

Sports

Chris McCosky, Brad Emons editors/591-2312

Thursday, April 24, 1986 O&E

(F)10



C.J. Risak

Not all changes are for the better

RULES, RULES, RULES. Can't live with them and can't live without them. Sports are particularly vulnerable to this paradox. Where else are rules so strictly, so visibly defined?

But it's never enough. People, you see, share a common deficiency. They are never satisfied.

They constantly ficker with long-established standards. Some firmly believe their suggestions for change are for the good of the game; others will recite such rhetoric, but their true incentive, hidden and unspoken, is how the change will benefit them.

Change is good? It reflects a changing society? It's evolution?

Perhaps. But like the rules sometimes are, change isn't always right. It doesn't always mean improvement.

Three changes in sports: One is already on the books, one is currently under strong consideration, a third is in its infancy.

IN THE BOOKS is the NCAA rule regarding three-point field goals in basketball. The college rule awards three points for any shot made from behind an arc 19 feet, nine inches from the basket.

Coaches within the Observer & Eccentric coverage area were split on the change — two in favor (Schoolcraft College coach Rocky Watkins and Orchard Lake St. Mary's coach Tim Domke), and two against (Oakland University coach Greg Kampe and Oakland Community College coach Lynn Reed).

The reasoning of each coach was, well, reasonable. But understand, each also had his own, personal incentive. OU's Kampe, for example, has worked to build a big, strong team capable of dominating in the paint. Now that his goal is within reach, the change is being taken away from the big men and given to the jump shooter.

OLSM and SC are known for strong perimeter shooting. Getting three points for their jumpers instead of two will greatly enhance their victory chances.

LOST IN THE argument is recruiting. Big, strong players are still in demand, but their value has dipped slightly. And the guards most teams sought before were at their best driving to the hoop. No more. Why drive when a 23-foot shot will earn three?

Note, too, why a player like North Farmington's Rick Anderson remained unsigned for so long. Before the change, Anderson was borderline Division I. But his strengths — namely, 6-foot-5 height coupled with a great outside shot — increased his value. Eastern Michigan finally won a draw-out battle for Anderson, beating out Kent State, Bowling Green and Western Michigan.

One point all four local coaches did agree on, and I with them: The three-point line is much too close. Moving it back to 21 feet would be more reasonable. There's going to be a lot of Spud Webb-type heroes next year, 5-7 guys hitting from less than 20 feet.

Defenses will suffer, too, and that's a shame. No one can afford to play a zone with a three-point shot available. My feeling is the change takes away part of the attraction of college basketball. What separated the NCAA game from the pros was defense.

CHANGE NO. 2: Look for the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) to adopt a revised football playoff format in the next two weeks. The one drawing most favorable attention would keep the expanded version (16 teams per class, instead of eight), with the ninth game as the first round of playoffs.

As you may recall, both last year and this year the calendar had an extra week in the season, so an extra week of playoffs could be added without altering the regular season or the Saturday-after-Thanksgiving date for the finals. That changes in 1987.

The MHSAA has to make a decision for 1987, and the one favored by their playoff committee is fine. The alternatives were opening the season a week earlier — but that's before Labor Day and offtimes prior to the start of school — or going back to the eight-team format.

THE PLAN endorsed by the playoff committee would have teams qualify for the state playoffs after eight games. Whoever they scheduled as their ninth-game opponents would then play each other.

One problem with this plan is its interference with the playoff formats for the Catholic League and Western Lakes Activities Association, which normally play their championships on the ninth week. That can be circumvented by opening league play a week earlier and eliminating an early-season non-league opponent.

I like this change. And in an MHSAA survey of the schools that participated in the expanded playoffs last year, the consensus was strongly (roughly two-to-one) in favor of keeping the 16-team-per-class format.

CHANGE NO. 3: OK, so there isn't a major clamoring among state high school baseball coaches to follow the Catholic League's example and switch to a 3-2 rule. I think there should be.

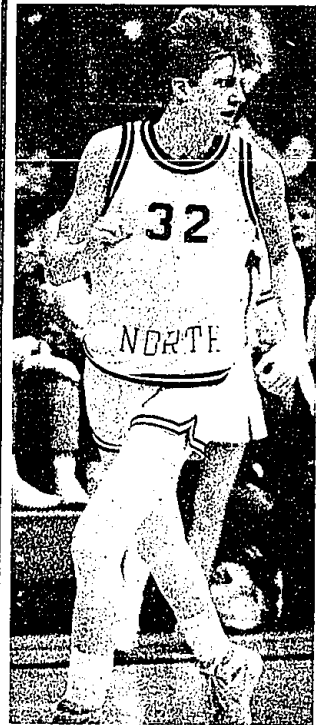
Arguments against range from I just don't like it — the rule allows three balls for a walk and two strikes for a strikeout — to that it wouldn't make any difference.

I have to believe it would. Games certainly would be shorter, and in Michigan's unpredictable weather that would be a blessing. It would be particularly beneficial in after-school double-headers, where darkness sometimes intervenes.

I think the number of walks would decrease, too. Batters would have to be more aggressive.

BUT THE GREATEST benefit would be to the pitchers.

A 3-2 rule would save pitches, which in turn would reduce the strain on young arms. It's something worth considering.



RANDY BOSTON/staff photographer

Rick Anderson has decided to attend Eastern Michigan University next fall. The North Farmington senior chose EMU over Western Michigan, Kent State and Bowling Green.

'I feel very lucky to have been in the position I was in — having a choice between schools. To have four schools interested in me, I mean, a lot of guys don't get anyone looking at them. I'm grateful, but I'm also very relieved it's over.'

— Rick Anderson
Ypsilanti-bound

'I'm a Huron'

North Farmington's Anderson selects Eastern over 3 others

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

With one quick, short sentence Rick Anderson removed a tremendous weight off his shoulders and made another man very happy.

"Coach, I'm a Huron."

That was all it took for Anderson, the two-time All-Area basketball star from North Farmington, to make Eastern Michigan University basketball coach Ben Braun's day.

Anderson, the most sought-after basketball player in Observerland, was caught in the middle of an intense but very clear recruiting war between Eastern, Western Michigan, Kent State and Bowling Green — all NCAA Division I Mid-American Conference schools.

"Oh, man, we're very happy," said Braun, who became EMU's head coach on an interim basis after Jim Boyce resigned midway through last season. Braun was given the job outright last month.

"I don't think I'm going out on a limb by saying this: Rick Anderson has the most potential of anyone we've signed, and we've signed some good recruits," he said. "He's a good shooter with tremendous range who can pass the ball. We especially like the fact that he's a team-oriented player. We're impressed with so many things about Rick, you could write a book."

— EMU coach
Ben Braun

'I don't think I'm going out on a limb by saying this: Rick Anderson has the most potential of anyone we've signed, and we've signed some good recruits. He's a good shooter with tremendous range who can pass the ball. We especially like the fact that he's a team-oriented player. We're impressed with so many things about Rick, you could write a book.'

The social thing, well, I just figure that wherever you go it's up to you to get as much out of it as you can. If I want to have fun, I will."

SO THAT left it up to the basketball programs to win or lose Anderson.

"Basically, I was looking at what type of kids were in the program and what kind were coming in and what kind of coach was there. I figured that this was going to be my family for the next four years; I'll be basically living with those 12 or 15 guys for the next four years."

Anderson hit it off immediately with both the current Huron players and the incoming freshmen.

"Our players took to Rick right away," Braun said. "I've seen many situations where current players shy away from recruits, but these guys really warmed up to Rick."

The two things, though, that may have iced Anderson's decision were the hiring of Braun and the three other EMU recruits.

"When coach Braun got the job, that really helped," Anderson said. "He was the one who recruited me, he was at just about all my games. I really respect him. He's a terrific guy, the kind of guy I could play for."

AND WHEN Braun signed Brad Soucie out of Allen Park Inter City

THE BIDDING for Anderson intensified after the NCAA instituted a three-point shot rule. Anderson is 6-5 with deadly long-range shooting accuracy.

"With his size advantage, he'll be able to shoot over the smaller guards. And his range, he's a zone-buster. He proved that last year," Braun said.

But it is not likely that Anderson will step right into a starting role at Eastern. Braun graduated just one starter off last year's squad-point guard Percy Cooper.

"How much Rick plays next year is not up to me," Braun said. "I always believe that the players decide how much they play. Strength will be his biggest adjustment. He'll have to improve his strength. But with his work ethic, he should not have a problem making the adjustment."

Anderson will be playing behind two standout MAC players next year in Mike McCaskill (Southfield) and Lewis Scott (Bishop Borgess) — both wing players in Braun's offensive system.

"Those two (Scott and McCaskill) will be among the top players in the league next year. Playing against those guys in practice can only make Rick that much better," Braun said.

OU sports

OU recruits Alaskan star

The bigger, the better — that's the strategy in Oakland University basketball coach Greg Kampe's current recruiting session.

The Pioneers were victimized during Kampe's first two years as coach because of their lack of size. That shouldn't be a problem in the next few years.

Joining a class that already includes players 6-foot-6, 6-4 and 6-3 will be 6-8, 240-pound Skip Townsend, it was announced Tuesday.

Townsend starred at Anchorage Bartlett High School in Alaska. He helped lead Bartlett to the state championship, and was selected to the all-state tournament team. As a senior, Townsend averaged 12.7 points, 7.2 rebounds and three blocks, and connected on 52 percent of his floor shots.

Townsend caught Kampe's eye at several summer basketball camps. He visited OU and, later, verbally committed. School officials had been waiting to receive his national letter of intent in the mail.

OU WOMEN'S COACH Bob Taylor has also been busy. Taylor, who recently was selected to succeed Sue Kruszewski, has received commitments from a pair of Class D all-stars — Hastings' forward Amy Atkinson and Troy Zion Christian guard Dawn Lichty.

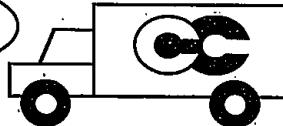
Atkinson, 5-9, averaged 19.2 points, 10 rebounds, four assists and four steals for Hastings, which reached the state quarterfinals before finishing 19-4. She was an all-state selection in both her junior and senior seasons.

Lichty, 5-6, was recruited by Kruszewski and had verbally committed before the coaching change. After speaking with Taylor, Lichty decided to remain with OU.

— C.J. Risak

Truck Load Sale!!

Savings
up to
80%



Farmington Hills
Store Only!!

If you've been looking for those hard to find bargains for your personal computer, come to Computer Connection in Farmington Hills this Thursday, Friday and Saturday and SAVE a bundle on names like-

MICROSOFT.

MONOGRAM

Lotus



Thoughtware

EPSON

INFOCOM

Software from

Peachtree Software

ASHTON-TATE

We'll put you in control.

3 Days Only!! - Quantities limited



COMPUTER CONNECTION

Holt
2485 N Cedar
(517)694-4594

Farmington Hills
38437 Grand River
(313)477-4470

Plymouth
44473 Ann Arbor Road
(313)455-2983