



Long-time volleyball official John Shields was found dead in his Trucksville home on Feb. 8. He was 57 years old.

## Volleyball community will miss Shields

Trucksville's John Shields supported the sport at every level.

By TOM ROBINSON  
For the Dallas Post

The Wyoming Valley Chapter of Volleyball Officials will gather soon to prepare for the upcoming high school boys season.

It will do so without one of its charter members and its leader of nearly a quarter century following the loss of John Shields, 57, who was found dead in his Trucksville home on Feb. 8.

"We have a mandatory meeting

scheduled the 14th of March," said chapter secretary/treasurer Kathy Goeringer. "I'm not sure what we're going to do, but somehow we're going to get through it."

Shields was remembered at a memorial service at Kniffen O'Malley Funeral Home in Wilkes-Barre on Feb. 23.

The volleyball community remembers him as a long-time referee, a former King's College head coach and someone who supported the sport of every level whenever possible. If there was a new volleyball event being started anywhere within driving distance, Shields could be expected to make an appearance, lending

his support in one form or another.

"He loved to be around the game," said North Pocono boys coach Jud Holdredge, a former Tunkhannock and University of Scranton coach and long-time college officiating partner of Shields. "If he got paid or he didn't, that was fine. He was there for the kids."

Shields became certified as a Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association volleyball official in 1974. He was there when the Wyoming Valley Conference and Wyoming Valley Chapter of Officials were formed a few years later and served as rules interpreter for the chapter

since 1990.

"He was the heart and soul of volleyball in northeastern Pennsylvania," Goeringer said. "His reach was not only here in District 2."

Shields could also be found working matches in the Lackawanna League, throughout the rural stretches of District 4 to the west and at regional colleges.

"Believe me, if I were a coach, I would want him to do my game," Goeringer said. "He was that good."

Shields worked many of the biggest matches, including District 2 tournaments throughout

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## Three out of four cage teams go on

Three out of four Back Mountain high school basketball teams advanced in the District 2 Class AAA playoffs with first-round victories this week.

Both Lake-Lehman teams and the Dallas girls won while the Dallas boys lost.

Tanner Englehart scored 20 points to lead the Dallas girls past Meyers, 65-48, Wednesday. Ashley Dunbar added 14 points.

Cayle Spencer scored 21 points Tuesday when the Lake-Lehman girls defeated West Scranton, 54-50. Emily Sutton added 12 points and Bethany Williams 11.

Pete Borum took over on the inside, scoring 17 of his 23

points in the second half to bring the Lake-Lehman boys back from a 13-point halftime deficit to a 44-40 victory over West Scranton Tuesday night.

Borum also grabbed 10 rebounds for the Black Knights, who trailed by as many as 16 points in the second quarter.

Freshman Suk Mathon had 16 points, 13 rebounds and five blocked shots in the season finale, but the Dallas boys fell to GAR, 69-31. GAR forced 20 turnovers in the second and third quarters on the way to a 64-16 lead early in the fourth quarter.

Dallas finished 3-20.

- Tom Robinson



BILL TARUTIS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

The Dallas bench erupts at the buzzer in the Wyoming Valley Conference Division 1 championship game after the Lady Mountaineers defeated Pittston Area, 74-44.

## DHS girls celebrate a HUGE upset

By TOM ROBINSON  
For the Dallas Post

Katy Comitz entered the Wyoming Valley Conference Division 1 girls basketball championship game on Feb. 15 with an essential defensive assignment.

The junior guard/forward was also expected to help out with rebounding on what had just become a smaller Dallas lineup.

Comitz handled both assignments just fine.

And she did so much more.

Comitz came off the bench to share scoring honors with Talia Szatkowski, producing a career-high 19 points to lead Dallas to a stunning 74-44 rout of Pittston Area, the team that had handed the Lady Mountaineers their only two division losses.

"I knew it was probably the most important game of the season," Comitz said. "In practice, we all worked really hard. We just pulled it all together and, in the end, it came out great."

Dallas coach Kelly Johnson liked what she saw from her team in general and Comitz in particular during the preparation for a rematch after the teams each went 12-2 in the division.

"We left practice with a very good feeling," Johnson said. "It was the kids, it was the coaches. There was just an energy when we left practice. We felt very good."

"... Katy was one of those at practice who you could tell how bad she wanted it."

Johnson turned to Comitz early, then stuck with her.

Just 4:40 into the game, Comitz entered play with the task of slowing down Mia Hopkins, the Monmouth University recruit who had five points to help the Lady Patriots to their 9-5 advantage.

By the time Comitz walked off the floor, her night complete, Dallas was up 71-42 with 1:16 left and celebrating a championship.

Hopkins, one of only three players to average more than 20 points in the WVC this season, managed just 12, even with the strong start.

With Tanner Englehart grabbing 12 rebounds, Szatkowski grabbing 10 and Comitz contributing six, Dallas held a 46-36 lead on the boards.

Then, there was the shooting. Comitz made all four of her shots from inside the arc and both of her free throws. She also hit half of her six 3-point attempts while scoring seven more points than her previous season-high.

"For the entire season, I've been working on my shot," Comitz said. "My Dad would take me to the gym, even before games."

"I had a good feeling we were going to do well and my shot was really on before the game."

Comitz had plenty of help. In fact, the number of options Dallas possessed was part of the difference with the championship on the line.

The Lady Mountaineers showed depth and balance at both ends of the floor. The depth helps fuel a relentless full-court press which, in turn, allows Dallas to speed up its offense.

"When you steal the ball once,

"I knew it was probably the most important game of the season."

Katy Comitz  
Dallas junior guard/forward

they start thinking twice about what they're doing," Szatkowski said.

Nobody provides more of that constant pressure than Szatkowski.

Whenever a ball winds up bouncing into open space – whether it be an errant pass or a loose rebound – Szatkowski is a good bet to wind up speeding into the space and winning the race to the ball. She wound up with 10 steals, helping Dallas force 31 turnovers.

"She's a tough competitor," Johnson said.

Szatkowski and Comitz were part of streaks in which Dallas scored at least 10 straight points in each of the last three quarters.

Comitz hit a 3-pointer and Szatkowski followed with a three-point play – off a blind, behind-the-head pass by Ashley Dunbar, who hustled to save the ball from bouncing off the end line – to start a 10-point, second-quarter streak that put Dallas ahead for the first time, 25-18.

That burst of 10 points came in a span of just 2:17.

Dallas went ahead to stay, 43-33, with 14 straight points in just 2:23 in the third quarter. Comitz also started this streak with a 3-pointer. She added another basket after Szatkowski made a steal

and took the ball the length of the floor before dishing off.

The Lady Mountaineers had just one challenge left.

Johnson wanted them to keep up the defensive pressure that had turned the game around while being more patient on offense to take time off the clock and move closer to victory.

The Mountaineers were nearly flawless, hitting eight of nine shots in the fourth quarter.

While outscoring Pittston Area, 45-11, over the game's final 15 minutes, Dallas put together one last streak.

Szatkowski had a pair of three-point plays and dished out two assists, one of them to Comitz, to lead a 13-point outburst in just 1:49 for a 63-39 lead with 4:13 left.

"Once you get the momentum, it's hard for us to slow down," Szatkowski said.

Englehart had 12 points, Dunbar had 11 points and six assists, Szatkowski also contributed five assists and Hiscox made four steals in the win.

Hopkins had 14 rebounds, six blocked shots and five assists, along with her team-high 12 points for Pittston Area.

Both teams advanced into the District 2 Class AAA playoffs where they had home games in the first round this week.



BILL TARUTIS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Dallas' Darik Johnson passes the ball in transition against GAR in the opening round of the boys District 2 Class 3A playoffs Tuesday night in Wilkes-Barre.

### SPORTS BRIEFS

#### Comedy Night Benefits Bombers

A Comedy Night at Wise Crackers Comedy Club (next to Genetti's in Wilkes-Barre) on Saturday, March 2 will benefit the Back Mountain Bombers.

Doors open at 8 p.m.; show starts at 9 p.m. Tickets are available at the door.

#### BMT Little League slates registration

Back Mountain Little League will hold final registration for baseball and soft-

ball players from 6 to 8 p.m. on Monday, March 4 at the Daddow-Isaacs American Legion, Route 415, Dallas.

All players who will be 5 years old prior to May 1 are eligible to play.

#### Little League meeting is March 4

Back Mountain Little League will hold a board meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 4 at the Daddow-Isaacs American Legion, Route 415, Dallas. A general meeting, open to the public, will be held at 8 p.m.