

# Girls Basketball? Interesting But...

By R.T. THOMPSON

There is a hue and cry in many sections of the areas covered by the Observer Newspapers — which we prefer to call Observerland — to revive varsity girls competition in the high schools.

It wasn't so many years ago that most of the schools had girls varsity basketball, baseball and track teams, and many supported field hockey in the fall as a varsity sport.

Then came the demand to drop girls athletics with the dissenters claiming that it damaged the health of the participants — too much competition, the nervousness caused by extreme tension, playing too hard when not in top physical condition, players fainting on basketball courts — and they succeeded in having girls sports eliminated from the school programs.

FOR MANY YEARS girls attending high school have competed in intramural events under the auspices of the Girls Athletic Association.

This has involved some games between schools on an unofficial basis — GAA vs. GAA. But with the new emphasis on physical fitness more and more parents are pressing for a return to varsity sports for the girls.

It isn't entirely clear just what the true motive is, but in many instances we would believe that the parents have a house full of girls and no boys. Thus, why not have varsity sports for the girls just the same as for boys? We all pay the same taxes to send our children to school. And women want equal rights.

Be that as it may, we were invited to attend a varsity girls basketball game between Plymouth and Redford Union on the PHS court recently.

This was to be a real treat — a chance to see the difference between basketball played by girls today contrasted to that of the 1930s when we covered county tournaments and even national champions in Ohio.

THERE WAS tremendous stress on girls sports in north-

eastern Ohio at that time, and one could sit back and enjoy a basketball game even though in the times when girls played half court and one-third court contests.

It was when there were such odd positions as center-guard, center, forward-guard and forward. The forwards and forward-guards played only in half of the court — three girls from each team — and the remaining three from each team played in the other half of the court.

So, we were prepared for something different at this game.

IN THE FIRST place, the girls now use modified boys rules, full court with five on each team.

Properly coached, properly conditioned and under proper supervision, the new game could be very interesting. It could be an added attraction each week as part of the varsity program with the boys team.

But after viewing the Plymouth-Redford Union contest, we would have to say that it will be a long time before girls basketball will gain the popularity it deserves unless changes are made.

It was an interesting contest; the girls from each team an excellent job. But after that is said, then one has to wonder what did take place.

The two officials, from some National Association, need a few lessons in public and press relations. Each had one goal when the game ended, to sign the scorebook with a score and then scout out of sight as quickly as possible.

As a result of this attitude, no one actually knows what the final score was. One of the referees very brusquely announced the score as 21-20 in favor of Redford Union. The scorebook showed a score of 23-19 and no protest was registered against it by anyone.

AS IT WAS, we kept a running account of the game, just as we do for all varsity basketball contests we cover.

Our running account showed

a score at one time of 17-12 in favor of Plymouth. So did the scoreboard. Then suddenly there was an argument at the scorers' table, and the referees ordered the score changed to 15-12.

Other than that, a play-by-play account had the final tally at 23-19, taking the two points away from Plymouth.

The Plymouth scorer, who sat at the end of the players' bench, was asked for a complete summary after the final whistle.

"Oh, I only keep score for the Plymouth team; I never mark down any points for the opposition; I don't even have their names," was the reply.

As we said earlier, the game was interesting, the girls played well — whoever they were — but we still don't know the score and probably never will.

THAT'S WHAT we wanted to ask the officials. We wanted to get the names and numbers of the players. We wanted to find out why two points were taken away. We wanted to know why the official book differed so much from a running, play-by-play account.

We didn't get the answer to any of the questions — the two Association officials had no intention of answering any questions, and they didn't. However, they did sign a scorebook with a score that we know wasn't correct. We hope the Association has some rules that ban such a thing.

It isn't that we're against varsity girls competition — it's just that we feel if there are going to be such contests, they should receive the same treatment as the boys varsity.

There weren't any cheerleaders, and the audience consisted of two sets of parents, a few uninterested Plymouth High students and members of the junior varsity teams.

That's not much interest when one considers all the phone calls received asking support for a movement to get the Board of Education to install girls varsity sports as part of the athletic program at Plymouth High.



TYPICAL SCENES at an afternoon girls varsity basketball game in Plymouth. (Upper Left) A Redford Union gal dribbles in for a two points. (Above) See nothing, do nothing, answer nothing is the attitude of National Association registered officials. (Left) The girls take to the sport just as well as the boys. This shot shows their intense interest—they like to win just like their main counterparts. (Observer photos by Harry Mauthe)



RELAXED GROUP — Instructor Ceci Orman keeps the atmosphere informal during the Creative Dramatics for Children Class.



KING OF THE BEASTS — Ward Kelman is the roaring lion.

SOME DUCK — Seven-year-old Mitzi Richardson says this is the way a duck waddles.

## This Class Has Lions, Ducks And Monsters

He's an Indian, a roaring lion and then a Sea Monster — all in the time span of an hour and a half.

The "he" isn't a quick change artist, but eight-year-old Ward Kelman, a budding actor.

The performances came during one of the weekly Creative Dramatics for Children sessions in the Farmington Community Center. Ward is one of 19 youngsters who spend an afternoon a week learning about the craft of acting and theater.

DURING A recent session, Ward was an Indian during a choral reading of "10 Little Indians." He was a roaring lion when he had his choice of what kind of animal he wanted to be.

The sea monster appeared during a puppet show made up and staged by Ward and two other class members.

What's the purpose of the classes?

Instructor Ceci Orman says the youngsters are taught "expression."

"I'm trying to have them

learn how to put the role of an actor across," explains Mrs. Orman whose acting talents are known to Farmington Players fans.

Mrs. Orman hopes to have the youngsters begin work on a play after this class.

WHEN THE age ranges from seven to 10 and the breakdown is 16 girls and three boys, the problems of teaching expression can be complex.

But then again it isn't. Consider the choices of animals made by the youngsters. The boys chose a lion, a snake and a wolf. On the other hand, the girls were chickens, ducks and dogs.

Mrs. Orman's classes could be described as an hour and a half of activity because there is constant movement and noise in the room.

On the other hand, that description could be called just another way of saying expression.

There's a new session of the course scheduled to begin April 7 in the Community Center. Many more sessions and Farmington will be filled with expressive children.

STORY: Sue Shaughnessy

PICTURES: Ralph Evert

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