Higher levels, same mistakes

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Sometimes you wonder why high school players have such a hard time grasping the little things that are so important in being successful in athletic contests.

As a high school coach, you work with 15,16, and 17 year old kids on your varsity squad and you try to instill the winning concepts that you know they must have and then work on those in practice so that when the time comes in a game they can execute and be successful. It all seems so simple.

Then you watch college games and professional games and you see that when you consider what high school coaches are working with–the least experienced players– there might be some reasons for breakdowns. Because you see college and professional teams making the same miscues.

Saturday there were a number of really good college games on TV and, lo and behold, they did things just like high school kids. The game that hurt the most was KU and Okie State. KU very seldom gets beat at Allen Field House and during Bill Self's tenure had only lost seven times while winning somewhere around 100.

Last week we talked about the team that makes the fewest mistakes usually wins, well KU had 10 turnovers in the first 10 minutes of the game and even though they did a better job later in the game, those were killers.

The Jayhawks didn't rebound very well on either end and that led to a number of offensive rebounds and put backs for OSU. KU couldn't hit free throws, OSU did. KU was still in the game right to the end, but committed three turnovers right in a row and when it was over, they lost by five.

Later in the day Indiana and Michigan had a great game and Indiana did all the things like hitting 15 free throws in a row in the last five minutes or so to salt the game away.

College teams that had tons of talent when compared to high school teams, but when you break it down, were plagued by the same problems that high school teams encounter. It really is a simple game.

The Nebraska High School basketball season is coming quickly to an end as far as regular season play is concerned. Sub-district play will soon open and before you know it–state tournament time.

This weekend, however, a number of basketball fans will have the opportunity to watch one of the best high school basketball teams in the Nation in Oak Hill Academy. Oak Hill will play Omaha Central in Grand Island as the feature game of a day of high school basketball. Rajon Rondo, Carmelo Anthony, are just a couple of players that played at Oak Hill.

A lot of the really good players play maybe just a year at Oak Hill, but because Oak Hill plays

all over the United States, the players get a lot of exposure. The Coach at Oak Hill is Steve Smith and he is a former student of my sister Rita.

Smith and Sis were inducted into the Asbury University Hall of Fame back in 2004 and I got to meet him then. His father was on the staff at Asbury and also was inducted in that original Hall of Fame group. Coach Smith has been National Coach of the Year numerous times and being able to see one of his teams play should be fun.

Congrats to the Ravens who won the Super Bowl. Turned out to be a pretty good game. Might have a comment or two next week on what I think is the most over-hyped event on TV.