

Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

It's been a while since I've written a 'stream of conscience' column, but without any interviewees this week, I think it might be time to do so.

Football in Texas

Unfortunately, I had to travel to Texas for a funeral last week, but as I drove through the Texas countryside, I couldn't help but notice the size of the football stadiums. One in particular that stands out? Farmersville, TX, home of the Farmers. According to Wikipedia, the town population is 3301. The stadium? Well it seats about 5000. With turf instead of grass. And a clubhouse that would be the envy of most Division III schools in these parts. We were staying in Wylie, population 75000, and their stadium was a thing of beauty, seating 10000 with all the bells and whistles. Pirate stadium, as it's called, didn't dent the top twenty list for Texas high school facilities, which surprised me almost as much as the fact that there is a top twenty list for high school football stadiums.

The Pirates team, according to their web site, got their act together after a 0-4 start to finish 5-5, with a loss in the first round of the playoffs. It's been written that the two biggest sports in Texas are football and spring football, and judging from the facilities, it's probably true. Football is definitely king in Texas, and I hope that the beloved Orange and Blue continue to recruit the fertile fields for ball players.

Spring sports

It's too bad that track and field, baseball and softball can't push their seasons back a month. They would still be fighting rain in late May and early June, but at least they wouldn't have to be battling snowflakes and wind chills in the 20's. By the time commencement rolls around, players, coaches and administrators are ready for a much deserved break, and it would be tough to convince them to keep on keeping on.

High School basketball state championships

By the time this goes to press, the IHSA will have crowned all four state champions in boys' basketball. So far, the Class 1A and 2A champions both hail from Chicago, and there's a good

chance that the 3A and 4A champs will also, although the Belleville West-Chicago Curie battle should be epic. BW is the defending state champion and features future Illinois football player Keith Randolph Jr., as well as some schlep who chose to spurn the beloved and go to THE Ohio State University. Gag. The Condors counter with DaJuan Gordon, a guard who committed to play for former Illini coach Bruce Weber at Kansas State. Speaking of Weber, I for one harbor no ill will toward the coach. Having met him on a few occasions while he was at Illinois, he seems like a genuinely nice person. It's too bad that he got the run-around from the player who shall never be named in this column, because Weber's tenure at Illinois almost certainly would have ended differently had the PWSNBNITC honored his commitment. Can't trust those sneaky Hoosiers, I suppose. Anyway, time for my semi-annual rant about the IHSA. Chicago Providence St. Mel won the class 1A championship over

Cissna Park last Saturday. Providence St. Mel has no geographic boundaries for attracting students, meaning their students can come from literally anywhere. Chicago alone has a population of 2.7 million. Cissna Park's school district has a population of approximately 2000. In Class 2A, Chicago Orr defeated Nashville. There are approximately 2500 STUDENTS who live within Orr's boundaries, though budget issues have forced many of them to go to other schools due to open enrollment within the CPS. Nashville, on the other hand, has a population of about 3000, with a high school population of 399 students. I've said it before and I'll say it again, the school population doesn't matter if athletes are allowed to come from a greater geographic boundary. A school of 200 who has attracted 20 good basketball players from a population of 2 million has a huge advantage over someone drawing from 2000. I'll continue to howl this into the wind, but I don't think the IHSA is listening.

WEEKLY SPORTS WRAP-UP

VGH Baseball
 Fall to Spartans
 The Hawks could only scratch out 3 hits as they were defeated by St Joe Ogden 10-0 in their 2019 opener at St. Joseph on March 11. Keegan Patterson doubled, and Carson Howard and Nick Coffin added base hits for VGH. Evan Wilson took the loss, giving up 3 earned runs.

Split pair with Tigers
 Carson Howard doubled and drove in two runs to

make the VGH home opener a happy one as they defeated Paris 6-5 with a run in the bottom of the ninth on March 16. Nathan Chewing pitched the ninth to pick up the win. Noah Davison had two RBI's and Kane Davison added an RBI and scored twice for the Hawks.

Noah Davison went 4-4, including a double and a triple, and drove in 3 runs, but the Hawks fell to the Tigers 11-8 in the nightcap.

Logan McKee took the loss, giving up 4 earned runs in an inning of work.

Villa Grove Softball
 Kyleigh Block and Molly Mixell each racked a pair of hits, but the Blue Devils lost their opener at Mahomet Seymour by a score of 7-4. Reagan Cheely took the loss, surrendering 5 earned runs while walking 5 and striking out 4 in a complete game effort.

VGFD discusses Flood Safety Awareness cont'd from pg. 1

"This will ensure that we don't have to come and get you in a boat." "We don't mind, it's our job to come and get you, but we don't necessarily love the idea," Chief Elston added.

Finally, if a flood occurs, always boil drinking water before using, unless given the go ahead. The Red Cross will have food, clothing, shelter and first aid available if necessary. When entering a home, use a flashlight instead of a lantern or torch in case of a gas leak, and finally don't operate electrical equipment without thoroughly checking it out and drying it first. The firefighters also added that during farming season, flood waters from area fields could potentially be loaded with chemicals, and shouldn't be entered.

Finally, all three firemen were adamant about being prepared when the threat of flooding looms. "If you live in a flood prone area or a place where you can get locked in, stock up a little bit," Elston stated. "Most of our flood waters dissipate quickly, in 24 to 48 hours, so if

you can keep an extra day or two's worth of food on hand, you should do so."

When asked about overall emergency preparedness, the firemen were quick to answer in unison. "I can tell you first-hand just how important it is to check your smoke detectors," said Smith, who recently had an incident with a furnace motor that led to smoke issues in his own home. "Change your batteries every month." Elston added that the VGFD participates in a program run by the state that gives free smoke detectors to anyone who can't afford one. Elston added "If you want to put it (emergency preparedness)

in order, it would be smoke detectors, CO detectors and stocking up in preparation of weather events."

The fire department too makes preparations in advance of weather events, stationing their response vehicles strategically throughout Villa Grove to ensure a quick response in case of emergency. "We station one truck on the east side, one truck in the southwest corner of town, and then one remains here at the fire station," Lake added. "We stay on the radios," Elston quipped.

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2019 VILLA GROVE/HERITAGE HAWKS				
BOYS BASEBALL SCHEDULE			record	
Mar 11	SJO	L	0-1	0-1
Mar 12	@ Marshall	ppd		0-1
Mar 13	@ Salt Fork	ppd		0-1
Mar 14	Urbana	ppd		0-1
Mar 16	Paris	W,L	6-5, 8-11	1-2
Mar 18	@ Monticello			
Mar 19	@ Armstrong Sullivan			
Mar 22	@ Bismarck Henning			
Mar 26	@ Judah Christian			
Mar 28	Oakwood			
Mar 29	@ Arcola			
Mar 30	@ Blue Ridge			
Apr 01	ALAH			
Apr 02	LSA			
Apr 04	Georgetown Ridge Farm			
Apr 05	@ Martinsville			
Apr 08	@ Cumberland			
Apr 10	Oblong			
Apr 11	@ Fisher			
Apr 12	Tri-County			
Apr 16	Schlarman			
Apr 17	@ Hutsonville			
Apr 18	Arthur Okaw Christian			
Apr 22	Martinsville			
Apr 23	@ Tuscola			
Apr 24	Cumberland			
Apr 25	@ Oblong			
Apr 29	@ Tri-County			
May 04	Neoga (DH)			
May 08	Cerro Gordo			
May 09	ALAH			
May 11	@ Unity			

HEAD COACH Jason Conn

2019 VGH Girl's Track & Field Schedule				
Mar 09	@ EIU invite			
Mar 13	@ Uni High (Armory)			
Mar 19	@ Arcola			
Mar 26	@ Arcola			
Mar 28	@ Tuscola			
Apr 05	@ ALAH			
Apr 09	@ Salt Fork Invite			
Apr 12	@ Unity (girls)			
Apr 19	@ Tuscola			
Apr 23	@ ALAH			
Apr 26	@ Monticello			
May 03	@ Arcola (LOVC meet)			

HEAD COACH Heath Wilson

2019 VILLA GROVE Blue Devils				
GIRLS SOFTBALL SCHEDULE			record	
Mar 12	@ MS	L	4-7	0-1
Mar 13	@ Salt Fork	ppd		
Mar 14	@ ALAH	ppd		
Mar 18	Tuscola			
Mar 19	@ Unity			
Mar 20	Urbana			
Mar 21-24	@ Murfreesboro, TN			
Mar 26	Georgetown-Ridge Farm			
Mar 27	@ Argenta Oreana			
Mar 28	Windsor			
Mar 29	Okaw Valley			
Mar 30	@ Rantoul Tourney			
Apr 01	@ Cumberland			
Apr 02	@ SJO			
Apr 03	Tri-County			
Apr 05	@ Oblong			
Apr 08	Martinsville			
Apr 09	Champaign Centennial			
Apr 10	@ Hut-Pal (DH)			
Apr 11	@ Fisher			
Apr 15	vs Heritage			
Apr 16	@ Casey Westfield			
Apr 17	Cumberland			
Apr 18	@ Blue Ridge			
Apr 19	@ Tri-County			
Apr 22	Oblong			
Apr 24	@ Martinsville			
Apr 25	@ Arcola			
May 01	@ Heritage			
May 02	Armstrong-Potomac			
May 08	Cerro Gordo			
May 10	@ PBL			

HEAD COACH Heather VonLanken

2019 VGH Boy's Track & Field Schedule				
Mar 13	@ Uni High (Armory)			
Mar 16	@ EIU invite			
Mar 19	@ Arcola			
Mar 26	@ Arcola			
Mar 28	@ Tuscola			
Apr 05	@ ALAH			
Apr 09	@ Salt Fork Invite			
Apr 12	@ Unity (girls) M			
Apr 19	@ Tuscola			
Apr 23	@ ALAH			
Apr 26	@ SJO (boys)			
May 03	@ Arcola (LOVC meet)			
May 11	@ Shelbyville			

HEAD COACH Heath Wilson



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