

Lombardi will energize Washington baseball

Written by Bob Brooks

Thursday, 17 November 2011 11:44 - Last Updated Thursday, 17 November 2011 22:18



Let's start this column with a few notes on the high school scene.

It was great to see that Washington hired Tony Lombardi as its new head baseball coach to go along with his other coaching duties, not incidentally the football team.

Tony will bring a lot of energy to a baseball program that certainly needs to be energized. With all of those duties, a large family and a wife who is the volleyball coach at Washington, he has enough on his plate to keep the Washington program rolling. We wish him well.

A tip of the fedora to the City of Cedar Rapids on its production of the state volleyball tournament at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena. I was out there last Friday and I was amazed that the facility was so good for the spectators.

Close to the action, plenty of parking, good competition. It made the Iowa Girls Union a happy camper in this transitional time of switching from the U.S. Cellular Center and into the Ice Arena this year.

This past Monday was the first day for high school boys basketball practice. And here's a reminder that Cedar Rapids Kennedy will host a Girls Jamboree Friday night and Cedar Rapids Prairie will host Muscatine in the first girls game Saturday night.

In the Metro, it seems that Linn-Mar and Cedar Rapids Washington will be the girls teams to watch. And on the boys side, Linn-Mar again will be the odds-on favorite, trying to do something it has not done and that is winning back-to-back state titles.

Which brings us to Iowa basketball: Just a line about this year's team. Number one, Coach McCaffery has Iowa on the right track. Not that they will be world beaters, but they certainly will

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be competitive, especially in Carver-Hawkeye Arena. And the fans are catching that mo-jo, too.

A surprise: The Drake Bulldogs defeated Iowa State at the Knapp Center on Tuesday night. Now the Bulldogs go to the Virgin Islands for that tournament, while Iowa State and Coach Hoiberg will digest a couple of dishes of humility. Fred has some excellent players to work with.

Northern Iowa played in ESPN's 24 hours of basketball and lost on the West Coast to St. Mary's of California. And now it's time for the Panthers to start shooting rather than just playing defense.

And to close with a football note: Would you have believed a year ago that with Ohio State hosting Penn State this week, with all the bad publicity the Buckeyes got with their NCAA violations they look like choir boys compared to what the Nittany Lions are going through and will go through in the upcoming months and years.

This is one story that will not go away.

Note to the NCAA: You promised the final report on Ohio State would be forthcoming in October. Now we're at Thanksgiving time and we still haven't heard from you. It's time that you released your paperwork.

Happy Thanksgiving.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)