

Story No.2 for 2010-11: Linn-Mar basketball

Written by Scott Unash

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Life has few certainties. There's death, taxes and, lately anyway, Linn-Mar basketball.

Both the boys and girls teams have been outstanding during the past several seasons. Coach Mike Brandt's girls tied a Mississippi Valley Conference record this year for most consecutive conference wins and made it back to the state tournament.

The Lions fell in the semifinals to fellow MVC school Iowa City West in a game where all-state center Kiah Stokes fouled out for the first time in her career. It wasn't the way the Lions wanted to end the year, but it was a great followup to the 2010 state championship.

Now let's concentrate on the boys' side -- a perfect 21-0 regular season in a year when the MVC may have had its best assemblage of talent ever. The undefeated year included wins over talented out-of-state teams with several Division I players.

A perfect run though the substate and state tournament in Des Moines added up to a fourth title in school history for Coach Chris Robertson and the Lions.

It doesn't end there, though. Linn-Mar set a state record for consecutive seasons qualifying for the state tournament at eight, breaking the tie it held with Dick Breitbach's Regis teams. The Lions' average margin of victory during the state championship run was 19 points, against some very stout competition.

Linn-Mar went wire-to-wire ranked as the No.1 team in Class 4A. The Lions overcame injuries and illnesses and never skipped a beat.

Was it the best team ever at this basketball factory? That is open for debate. But one thing is certain, it would be a heck of a fun afternoon bringing all four of the school's championship teams together to find out.

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Scott Unash is the sports director at KGYM-1600 in Cedar Rapids and has won numerous broadcasting awards).