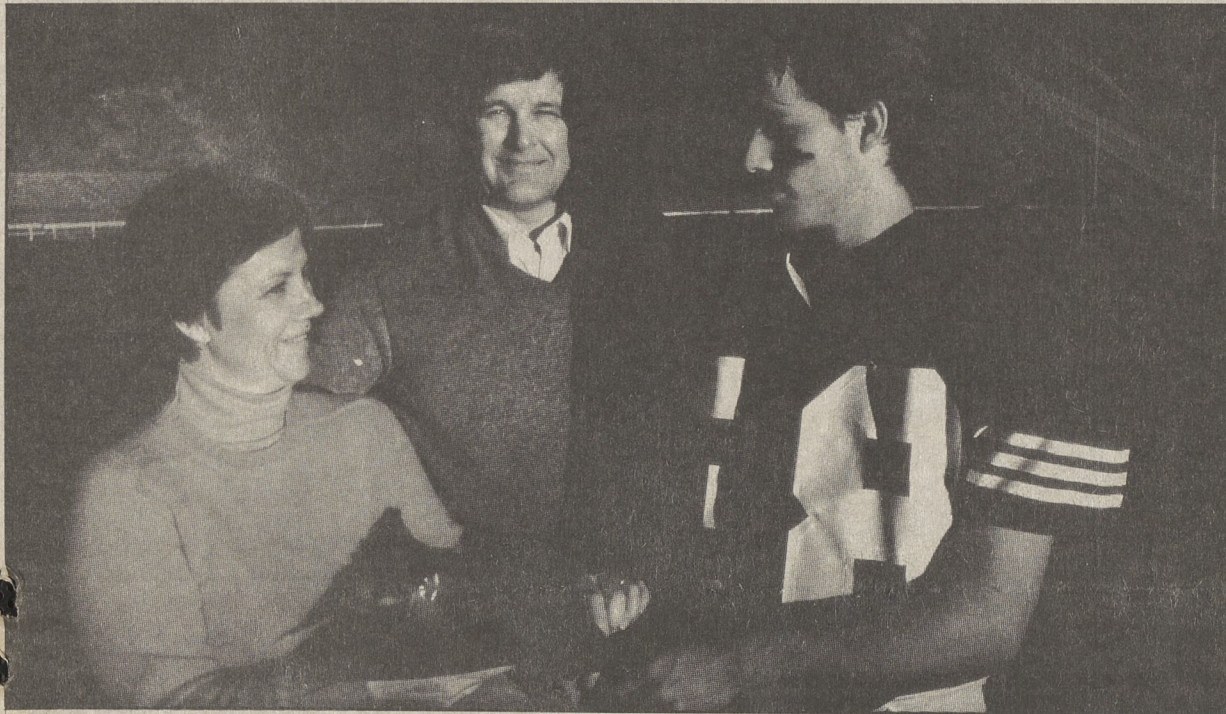
It is the coach or coaches responsibility to keep the boys under control on the sidelines. True, the head coach does not have time to watch the boys on the bench when he is trying to follow his team on the field. He should be given enough assistants, however, so they can keep the players on the sidelines under control and back behind the lines in order to avoid a penalty call.

It is not the coach's responsibility to control the fans, but it is the responsibility of the athletic director or high school principal to see that there is sufficient security to keep all spectators in control. We believe that this refers to language

as well as action. Those players on the field are kids, giving the best they can on any given day and their best is not always what fans expect.

These kids are not pros, they are not collecting high salaries, but they are giving a lot of their time and effort to take part in a sport they love. They are there to learn sportsmanship, to develop, to play their best. They want to win and their coach wants them to win, but they don't always have the ability to win. Winning should be near the bottom of their list of priorities. Good sportsmanship and doing their best near the top.

When a boy goes out for the team he has certain responsibilities. He has to learn to work as a team member and not to want to be a star all the time. It is team effort that helps a team win. The player has to learn that when it comes to football, he has one coach, either the head coach or the coach to whom he is assigned. His parents, his big brother, his friend — none of these people are his coaches — that is one of the first lessons he should learn. A player has to learn to be a good loser as well as a gracious winner. High school sports programs are a part of the school curriculum to aid in a well-rounded education.



Parents Day

Bill Bearde presents his mother, Addie, with long-stemmed red roses during Parents Day festivities held Saturday afternoon prior to the Lehman-Crestwood football game. Bills' father, Rodger Bearde, athletic director at Lake-Lehman looks on. Parents of senior members of the Black Knights football team were honored prior to Saturday's game which Lehman won with a late-game score.

Dallas Post/Ed Campbell

Wilkes-Barre Fats

Just a couple of notes

— PITT COACH ANDY URBANIC was in the area last week checking on some of the top schoolboy prospects. Andy believes the Panthers will get things turned around. Many of their problems stem from various injuries to key personnel.

"Sure we've had some costly injuries and we haven't played with the consistency we anticipated, but we're going with a lot of young people. It's a tough way to gain experience, but it could help us down the road," said Urbanic.

— SPEAKING OF RECRUITING, Meyers' Greg Lott is getting a heap of attention. Most of the college coaches I've talked with say he's got a lot of athletic ability and could be a 'diamond in the rough.'

One of the players I've got a hunch on is Valley West's Ed Michaels. He could be the type you got to take a chance on and could be a late bloomer in the future.

— FOOTBALL NEWS had a superb story regarding Pitt football in last week's edition. Harry DeVold said, "The 1937 team had no equal and was probably the greatest combination of talent for its time. Under (Coach Jock) Southerland, it was a popular national champion."

I'm always proud when I read accolades about the team, simply because my Dad, Luke, was an offensive guard on that squad. When I was growing up many members of that classic group would visit our home and I enjoyed listening to the various stories about their adventures. I never realized or appreciated just how great that team was until I was a lot older. My Dad wasn't the type to boast about his grid accomplishments. Pitt always had a great foot-

ball tradition. Panthers have nine national titles to their credit. I'm sure they'll return to the top 10. That '37 team allowed only 34 points.

— MANY FANS HAVE ASKED about Bill Fralic's performance this season. It was amusing to hear the announcer on ESPN during PSU-WVU game recently state a Mountaineer out performed Billy. It was an absurd statement. Coach Urbanic told me Bill has played better than ever. Pro scouts in Pittsburgh last week say Fralic is still in a class by himself.

— WE'RE PREPARING A SPECIAL OUTLOOK on the annual Old Shoe Game between Dallas and Lake-Lehman. Despite the records of both teams this game is still significant for the two schools and fans in the Back Mountain.

— SEVERAL LAKE-LEHMAN FANS have inquired about former standout Mike Leskowski. He's still on the Penn State squad, but hasn't seen any playing time, which is unfortunate for him. I believed at the time Mike made a mistake in his selection of schools. I still believe had he gone to Maryland he'd have played simply because of the Terps defensive scheme. That's hindsight, but my opinion.

— I DON'T BELIEVE there's a more popular coach or a guy that gets more out of his players than Wyoming Sem's Marv Antinnes. He's a stickler for detail.

— WHAT A SUPER JOB Pete Kowalski did with the Penn State Wrestling brochure for the coming season. This is Pete's initial production and it's packed with a bunch of records and facts about the Nittany Lion matmen. I'm looking forward to working with him again this season. Pete has a shot at going into the 'White Castle Hall of Fame' in the near future.

— SPEAKING OF WRESTLING, from early reports I won't be surprised to see Bloomsburg challenging Penn

State for the top spot in my Eastern Mat for the upcoming dual meet season.

The wrestling season will start with the Bloomsburg and East Stroudsburg Opens on the 16th and 17th of this month. Penn State's Invitational is slated for the 30th and Dec. 1. Coach Rich Lorenzo and his staff always do an outstanding job with the tourney and many of the top teams will compete.

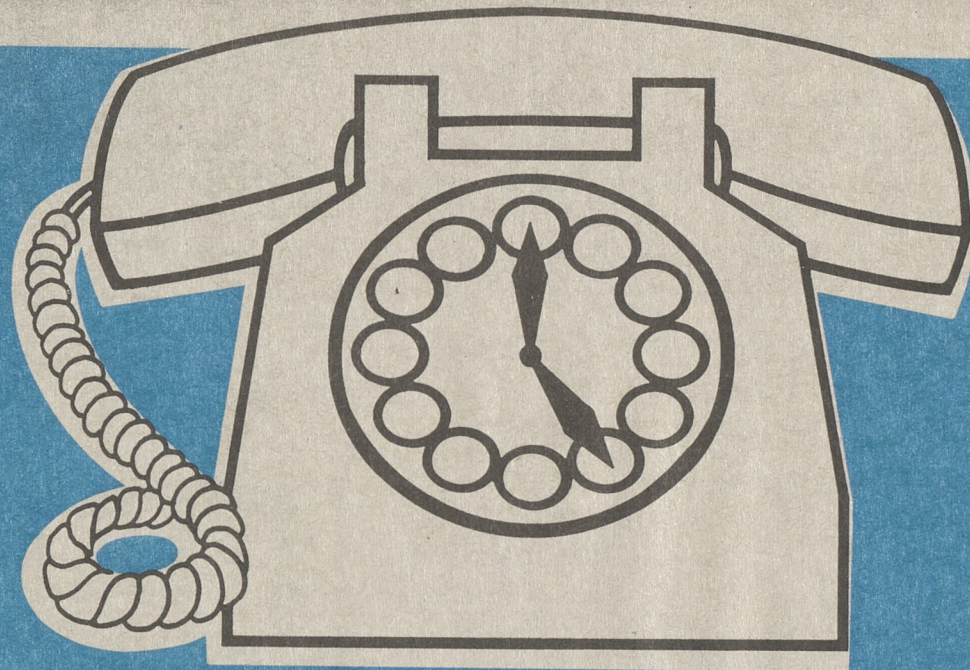
— GETTING BACK TO MY SUPER SEVEN, which I overlooked in the previous columns. Here's the way they shape up after comparing notes with various coaches: 1-Texas, 2-Nebraska, 3-Oklahoma, 4-Miami, 5-Florida, 6-Florida State, 7-Oklahoma State. No Washington simply because they aren't that good and play a patsy schedule. Watch Washington State knock them off. Iowa is supposed to be getting better, but I can't forget the loss to PSU and the way Ohio State punched their tickets.

— ARE THE HANOVER HAWKS FOR REAL? What they did to Wyoming Area surprised many. The Hawks simply lined up and ran the football right at the Warriors defense. I can't remember a team controlling the football on sustained marches like the Hawks did against the Warriors.

— TOO BAD THE DALLAS SOCCER TEAM got eliminated from the District playoffs. However, with the popularity of soccer in the Back Mountain, I've got to believe it will only be a matter of time before the Mountaineers claim the District 2 crown.

— DID I HEAR WARM's Ron Allen right recently when he stated 'PSU Coach Joe Paterno has left the game pass him by?' While I've never been a fan of St. Joe's, he's still a very solid coach. He just doesn't have the size in the trenches to matchup and take the good teams on head-to-head. Nittany Lions have simply been outmuscled up front on both sides of the ball.

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