

# JV Tourney Sees Smooth Sailing After Rocky Start

## Sponsors work hard with Wynn and Howard to keep tournament going

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When what is now known as the David Lash/Chronicle Junior Varsity Holiday Basketball Tournament ended last year and East Forsyth was declared the winner, there was some concern about whether the tournament would continue.

The problem the tournament had was funding. More specifically, an insufficient amount to make a difference.

"The tournament had problems finding the funding that would help it go on in the future," Sportsmen Club spokesman and tournament organizer Ike Howard said. "The tournament was built for the kids, but it needed some help to put everything together."

The junior varsity tournament was an idea Howard developed, albeit rather accidentally. Howard wanted to form a junior varsity tournament that would benefit the eight high schools in the Winston-Salem area. Howard wanted to host it along with the Mary Garber Tournament, which is held for the girls varsity teams.

"My son played junior varsity basketball and he was a player who in that borderline case of being not quite ready for varsity," Howard said. "And he didn't have any place to play between the end of the preconference schedule and the conference began. So I came up with the idea these kids needed something to play in."

After initially supporting the idea, Mary Garber officials decided that such an idea would entail too many activities to run in conjunction with the girls varsity tournament.

That's when Howard took his idea to Carver Athletic Director Robert Wynn. Wynn sensed that such a tournament could be attract some interest in junior varsity sports and began soliciting junior varsity coaches about the event.

"The coaches wanted to give their kids some type of athletic competition to play in before the Christmas holidays," Wynn said. "Without some sort of tournament to play in, these kids would go up to a month without playing basketball."

The first junior varsity tournament included only five of the eight Winston-Salem teams — Carver, East Forsyth, Glenn, Mt. Tabor and North Forsyth. Parkland, Reynolds and West Forsyth had committed to similar tournaments outside the county, which reinforced the reason Wynn supported the tournament all along.

"Most of the schools in the county cannot afford to send their jayvee teams to a tournament outside the city," Wynn said. "So between Christmas and January, these players would only face themselves in practice. Plus, it would eliminate the down time the kids would have."

To round out the field, T.W. Andrews of High Point and Smith and Dudley high schools of Greensboro were added. Howard and Wynn managed to put



High school players display the jacket that will be given to the winners of the David Lash/Chronicle Junior Varsity Holiday Tournament

it together with little financial support. Howard asked officials from the Sportsmen Club to officiate the game, which they did without any charge. Concessions were paid for through whatever donations were raised.

When time came around for this year's tournament, Wynn and Howard found the sponsorship it needed. Chronicle Publisher Ernie Pitt heard about the tournament's plight and showed an interest in helping out any way he could.

"I see the tournament as a way of fulfilling our community service obligation," Pitt said. "I wanted to participate in something positive and when I heard about the tournament, I wanted to find out how we could help."

After The Chronicle made its commitment, Howard and Wynn were able to procure additional financial backing from Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Winston-Salem and Lee Apparel. Not only are all three companies sponsoring the tournament, but Pitt, Jim Robertson and Darryl Brown of Coca-Cola and Bob Bell and Don Hancock of Lee Apparel are on the organizing committee.

Coaches, athletic directors and players alike have been elated about the tournament's decision to keep going.

"I'm just tickled to death that the kids will have an opportunity to play in something like this," East Forsyth athletic director David Bumgarner said. "I'm glad to see it will get the support it deserves to keep it growing in the future."

When it came to renaming the tournament, the committee led by Wynn decided to name it in honor of David Lash,

the former head coach and athletic director at three Winston-Salem high schools and renowned tennis instructor.

"It's hard to think of Carver athletics without thinking of the name of David Lash," Wynn said. "Whatever person has done in athletics in the past or in tennis today, Coach Lash has probably had a hand in their success."

Now the future is looking up for the tournament. Plans have been discussed of moving the tournament from Carver, which has fielded the tournament the first two years, to a neutral site. Howard said a possibility is the Lawrence Joel Coliseum annex building, the site of the varsity boys' Frank Spencer Tournament. Rotating sites annually is another option.

Parkland and Reynolds high schools, which were in other jayvee tournaments the past several seasons, have committed to playing in 1994. And with the increasing popularity of the boys' tournament, seeing a girls' junior varsity tournament may not be out of the question in the near future.

"This tournament has been well received by everyone, the coaches, the players and the families," Wynn said. "It's a great time of the year to have the tournament because all the players' families can come out to see them play. But most importantly, everyone can have fun during the most important time of the year."



Carver athletic director Bob Wynn (standing), introduces David Lash during the press conference.