



# Pat's Peckings

BY NEALE PATRICK

## 'Hickory Stick' for H. S. Athletics

Schoolboy athletics is the whipping boy for the "hickory stick" being toted by school administrators these days.

You, of course, have been reading in the papers about the state school officials labeling prep athletics as the "bad apple" in the otherwise solid barrel of school activities. The powers-that-be say that too much emphasis is being put on high school sports, particularly on football, claiming that the seasons are too long, that post-season championship and bowl games should be eliminated.

It seems to me that the school officials may be using athletics as their "scapegoat" in answering the question of the high number of failures in schools. They find that athletics makes for a good "whipping boy".

But, I wonder just what effect athletics and sports have on study-habits and semester grades in school.

There is the hue and cry that athletic practice takes time from study, that travel to games takes boys out of school.

Let's investigate the claims a little closer.

Practice sessions are held between the hours of 4 and about 6 p. m.—after school hours and before supper time. And how many of those athletes, and, in truth, how many of the ones not participating in athletics, would be studying in the late hours of the afternoon? Normally, you could count them on the fingers of one hand.

Youths not taking part in school athletics are dashing the highways and the by-ways in hot-rods, or playing soda-shop cowboy. At least the athletes are under school supervision during practice sessions.

And, just how much class time is missed due to athletic trips? Very little. Night football and basketball do not cause any absenteeism. Afternoon baseball games in the spring possibly do take boys out of one or two post-lunch classes. Any of the time which is missed can be and is easily made-up.

The school officials would have you believe, too, that the long afternoon practice sessions and the sports trips cause a wholesale rate of failures among the athletes.

The facts hardly bear-out such a belief.

Percentage of failures among athletes, actually, are lower than with the student body as a whole. Athletes are well aware that they must keep-up their grades and make passing marks or they will not be permitted to participate in sports. The driving urge to "stay eligible" for football, or any sport, might well be the factor which keeps many boys above the passing level.

Kings Mountain, for instance, has not lost a standout player in any sport, due to grades-deficiency in the three years that I have been here. And, I have it on the authority of the coaches here that many boys have improved their grades, and their general aptitude, after becoming a member of a Mountaineer athletic team.

## Length of Football Season Questioned

School night athletics, such as Tuesday night basketball games, is another item of discontent among the school leaders. They figure that players and spectating students, alike, should be home studying . . . or watching TV.

Just one question. If the officials do cancel all Tuesday night basketball, does that also mean that all other school-related activities during the week, such as PTA's, etc., also will be discontinued? What's fair for one should be fair for the other.

Another big beef has it that football seasons last too long.

It's a fact that some teams which happen to be both lucky and good and advance into championship rounds do play as many as 13 or 14 games a year. That's the normal ten games for the regular schedule, then a series of playoff contests for conference, inter-conference, and state crowns.

Agreed, that's a lot of football for 16-and-17 year olds. But, trimming football schedules to six-or-eight games is swinging the pendulum too far in the other direction.

As a sport, football must "pay it's own way" with its gate-take. Most schools that I know anything about have a tough time making athletic-ends meet by playing their normal five games at home. Trimming a schedule to eight games, thus, would eliminate one home game, and that one contest could well mean the difference in writing the financial success of the season in red or black ink.

For that matter, football, normally, is the only money-making sport in high schools (and colleges, too) and as such is the "sugar daddy" for the other athletic teams. Without a good season at the gate in football, the other sports would, in turn, suffer the consequences.

And, if the gate-take does not support some sort of school sports, then the burden falls on the taxpayers.

This is not a case for the high school football program which often calls on a team to play a dozen or more games. I feel that a more workable plan could be devised to crown a state or Association champion without so many round-about playoff contests continuing over into December.

## Education And Athletics Do Mix

Perhaps I need to be "educated" on this next point which deals more specifically with college, than with high school, athletics. But I have a hard time trying to "buy" the reasoning of some educators that good educational institutions and good athletics do not go together.

These folk assert that the principal objective of a college or a university is education, not athletics, and the tail, so to speak, should not wag the dog.

That's all well and good, and true, and as it should be. College and universities are built and operated to dispense knowledge and to provide access to learning. But just how does a good football team detract from the educational qualities of the school? Just what does winning or losing on the gridiron have to do with the things to be learned in the chemistry department or in the business school?

For instance, did Notre Dame achieve any higher educational rank in this autumn of two football victories and eight defeats than it held during the heyday of the undefeated national championship seasons ten years ago?

Admitted, Notre Dame might be a better school today, and I'm sure it is, but the decline in the number of football wins had nothing to do with that improvement.

By the reverse token, was the University of Minnesota's educational rating lowered this fall simply because the Gophers reversed their football record from a 1-8 mark in 1959 to an 8-1 figure and the school's first bowl trip in 1960?

I doubt it. Minnesota grads next spring will be as well educated as the ones who drew their sheepskins last June, despite the sudden grid success.



**MOUNTAINEER TROPHY TAKERS** — This happy quintet represents the principals in the Lions Club annual football banquet honoring the Mountaineers last Tuesday night. Charles Burns, second from left, holds the Fred Plonk Blocking trophy, presented to him by Coach John Gamble, left. Punch Parker, second from right, and Dr. George Plonk, right hold the trophy which Dr. Plonk presented to the half-back as the Most Valuable Player. Davidson Coach Bill Dale, speaker for the banquet at the Woman's Club, smiles his approval in the center. . . . . (Photo by Pennington Studio)

# Hot-Handed Grover Pair Hit 28 Points Each To Top KM Outfits

## BOXSCORES

BOYS				
KINGS MOUNTAIN (47)				
Player	FG	FT	PF	TP
Champion	1	3-3	4	5
Allen	7	4-4	0	18
Adams	3	2-6	2	8
Parker	4	4-6	5	12
Clontz	0	2-3	4	2
Ross	1	0-1	2	2
Houston	0	0-0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15-23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>47</b>

GROVER (53)				
Player	FG	FT	PF	TP
Green	2	2-4	4	6
Cash	1	1-2	5	3
Mullinax	10	8-10	0	28
Robinson	0	0-1	3	0
Little	0	5-6	4	13
Heafner	0	0-0	0	0
Cooke	0	1-1	0	1
Moss	1	0-0	1	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17-24</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>53</b>

GIRLS				
KINGS MOUNTAIN (35)				
Player	FG	FT	PF	TP
Gladden	7	0	14	14
Weir	0	0	8	0
M. Plonk	6	1	13	13
Roberts	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>

GROVER (54)				
Player	FG	FT	PF	TP
Gloria Huffstetler	4	6	14	14
Eaker	12	4	28	28
Galt Huffstetler	6	0	12	12
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>

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