

Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

What if they threw a social spectacle and a football game that was just "ok" broke out?

As a first ballot hall of fame lover of the game of football, I was really surprised at how disinterested I was in the game itself.

Dorito's commercial with Chance the Rapper? Cool. Another three and out by the Rams? Not so much.

To be honest, I think my lack of interest had more to do with the cast of characters than the lack of offense.

The perception was that the Rams were only there because of a blown pass interference call that cost the Saints the NFC championship game. As for their opponents, the general feeling around most of the US is that the Patriots feature Volde-mort at quarterback, being coached by Sauron.

It's funny how so many of us fall into the same trap. Why do we hate New England? As a society who supposedly venerates excellence, we sure seem to despise most of the sustained examples of it that sport provides.

Dynastic Yankees teams of the 90's? Hated them. Celtics with Bird and McHale? Ditto. Michigan & THE Ohio State University? Same.

And it's not just me. This year's college football championship game between Clemson and Alabama didn't even sell out. Of course, part of that was due to the fact that it was played on the

west coast, when everyone knew the combatants were most likely going to be coming out of the southeastern part of the country.

Speaking of despicable excellence, how many of us hate Crimson Tide football? Even with monstrous turnover in their players and coaching staff, they continue to be the team to beat, and most of America outside a few transplants and wagon jumpers can't stand them. From Saban's smug autocracy to the gazillion dollar football only facility, they make us grind our teeth.

Strangely, outside of a few hundred thousand Gamecocks fans, Clemson doesn't seem to be met with the same disdain, even though they've split the last four national titles with the Crimson Tide. You can bet that if they win another title or two, people will begin to hate them like they hate the Andy Warhol Burger King commercial.

Call it the green monster of envy. Call it jealousy. You can call it whatever you want, but it's a part of our national fabric to hate on those who are most successful. Duke basketball and LeBron James earn our ire, along with the Patriots. Locally, many of us dislike a certain black and yellow clad high school football team that we share a county with. Many otherwise rational buddies of mine wear their hatred for the team with the birds on the bats like a

scarlet letter. It must reach to the big league level, right? Why else, other than a pang of jealousy, or perhaps worry that the team along the Mississippi got better during the off-season, would a handsome, talented millionaire player to go out of his way to throw shade, not just at the team, but at the whole city and region. It makes about as much sense as Harrison Ford giving his dog an Alexa.

Maybe that's the key. All this irrational hatred can foment interest when it begins to wane. How many times do we watch those we hate with a great desire to see them fail? When they succeed, it's because they cheated, obviously. When they fail, it's because they finally got their richly deserved comeuppance. With all this being said, I'm going to try to appreciate excellence in sport. I appreciate excellence in everything else around me. Even Adam Levine's ripped physique. So, just for a moment, I'm going to see the New England and Alabamas of the sporting world for what they are, tributes to the hard work and dedication it takes get to the top and stay there. But not local high school football. No matter how good they've been or for how long, it's genetically imprinted in me to not like the team to the west. If that's a character flaw, it's one that I'm willing to live with.

WEEKLY SPORTS WRAP-UP

Girls' basketball
Fall to Titans
Kyleigh Block's nine points led VGH, but the Blue Devils fell to Tri-County 55-25 on January 28.

Clean Streaks
Kyleigh Block tallied 23 points and reigning News-Gazette player of the week Aliyah Holloman added 21 as the Blue Devils defeated Martinsville 58-25 on January 31.

Boys' basketball
Crowded by Tribe
Jared Stevens hit three 3-pointers on his way to a 19 point night and dished out 8 assists, but VGH dropped a 71-59 decision to Judah

Christian on January 31. Will Wilson had 15 points and 12 rebounds for the Hawks.

Cage Panthers
Stevens was the only double digit scorer as the Hawks won a 63-51 road contest over Oblong on February 1. Jake Eversole and Will Wilson added 9 points, and Logan Nohren pitched in with 8. Nohren ran down 10 rebounds to lead the Hawks on the glass, and Eversole pilfered 5 steals and Stevens swiped 4 to lead the team defensively.

Dance
The Devilettes and Junior Devilettes made the most of their final regional competi-

tions, winning the Class A and junior high hip hop categories at the Tuscola regional competition on February 2. Both squads will be competing in their final performances of the year at the IDTA state finals in Springfield on February 9. Taylor Risken's solo routine earned a 5th place finish, and both she and Alexis Vandeventer qualified their solo performances for the IDTA state finals on February 8. Additionally, junior Devilette Olivia Jones and Devilette Sara Stutz earned "Rising Star" awards for their outstanding contributions to the team's dance efforts.

Devilettes Bring Home First Place in Final Regional Competition of Year



Senior Night Honors: Girls Basketball



Senior basketball players; Sophia Wegeng, Ashley Fulk, and MoKaylee Knell and their parents. Photo courtesy VG School.

Senior Spotlight



influence in your life? How?

My biggest influence has been my Grandma Debbie. She has always been there for me and taught me how to put others before myself.

2. What is your favorite restaurant, and what are you ordering?

My favorite restaurant would have to be Olive Garden and I would order Chicken Alfredo, but probably won't finish it because I'll be full from the multiple breadsticks and bowls of salad.

3. Who do you HAVE to see in concert?

I would love to see the band PrettyMuch in concert.

4. What is your dream career?

My dream career is to be a Forensic Pathologist.

5. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I see myself in 10 years, pos-



sibly still in college, living on my own with an Australian Shepherd.

HOW THEY'RE DOING

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2018-19 VILLA GROVE/HERITAGE HAWKS				
BOYS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE				record
Nov 19-24	@CGB tourney	(3rd)		3-1
Nov 27	@ Uni High	W 70-32		4-1
Nov 30	@ Schlarman	W 62-38		5-1
Dec 04	Westville	W 67-37		6-1
Dec 08	@ Sullivan OV	W 67-30		7-1
Dec 11	Tuscola	L 48-52		7-2
Dec 14	@ Arthur OC	W 74-60		8-2
Dec 18	@ STM	L 55-76		8-3
Dec 27-29	BSN Tourney	CHAMPS		13-3
Jan 04	LSA	L 62-64		13-4
Jan 08	@ SJO	L 52-58		13-5
Jan 11	Cerro Gordo	W 64-43		14-5
Jan 15	Chrisman	W 63-29		15-5
Jan 19-26	@ LOVC tourney	3rd place		17-6
Jan 31	@ Judah	L 59-71		17-7
Feb 01	@ Oblong	W 63-51		18-7
Feb 05	Tri-County			
Feb 08	Hut-Pal			
Feb 09	Arcola			
Feb 12	@ Cumberland			
Feb 15	Martinsville			
Feb 18-22	@ IHSA regionals			

HEAD COACH Corey White

2018-19 VILLA GROVE/HERITAGE Blue Devils				
GIRLS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE				record
Nov 11-16	@Falcon/Bunny Classic	(2nd)		3-1
Nov 20	Tuscola	L 35-39		3-2
Nov 26	@ Westville	W 62-36		4-2
Nov 27	Salt Fork	W 55-49		5-2
Nov 29	Uni High	W 60-32		6-2
Dec 03	@ Judah	W 59-45		7-2
Dec 05	ALAH	W 58-47		8-2
Dec 11	@ Unithy	W 47-39		9-2
Dec 13	Cerro Gordo	W 65-41		10-2
Dec 27-29	@ Bismrk trny	4th Place		12-5
Jan 03	Arcola	W 56-29		13-5
Jan 08	@ Chrisman	W 65-36		14-5
Jan 10	@ Hut-Pal	W 56-25		15-5
Jan 12-19	@ LOVC trny	3rd Place		17-6
Jan 21	@ Cbrlnd	W 48-26		18-6
Jan 22	@ GRF	W 55-16		19-6
Jan 24	Oblong	W 57-33		20-6
Jan 28	Tri County	L 25-55		20-7
Jan 31	@ M'ville	W 58-25		21-7
Feb 04-08	@ IHSA Regional			

HEAD COACH Dan Sappenfield

2018-19 Villa Grove Devilettes Schedule		
Dec 15	Villa Grove Competition	1st in IDTA
Jan 05	Charleston Competition	2nd in IDTA
Jan 12	Clinton Competition	postponed
Jan 19	IHSA Sectionals	1st place
Jan 25-26	IHSA State Finals	12th place
Feb 02	Tuscola Competition	1st in IDTA
Feb 09	IDTA State Finals	

HEAD COACH Sarah Bouton

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