

Great sports for area teams

By Larry Pritchett

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The fall athletic season is coming to an end with the conclusion of the football season in the next week or so. Cross country is finished, volleyball is finished and the semi-finals of the football playoffs were played earlier this week. Time has gone very quickly again this year.

Area teams had success in the different classes and sports this fall and some congratulations are in order for them. Ogallala had a football team in the playoffs and the Ogallala volleyball team won the third place game on Saturday to close out a very successful year. Wallace also had a very successful football team reaching the semi-finals and their volleyball team also made the state tournament.

Perkins County girls' cross country team made the trip to Kearney for the championships and I think I am correct in saying that Courtney Lyon had the opportunity to run at the state meet four years in a row. That is a statement to her dedication and work ethic in a sport that is NOT really an easy one.

In football, in addition to Ogallala and Wallace making the playoffs, Chase County also made it in C-1.

In C-2 there were a number of area teams that played. Bridgeport, Kimball, Cambridge, North Platte St. Pats, Hershey, and Bayard also played games.

In D-1 Sutherland made it, and also Hemingford. In D-2 Wallace, Leyton, Brady, Medicine Valley, Garden County and Hitchcock County were all participants.

After seeing the list of state champions in volleyball and looking through the football playoffs and listening to some of my friends in the Lincoln area, I wouldn't be surprised to see the "private school" bias be talked about again.

The NSAA class divisions used to be based upon ninth, 10th and 11th grade enrollment of schools on the fourth Friday of September. No one cheated on that number because that was the number used for state aid. I don't know if that has changed or not in regards to state aid, but I know that enrollment figures are based on the 9-10 and 11 grade numbers.

There was a proposal that private schools had to count their students at 1.35 and the rest just used the very simple—you have 300 students, you have 300 students. The idea was to make private schools, who everyone knows recruit the best and the brightest, play up a class. It didn't pass. It has, however, been adopted in other states.

There were 48 teams in the state volleyball tournament. Of those 48, I think 11 were private schools, but four of the eight state champions were private schools.

Omaha Marian in A, Kearney Catholic in C-1, Hastings S. C. in C-2 and St. Mary in D-1 and three of the six teams playing for third and fourth were also private schools. They must have a giant advantage over public schools.

First of all, I truly believe they recruit a little. They are private schools, and they need students to stay open and all the other things that would fit into that slot.

Do I care? No, not really. I am pretty sure that the public schools recruit also. Probably in a lot of cases just to get better athletes. I don't think most public schools have that big of an enrollment problem.

It could be a lot worse in the Omaha-Lincoln area. You are always reading about how this player was at ABC school last year but they are now at XYZ this year. A lot of that has to do with select teams in the summer and AAU teams and such.

You should mention recruitment in Malcolm sometime and see what kind of reaction you get or mention it in Seward and see what kind of reaction you get. It happens.

Seasons are about to change. College basketball has started and a week ago Michigan State and Kentucky and KU and Duke played and it was two of the better games you would want to see at this time of the season. Those are four elite teams and they fill their schedule all the way up with cupcakes. All four teams should be very good by the end of the season if they continue to improve from week to week.

The Cornhuskers didn't get it done in a big game once again and yet, despite five turnovers that led to way too many points to give to a good opponent, Nebraska was in it yet in the fourth quarter.

The defense played pretty well, but you cannot put the ball on the ground as many times and really close to the opponent's goal and expect to stop them from scoring. Now they need to finish it out and see if they can get to the chocolate chip bowl or another Capitol One bowl and see what is in our pocket and finish as strong as we can.