

Ableman sees new UI pool -- 34 years later!

Written by Bob Brooks

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Let's start off with some random thoughts in the middle of an Iowa winter.

With that in mind, I attended the finals of the USA Diving at the new Iowa pool last Sunday. And it so happened that I ran into Randy Ableman, the former Cedar Rapids Washington diver, Olympian and coach of the University of Miami diving team.

We visited about the district winning streak of the Washington swimmers, which reached 48 straight titles last Saturday. A remarkable feat. Randy and I reminisced about when this streak started in the coaching days of Hal Krizan and Jim Voss.

It certainly has to be one of the most amazing streaks in high school swimming history. Randy dove for both coaches, who started the dynasty. He's been the long-time coach of the Hurricanes under university president Donna Shalala, the former University of Wisconsin president.

One of his women divers from Miami became one of the representatives to advance to the U.S. National team this year.

To show you how things work out, Randy dove at Iowa and during his recruitment was told that by his senior year the Hawks would have a new diving pool. Thirty-four years later, Randy Ableman was able to see the results when he brought the Miami divers to the Hawks' new facility.

Even with several PhDs, he could not have stayed in school long enough for the pool to benefit him. But it will certainly benefit the Iowa program with many more national meets to be held there.

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NOTE: On the basketball front, Cedar Rapids got a full taste of Cedar Falls basketball this week and I got my first look at phenom guard James Harrington of the Tigers. He had double-digit scoring in back-to-back wins against Jefferson and Washington.

With Linn-Mar the No.1 team in the state, and with Marcus Paige getting most of the publicity, there really isn't in my view a great deal to choose between those two fine players, except Harrington is what you would call a complete athlete with his football and track to go along with basketball.

I asked him which sport he would choose, and I did not get an answer, even though he was wearing a winter Michigan jacket.

NOTE II: A belated tip of the fedora to Kyle Dunn on his scholarship award for track at Arkansas. But first, he'll have a couple of state titles to defend in the spring.