

Basketball wraps up for 2013

By Larry Pritchett

Past PCHS activities director

Thanks to the snow, I am still in the capitol city as I write this and I hope to be home before the paper actually hits the streets. Looking at the radar and weather forecast, that should not be a problem.

Eleven inches of snow in Grant was reported by one of the Lincoln stations and a forecast of 60 degrees by Friday! That is why I love Nebraska.

The high school basketball season in Nebraska is over. The 2013 state tournament was fun to watch, and there were some exciting games but overall maybe a little on the underwhelming side when you consider the entire tournament field.

Omaha Central the Class A Champion was certainly the outstanding team. Watching them this week and watching them a month ago at Grand Island against Oak Hill Academy, they expended less than total potential in winning the Gold.

They didn't have to play at max talent level in the State Tournament. They were that much better than the rest of their class. Don't get me wrong, they played hard, but they played at a much higher level in GI than they did in Lincoln.

The surprise champion in my mind was South Sioux City in Class B. They got to the tournament with a 13-12 record. They beat a 19-6 Ralston team and then in a semi-final game defeated Elkhorn South by scoring eight points in about 20 seconds to get the game into OT.

In the finals they hit a three-pointer for the first points of the game and didn't lead again until the last few seconds to grab the State Championship from Scottsbluff, the number one seed. The Bearcats were trying to win their second Championship in a row but lost in the worst possible way.

Paxton was undefeated and got to the finals against another undefeated team in Howells-Dodge. H-D was just too physical and talented for the Tigers. Paxton played with great effort, but Howells-Dodge had more firepower on offense and got the big trophy. Paxton had a great season and represented the area well.

There are some things that still cause me to wonder in watching high school basketball these days. One is why there is an intentional foul rule which seldom gets called and the other thing is the "sportsmanship" school award. I am all for the whole "sportsmanship" concept, but as I watch most of the teams at state I don't know how they determine a winner.

There was a "first" for me in all the years of going to State Tournaments when the PA person made the following

announcement: "Let me make this very clear, if the Freeman fans do not behave, they will be thrown out." Didn't say " Asked to leave," Thrown out is a much stronger term to use.

Every community seems to have a few people who can't just watch a contest without going overboard, but I would think the aforementioned announcement would be a gigantic

embarrassment to a team, coaches, administrators, and the other fans of the school attending the contest.

Coaching Change

When the school year starts next year, it will mark the first time in 50 years that a Pritchett family member won't be coaching some sport, at some level, in some state.

My sister, my two brothers, my two sons, and myself have coached some sport, at various levels, in Kentucky,

Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Nebraska. We have coached volleyball, track and field, football, cross country, girl's basketball, boy's basketball, and softball.

Last week the last Pritchett coaching, son Troy, resigned his basketball position at Malcolm to concentrate on

getting into the administrative area in high school. I know it was a tough decision on his part, and it was a tough thing for his father to realize what was really happening. I do, however, think he is doing the best thing for his career.

There is no doubt that I have a bias. He is my son, but he is a very good coach. I have watched his teams and know that they are always prepared. They play extremely hard.

Troy was able in many years to coach his kids "Up" and they played above their talent level. Other coaches have told me that they didn't like to play his teams because they would be very well prepared regardless of talent level.

One of my fondest memories is a phone call from one of the Husker football coaches after attending a Malcolm and Tecumseh game telling me that he had just seen one of the best coaching jobs he had ever seen.

We are very proud of what Troy has accomplished in the coaching profession. I am sure that he will make a fine administrator. I even know of coaches who do other things for awhile and then come back and coach some more. It could happen again.