

# Coach's private-school comments were right on target

Let's get this straight right off: The magic is not in the believing. Not where Catholic Central is concerned.

For weeks, the football coach at Canton HS — Tim Baechler — has been bombarded by cheap shots for remarks he made after the Chiefs lost to CC in the state playoffs.

All sorts of things have been offered. Very few, however, have been in his defense.

And that bothers me. Because every public school football coach would agree with Baechler's assessment.

What Baechler said was no revelation. It was nothing that hadn't been said before.

Private schools do have an advantage. They can draw players from anywhere — even Canada, if so desired.

For example: Imagine Michigan State meeting UCLA for the NCAA basketball championship, but certain conditions exist. MSU can draw its players from this state or there, while UCLA can get its players from anywhere — including Michigan.

Who you going to bet on?

Before any CC alumni or coaches get all p.e.d at me, let me offer this: I have nothing against Tom Mach and the truly wonderful job his staff did this season. Nor do I disrespect their players.

Which means I am in agreement with Baechler. Cause that's what he said, both to me and in a letter he sent to Mach.

"I never said anything about them not working hard, and I



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never said anything about them recruiting." Baechler said. "There was no disrespect to them or to the Catholic Church. I wrote a letter to Tom Mach, a long letter, and I said the

same thing. I totally respect the guy? What Baechler did say was that CC should win because it can do things most public schools can't. Indeed, it's what those public schools like Canton can't do that helps make CC so successful.

If you're the parent of an outstanding athlete who will be a star in football, what would you do in this situation: Enroll him at CC, with all of its tradition, or stay in the Plymouth-Canton school district, where he could end up at any of three schools — one of which won't even have a varsity program for another two years?

Is that sour grapes? No, that's reality. And that's what Baechler was talking about when he said CC should win every year. Canton HS players all live in Plymouth or Canton; less than half of CC's athletes reside in Redford.

The playing field isn't equal, and it won't be unless public school districts start doing what Farmington and Detroit have done with open enrollment. Do you think John

Herrington won all those state titles at Farmington Harrison by relying on the luck of the draw, like they do in Plymouth-Canton?

This is not an accusation that CC recruits. It doesn't need to, really. Like Herrington at Harrison, dad want their sons to play football for Mach at CC.

The Shamrocks draw enough good athletes to compete with anyone, and Mach and his staff make sure they fulfill their potential. They may not have loads and loads of NCAA Division I talent, but they have more good talent than anyone else.

Success breeds success. Given a choice between a sure thing and an I dunno, where would you send your kid?

"I didn't mean to hurt any

feelings or disrespect anybody," Baechler said, speaking publicly for the first time since his outburst after Canton lost to CC. "And I never, ever said I didn't respect their players or their coaches. I said I didn't respect their state titles because they're competing on a different playing field."

It's true. Everyone knows it. Both coaching staffs are limited to the students that walk through their doors; it's just that CC's doors are open to everyone. Canton's are open to those who live in Plymouth or Canton, and whoever draws a red chip.

Here's something else to consider. Of the 16 teams that played for state titles this fall in football, five were from private schools. Three of those won

championships (two Catholic schools, Gaylor St. Mary and Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes, played each other for the Division 8 crown). Another four private schools reached the semifinal round before being eliminated.

Is that fair? No. But that's the way it is. What Baechler said was logical. It was accurate. And it was truthful. Perhaps his timing could have been better, but when asked if his team was intimidated by the CC tradition a few minutes after losing, well, he has a right to be a bit defensive.

We can resolve all of this quite simply, you know.

As Let kids go to whatever school they want to, anywhere in the state;

B: Restrict private schools to recruiting — sorry, I mean drawing — students from a five-mile radius of their present location.

I don't expect either one to be adopted. I mean, if either was, what would the Catholic League schools do?

One last thing. For years, I have insisted on listing the city where Catholic Central is located (it's Redford, if you didn't know) in its first reference in a story, as I do with any other school. Now I realize that was unnecessary.

CC has no boundaries.

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## Veteran bowler, 99, honored at Old Timers tournament in Allen Park

The 72nd Annual Old Timers Bowling Tournament held Nov. 30 at Thunderbowl Lanes in Allen Park, was a huge success as usual, thanks primarily to the efforts of John

Chmelko Sr. and John Chmelko Jr. Also, event directors worked tirelessly to keep the event running smoothly and resulting in a full house of bowling participants again this year.

The opening ceremonies included the introduction of hall-of-famers, including Lew

Saad, who was recognized for his longtime contributions and support.

At 99, Saad is the oldest living sanctioned American Bowling Congress bowler in the state.

Meanwhile, the press squad consisted of myself, Jim Jimmerson, Larry Paladino, Darrin Hill and our rookie, Perry Farrell.

Paladino, this year's president of the Old Timers, turned over the gavel of the office to Ted Kress of Redford, who will serve in the same capacity for the coming year.

Mark Hickok of Farmington Hills was the defending champion, but was unable to repeat.

Top honors went to overall champion Bob Chamberlain with a 779 series.

Hall-of-Famer Tony Lindemann took first in the 80-and-up division followed by Harold Porter and Charles Appligan.

Gene Rice earned the title in the 75-79 group, thanks mainly to a 300 game which he rolled in the opening set. He started the day with 15 consecutive strikes and finished with 661.

Gabe Fazekas was runner-up with 649 and Milton Paston rolled into third place with 636.

The 70-72 division was captured by Chester Oleszkowicz with 694, followed by Jerry Cole at 690 and Tony Ballarta with 656.

In the 65-69 group, it was Tony Lalicano taking first with 728. Joe Fitzsimmons of Waterford was second with 701 and Bob Arnold placed third with 671.

The 60-64 age division was won by Roman Seniv of Imlay City with 751, including a 279 game. Jim Schaeffer of Farmington Hills took second with 719 and Bob Hayes third was with 698.

In the 50-59, Frederick Skora of Westland won with a 756 followed by Lee Snow of Wixom (741) and Ted West (726).

The under-50 title went to Paul Bohn of Trenton with a 780 series followed by Ed Towns at 767 and Greg Cohen of Livonia with 725.

The victor in each division received a commemorative wrist watch, made specifically for the Old Timers event.

A buffet dinner was followed by the awards presentations led by past president George Zainea, who presented Saad with a plaque.

Random ramblings: Let's back up a little and talk about bowlers who throw a backup ball (reverse curve).

This type of delivery is more common among women bowlers as it is conducive to the bone structure of the hand.

To initiate a hooking ball (right-handed), the bowler imparts a counter-clockwise turn as he or she releases the ball.

The backup is thrown the opposite way, the wrist and hand rotating clockwise at release.

I have discussed this delivery with many coaches and pro shop operators.

"It is better not to try and change somebody's delivery style if they are more comfortable in doing it that way," said Tom Relich of the Strike Force Shop at Oak Lanes. "They can learn to get the maximum results by playing the left-handers line."

One of my own teammates, Cathy Andrews, throws a nice backup ball where she has learned to adjust her starting position to the lane conditions by moving right or left on the approach.

An All-Star women, Robin Barker of Westland, is able to generate a lot of striking power with her "scroogie" delivery, while Jimmerson is able to convert some tough spare combinations by throwing a reverse curve, even though his regular shot is a nice strong hook.

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