

Drewitz Heads All-Observer Quintet

★ ★ ★ Five Brilliant Scorers On First Team ★ ★ ★

By George Maskin
Observer Sports Editor

Seldom have two players dominated a particular high school area in basketball as have Rick Drewitz of Garden City West and Paul White of Farmington during the now ending 1969-70 Observerland cage campaign.

Brilliant from the first tip-off last November, the two head the All-Observer team announced today.

These are selections based on the votes of coaches, players, writers and officials in the area.

And in every ballot, it was the same thing: "Start with Drewitz and then White."

Drewitz, who led Garden City West to its first perfect regular season in the school's history, unquestionably has to be the Observerland's "Player-of-the-Year."

He was voted All-Tri-Rivers League for the second year. He made the Free Press All-Suburban and All-Metropolitan teams. He's expected to be picked by the Detroit News on its All-Suburban team.

And, all signs now point to Drewitz not only gaining All-State acclaim, but he'll probably gain All American prep distinction, too.

But White wasn't too far behind and with Drewitz and White leading the way, they join Pat Cunningham of Plymouth, Paul Van Wagoner of Stevenson and Ken Kilikka in forming one of the most devastating All-Observer teams ever selected.

Here's a run-down on the five All-Observer players for 1969-70:

RICK DREWITZ

A standout on the basketball floor and the classroom as well. He's perhaps the most-sought after high school cager in Michigan this season. At least 30 major colleges, plus a flock of smaller ones have expressed an interest in him. Most offer full-ride scholarships, but the decision won't be made for a while.

Right now, the best indications are that it could be either the University of Michigan or the University of Kentucky. But it will likely be another school. Coach Chris Babler will sit with Rick and his family in making the final decision.

He's the second Drewitz to star on the West team. Brother Dwagene was a teammate last year when both finished with an identical total of 365 points, then a school record.

But Rick has smashed the mark this season hitting over 530 points for almost a 30-point average. His rebounds have been just a fraction under 20 per game.

"He's best under pressure," says Coach Babler. "When we have had troubles, Rick always has been there to pull us out. He never becomes ruffled by tense situations."

Adds Babler in discussing Drewitz, who's between an A-minus and B-plus student in the classroom:

"The kid has great speed, real good jumping ability and is as good a shot as anybody I've ever seen."

Just about everybody agrees, including the numerous college coaches who have flocked to game after game West has played...and mostly just to see Drewitz in action.

Drewitz himself is a modest young man. He carries all the honors that have come his way without anybody getting the impression: "There's a superstar who lets everybody know he's one."

PAUL VAN WAGONER

The story of Paul Van Wagoner would make for a first-class best seller. It shows what a young man, fighting physical obstacles could do.

He was only seven months old when he was stricken with polio. His right arm became limp. All the medical treatment by the best specialists never have been able to restore the arm to anywhere near normalcy. At best, he has two-tenths the normal use.

But still he's been on the varsity at Stevenson High for the last three seasons, coming up in the middle of his sophomore campaign. He's been a starter for the past two years.

The fact that his dad, George, coaches Stevenson has made no difference in the rise of Paul to a star. Or Paul's being selected to the All-Observer team.

"There's a kid (referring to Paul) who deserves All-Area honors," said two of the top coaches in the area...coaches whose teams

had played and lost to Stevenson.

When the All Inter-Lakes Conference team was selected two weeks ago, Van Wagoner was the choice of the league coaches and players...and neither Stevenson players, nor their coach, had a voice in the selection because nobody could vote for anybody on his own team.

A modest dad talks proudly of his son Paul's accomplishments, especially dad dad knows better than

anybody else (except Mrs. Van Wagoner) what this young man has experienced physically in his young life.

"The doctors honestly are amazed with what Paul has done in basketball," says Coach Van Wagoner. "They think a boy, affected the way he has been, would never be able to play the game...and yet he is a star."

Paul averaged 15 points during the past season as he helped Stevenson to another league title and into the district finals.

But his biggest asset to the team was the job of ball handling he has turned in.

"He's great at setting up his teammates," said his father-coach. "Paul has a knack for driving in, then spotting the open man and passing off to him for a basket."

Paul also has done well on defense.

He's almost an A-minus student and has been accepted to enter Michigan State next fall and study veterinary medicine.

He has a brother, Bruce, playing prep basketball, but dad won't have Bruce's services. Bruce attends Churchill High.

PAT CUNNINGHAM

The floor leader of the Rocks, who shared the Suburban Six League championship with Bentley and swept into the finals of the district before losing to Farmington - when Cunningham was handicapped by an injury.

Finished his second year

on the varsity. Was pretty much a ball handler and floor leader under Coach Dick Bearup's strategy last season.

This year, Cunningham took over as a scorer and wound up with an average of 18.4 points. He also topped the team in assists with eight per game.

"He was the key to our fast break, the guy who got the ball out there," said Coach Bearup.

"Pat is the kind of player every team needs," added

his coach, "not only giving you the leadership a team requires on the floor, but also starting in every aspect of the game."

KEN KILIKKA

Like the others on this Observer team, Pat is a star student, too. He has a 3.5-point scholastic average (four is perfect). Pat has been accepted by three colleges - Western, Albion and Alma. He'll naturally decide which one he'll enter.

"Overall, Pat is one of the finest athletes we have had around the school in a long time," Bearup. "His play and attitude have set the pace for the younger boys on this year's team."

Pat also plays the infield on the Rocks' baseball team on which he'll be the captain this spring.

PAUL WHITE

He came up and made the Farmington JV team as a sophomore. Wound up the season with a 30-point average. Was All-League, All-Suburban second team in the Free Press selections.

Talking about White, Farmington Coach Ray Boyles said: "He has been a tremendous boy. Never a harder worker around this school. Why we frequently had to kick him out of the gym so he'd go home and eat. But then he'd come back in the evening to practice more."

"Paul never missed a practice. He never was late. He never knew what it was to take a day off."

"He is an excellent passer. He can pass off with the best and frequently does. I've encouraged him to shoot

more and more because he's our big man."

In the two district games, Paul averaged 41.5 points.

Scored at 49% of his shots from the field and was an 87% man during the season from the foul line. He led Oakland County in schoolboy scoring this season.

KEN KILIKKA

Spent one year on the North Farmington JV team, a regular the last two years. Scored at 49% of his shots from the field and was an 87% man during the season from the foul line. He led Oakland County in schoolboy scoring this season.

Coached by Dick Wilson, who declared:

"Ken has fine moves. He also possesses good agility and good spring. And he's not a bad rebounder either. Kilikka also did an excellent job on defense and picked up opponents and blocked a great many shots."

Wilson said that Kilikka was "the man we went to" when North Farmington needed a big basket. "And he usually produced in a clutch."

Kilikka hit on 57% of his shots from the field and 74% of his tries from the charity line.

His brother Al attended Farmington High, where he played basketball. Now Al is a junior at the University of Michigan, where sister Carolyn is a senior.

Ken has been accepted at Michigan and also at two or three other colleges, but he thinks he may attend little Kenyon College in Ohio.

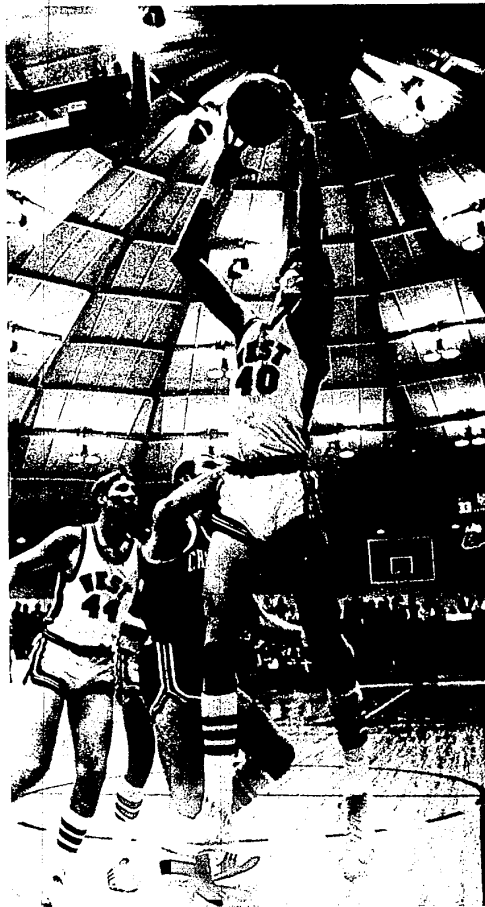
"I like a small college. It's beautiful down there at Kenyon," he said.

Al will play golf for North Farmington this spring before finishing his prep career.

★ Meet Observerland's Brightest Stars ★



PAT CUNNINGHAM
Plymouth



West's Rick Drewitz hailed as "player of year"



KEN KILIKKA
North Farmington



PAUL WHITE
Farmington



PAUL VAN WAGONER
Livonia - Stevenson

West's Chris Babler Is 'Coach Of Year'

Runnerup the first year, district champs the next two.

So needs the coaching record of Chris Babler at Garden City West High since he took over the reins of the school's basketball team.

Now he's in the midst of his finest season.



CHRIS BABLER
Garden City West

Garden City completed its first perfect regular season, winning 16 straight.

In doing so, West became the first Tri Rivers League champ to take the title without losing a single game.

It was West again in last week's district title at Franklin and now West seeks more honors in the Class A regionals at Franklin.

THE BRILLIANCE of his West team also has won for Babler the 1969-70 Observer Coach-of-the-Year honor.

Overall, this is his 10th year of coaching. He was at Laingsburg High in Michigan for four years, then at the Boys Commonwealth for two before coming to Garden City West as an assistant.

His duties, in addition to coaching basketball, include working in special services at the school. Many of his students are mentally handicapped.

Babler could field his own

family basketball team if he wished.

THREE ARE six children in the Babler household and a rivalry exists. That's because daughters

Debra, 17, and Cheryl, 15, both attend John Glenn High and dad didn't make either very happy when his team beat Glenn earlier in the season.

"Heck, they told me I wasn't fair," Babler laughed.

But now all the Bablers, including Debra and Cheryl are rooting for West. The others are Chris, 11; Eric, 9; Jeff, 7, and Ann, 5, and, of course, the real boss of the family, Mrs. Babler.

All-Area Cage Choices

ALL - AREA TEAM

| PLAYER | SCHOOL | AGE | HT. | WT. | CLASS |
|------------------|------------------|-----|---------|-----|--------|
| Rick Drewitz | Garden City West | 18 | 6-7 1/2 | 185 | Senior |
| Paul Van Wagoner | Stevenson | 18 | 6-0 | 155 | Senior |
| Ken Kilikka | North Farmington | 18 | 6-5 | 175 | Senior |
| Paul White | Farmington | 17 | 6-0 | 160 | Senior |
| Pat Cunningham | Plymouth | 17 | 5-11 | 160 | Senior |

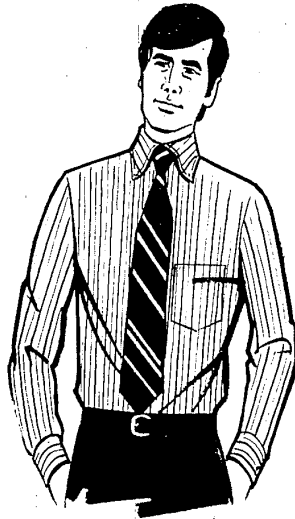
SECOND TEAM

Dave Urban (St. Agatha)
Steve Brown (John Glenn)
Tom Guilfoyle (Bentley)
Mike Harj (Sorrors)
Ted Exarhos, (Stevenson)

THIRD TEAM

Randy Cleveland (Farmington)
Dennis Leszczynski (G.C. West)
Drew Mahalic (N. Farmington)
Dave Jackson (G.C. East)
Ray Sobocinski (B. Borgess)

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