

The Dallas Post

SportsWeek

From the pressbox

By Dave Konopki

A family star sets

I guess I've been a pain in the rear end right from birth. I've always been an inquisitive person, always wanting to find out the answers to all of life's questions. It probably started from the time I was able to talk.

"Why is the sky blue, Mommy?"

"Because."

"Because, why?"

"Just because."

"Just because, why?"

Maybe that's why I became a journalist.

But my search for all the answers grows in intensity when it comes to researching my family tree. Especially when it comes to athletics.

I always knew my father was a good athlete who loved sports. But in order to work to help support his family and the unavailability of some sports in his high school, his days on the athletic field were limited.

How then, did my parents come to produce three sons who played sports on the high school and collegiate level; a daughter who played on the high school level; and another who loves football and baseball?

I did some research and found that our family, especially on my mother's side, has a tremendous athletic history.

A piece of that history was recently taken away.

To most people who knew Robert Bomboy, Sr., they knew him as "Pete." I knew him as my Uncle Bob. Call him what you want, just call him one of the best athletes in the history of the Wyoming Valley.

Last week cancer became one of few opponents to ever beat Uncle Bob. He died at the age of 70.

Uncle Bob was an outstanding athlete at Kingston High School, becoming the first-ever captain of the Kingston basketball team. His brother, Eddie, was one of the best quarterbacks to ever play in the WVC. After running roughshod over opponents on the athletic field, Uncle Bob decided to take on a couple of different foes following graduation.

Germany, led by a man called Hitler, and the Empire of Japan.

Uncle Bob enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served during the famous battles at Guadalcanal and at Tarawa. It was at the latter where his athletic career officially ended. A Japanese sniper's bullet struck him in the right leg while getting off a PT-boat.

His athletic career, and any hopes of playing on the collegiate level, were over.

But his love of the world of sports continued. He was an avid baseball fan, becoming a fixture at the Lackawanna County Stadium where he saw nearly 50 Red Barons games per season. Unfortunately, most of the knowledge I received about my Uncle Bob's athletic prowess came from people other than him. Talk of his success quickly turned to conversation about nine or my family's success.

That's the kind of man he was. Always putting the concerns of others ahead of his own. And that's how I'll always remember him. Uncle Bob, the person first. Uncle Bob, the athlete, second.

Speaking of great athletes, has anyone noticed the success of Dallas's Stacey Suda? The sophomore is just one of three girls on the Dallas cross-country team. But in girl's competition this season, Suda is undefeated. One of those wins came in impressive fashion last week when she blew out the field, finishing more than one minute ahead of the other contestants, in a meet against powerful Bishop Hoban. Read more about Suda and the Dallas and Lake-Lehman cross-country teams in next week's Dallas Post.

You needn't look any further than the Back Mountain to find the two most prolific quarterbacks in the Wyoming Valley Conference. Leading the way is Dallas senior Brian Brady who has thrown for 403 yards in his first three contests. Lake-Lehman sophomore John Oliver has thrown for 387 yards in his first three games. Brady's favorite targets so far have been junior Mike Viglone and sophomore Jeff Kunkle, who have more than 100 reception yards apiece. Oliver's favorite targets have been first-year senior Tim Waslik and senior Ernie Chamberlain. Waslik leads the WVC in receiving with 239 yards while Chamberlain is in the top 10 with 123.

When is the PIAA going to wise up and realize that some of the best high school field hockey is being played right here in the Wyoming Valley Conference? Like last year, only one team from District 2 is going to advance to the state playoffs. Meanwhile, others like District 1 and District 3 are sending up to four and five teams to the state playoffs. Apparently, the success achieved by Dallas, Lake-Lehman and Crestwood in recent state tournaments has gone unnoticed. Or overlooked. Last year Dallas, which lost two games and tied one in the WVC, advanced to the state quarterfinals before losing by a single point. Lehman, which proved during the year it could play on the same level as Dallas, sat home as the district runner-up. Let's hope the PIAA will wise up and send at least two teams from each district tournament before another travesty of justice occurs.

More than 75 young boys are enjoying baseball this fall thanks to a fall training and development league being sponsored by Back Mountain Baseball, Inc. There are two different leagues, one for boys who will be 10-12 before August 1, 1994 and one for boys who will be 13-15 before August 1, 1994. After getting the kinks worked out in their first week, the leagues are in full swing. The Little League division, led by Tom Evans, has been playing scrimmage games. Next year's 13-year-olds, under the direction of Herb Fehlinger, have been getting accustomed to play on the bigger field, while the 14-15 year olds have been getting weekly clinics on various baseball fundamentals and strategies by Dave Konopki. The Little League players play each Saturday and Sunday afternoon from 4-6 p.m. at the upper fields while the 13-15 year olds play on Sunday afternoons at the Dallas Sr. High School field from 2-4 p.m. Cost of the league is \$5 per player. New players are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

Callahan goal gives Dallas a 'w'

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Writer

There has been talk of the rivalry not being what it used to be.

There has been murmuring that perhaps the intensity between the two teams has diminished over the years.

But anyone who questioned the intense rivalry between the Dallas and Lake-Lehman soccer teams needed to just see the reaction of Dallas head coach John McCafferty in the final period of last week's meeting between the two Back Mountain schools.

After Sean Callahan broke a 2-2 tie with the eventual game-winning goal early in the fourth quarter, the emotional, but normally reserved, McCafferty leaped into the air. Dallas went on to win the contest, 3-2.

"When I start jumping up and down, it's something," said McCafferty, whose Mounts scored two goals in the final period to come away with the victory. "I don't want to see these kids lose. They're great kids with terrific attitudes. They practice hard, they work hard, and they play hard. It makes you feel good as a coach."

It was a typical Dallas-Lehman soccer game. Close, physical and emotional.

"Yes, yes, it was a very typical Dallas-Lehman game," said McCafferty, whose Mountaineers hadn't beaten Lehman in two years. "It was very nice to go out there and come away with a win. It was a very physical game. They took the lead. We came back. It was a great game. A Dallas-Lehman game."

The loss evened the Black Knights at 2-2 this season while the Mounts improved to 3-1. Although they're near the top of the standings, McCafferty knows there is room for improvement.

"We don't have the nice, fluid movement just yet," said the veteran Dallas coach, whose team's lone loss came to division leader Valley West (4-0), 5-4. "At times we're just playing kickball. We're still looking for two or three players to fill different positions."

But McCafferty is optimistic.

"We'll get there," said McCafferty. "We're happy to be 3-1 after getting off to what I would call a slow start. This team may not have the talent, right now, of some of the other Dallas teams I have coached. But they have guts. The biggest thing they have going for them is their attitude. There are

no superstars on this team. Their attitude can carry them all the way to the playoffs. They're going to get better and by that time we hope to have our team set."

Ken Chapple and Joe Ankenbrand joined Callahan in scoring goals against Lehman while Ken Marsola, Callahan and Ankenbrand each had an assist for the Mountaineers.

Charles Snyder and Ryan Bombick scored the two goals for Lake-Lehman while Mike Petruska and Will Woronko added the assists.

The scoring wasn't the only thing that was nearly even in the contest. Dallas took 19 shots on goals while Lehman had 13. Lehman had three corners while Dallas had two, and Dallas had 16 saves while Lehman tallied 13.

'Crucial' situations caused losses

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Writer

The Dallas and Lake-Lehman football teams may have different players. And they may wear different uniforms. But after last weekend both teams came off different football fields looking like mirror images.

Both came away with losses. Tunkhannock posted a rare shut-out of Dallas with a 14-0 win while Riverside pinned a 28-20 setback on Lehman.

Both teams struggled offensively. Dallas couldn't get its running game unracked and never got into the endzone while Lehman, which did play better in the second half, threw five interceptions and, like Dallas, couldn't come up with the big play when they needed it.

And, finally, both teams left the field knowing they could have come off with a victory. Dallas trailed by one score, 6-0, late in the final period while Lehman, which trailed 14-0 early in the first period, outplayed Riverside for most of the remainder of the game.

It also left both coaches feeling a bit frustrated.

"We didn't make the big plays and we didn't play well enough to win," said Dallas head coach Ted Jackson, whose Mounts dropped to 2-1. "But we were in the game right until the end. That's what worries me the most. We were losing by just six points and they (Tunkhannock) drove right down the field on us. I never saw a Dallas defense lay down like that in a crucial situation when we still had a chance to win."

Lehman head coach Rich Gorgone said much the same as his friend and Back Mountain counterpart.

"We turned the ball over in crucial spots and we didn't make the plays when we needed them," said Gorgone, whose Knights dropped to 2-1. "But we were pleased with the effort by our kids and the fact that they didn't quit. We scored 20 points in the second half against a very good football team."

Lehman travels to Nanticoke to take on the Trojans on Friday night while Dallas plays its fourth home game in a row on Saturday afternoon when it hosts Coughlin.

Here is an analysis of this week's games followed by the weekly predictions (record: 4-2).

Lehman at Nanticoke

The Black Knights begin Wyoming Valley Conference Division II play after three straight non-conference games. Nanticoke is the defending co-champion of the WVC Division II and they lost many of last year's District 2 Class AAA championship team, including quarterback Oresick and wide receiver Jim Domzalski.

But the Trojans do have some size (195, 250, 280 and 230-pounds across the front lines) and a tough, hard-nosed fullback in 230-pounder Mike Vnuk. Quarterback Ron Warman leads the Trojan offense, which runs the typical wing set.

Nanticoke has been blown out in two of their three contests this season, in their season opener against Scranton Prep and the 33-3 pounding by Coughlin last Friday night. But in between, the Trojans posted an impressive win against Pittston Area. Pittston, which had more than 200 yards in total offense against Dallas in



ROLLOUT - Dallas quarterback Brian Brady rolled to his left looking for a receiver during last week's game against Tunkhannock. The Mounts came up on the short end of the 14-0 score.

week one, was held to just 79 yards total offense against Nanticoke.

Lehman got its offense going in the second half against Riverside and sophomore John Oliver probably matured very much during the course of the game. First-year split end Tim Waslik has proven to be an outstanding player for Gorgone and the Knights. Waslik leads the WVC in receiving yards (see "From the Pressbox" this page) and caught four passes for 76 yards and a touchdown against Riverside.

Defensively, the Knights have to stop Vnuk. And to do that, they better come with their chin straps buckled up. This guy is a load. A big load. But if the Knights can contain Vnuk, they have an outstanding chance of beating Nanticoke.

Offensively, the Knights must mix the run with the pass. Oliver doesn't need to throw for 200 yards for Lehman to be successful but he has to cut down on the turnovers and know when to pass and when to tuck it in and run. He's a tremendous talent and he's only going to get better.

PREDICTION: Gorgone and his staff firmly believe his team has the opportunity to win the WVC Division II. With some of the size and talent his team possesses and the lack of a dominant team (Bishop Hoban is the lone unbeaten) in the conference, who's to argue? But if they're going to win, this game is a must. This is a very big game for the Black Knights. A win on the road against the co-defending champs gives them credibility. **LEHMAN 21 - NANTICOKE 17.**

Dallas vs. Coughlin

The fans at the Dallas High School football field sat in disbelief as Tunkhannock junior running back Rueben Sherman weaved and bulled his way to more than 200 yards of total offense against the Mountaineers.

But to quote the rock group Bachman-Turner-Overdrive: "You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet."

Enter Baldo Vinciarelli. He may not be a Jimmy Cefalo. He may not be a Rocket Ismail. But he

may be one of the best in a long line of outstanding Coughlin tailbacks and he certainly is one of the most exciting tailbacks in the WVC.

He may not be as physical as Sherman, but he's faster and has a better supporting cast.

The Crusaders are unbeaten and have scored some impressive victories in their three wins. They have scored 108 points and given up just 23 in their first three contests.

So, okay, Scranton High isn't that tough. But Coughlin did beat Williamsport, 33-0. Williamsport turned around the following week and blasted Hazleton, who had beaten powerful State College just a week earlier.

Confused? I hope not.

The Dallas-Coughlin game has always been an emotional game for Jackson. Jackson played high school and college football with Coughlin head coach John Joseph and later coached with him as an assistant at Coughlin. Jackson is also a teacher at the Plains Junior High School and has taught the majority of the players on the Coughlin roster.

In addition to Vinciarelli, the Crusaders have a collegiate Division I prospect in wideout Dale Koscielski and have gotten the

most out of senior quarterback Jim Shedlock.

Offensively, the Mounts must get back to the basics in order to win - and that means establishing the running game. Quarterback Brian Brady is an outstanding talent but, as the game against Tunkhannock showed, he cannot do it alone. Dallas must also get better production from its huge offensive line.

Defensively, Dallas didn't play that bad a game against the Tigers. Sherman got nearly 100 of his 145 rushing yards on two carries. But they'll have to stop the big play if they're going to beat the Crusaders.

PREDICTION: Although they've played three games, it's been awhile since I've seen a Dallas team that has had this many question marks this late in the season. This team is only going to get better as the season goes on. But until that happens, Jackson is going to have to hope players like Brady, Greg Nazdan, Marty Straigis and Rich Butcofski rise to the occasion. If this game were being played five weeks from now, it would be a different story. But for now, the Crusaders have a little too much for the Mountaineers. **COUGHLIN 21 - DALLAS 15.**

Sports shorts

Strikers' season starts Oct. 5

The Noxen Strikers will start its 1993-1994 Season, Tuesday, Oct. 5 at the Old Noxen School.

Practice will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. until November, then it will be 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Please pre-register by calling the following: Ron Swingle, 298-2212; John Coussock, 477-2288; or Perry Coolbaugh, 333-5133.

This year registration will be limited.

Those in fall sports will only be expected to make practice when they can until their fall sports are over, but should register.

Knight boosters meet Thursday

The Lake-Lehman Football Booster Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 23, at Grotto Pizza, Harveys Lake. Coach Gorgone will show the film of the Riverside game. All interested parents and friends of football players and football cheerleaders are invited to attend.

BMT wrestlers register September 28

Back Mountain Wrestling Club will hold registration Tuesday, September 28 between 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. at the Dallas Middle School.