

Lions have a fine all-around program

Written by Bob Brooks

Wednesday, 19 January 2011 20:04 - Last Updated Friday, 21 January 2011 00:12



The Linn-Mar against Washington boys basketball game last Friday at Washington generated a nice gate for the Warriors, even though they were outplayed by quite a margin by the top-ranked Lions.

The gate was in the \$7,000 range for the packed house and meant a nice increase for the Warriors' athletic program. They also got to see a sideshow for a bonus in the appearance of North Carolina Coach Roy Williams, who slipped into the Warriors' gym after a 1 hour, 40 minute jet ride from North Carolina to watch Marcus Paige.

He paid his own way at the gate, also bought his own popcorn and posed for every boy, girl, mother and father in the house. I had a nice visit with him, but he had to cut it a little short because the only person he could talk to after the game was Linn-Mar Coach Chris Robertson (NCAA rules prohibited him from talking to Paige, other than to say hello).

Roy still knows his way around Washington High School. In 1991, he reminisced about coming to Wash to recruit Russ Millard, who later became a four-year letterwinner at Iowa, graduating in 1996.

During the game, my thoughts turned to Linn-Mar's basketball program. I would like to congratulate the Lions for not only presenting a fine basketball program over the years for their men and women, but the school's program has now become more inclusive by presenting solid competition in the other sports. That was not the case years ago.

That made me think, that even though there are good arguments to be made on specialization and improvement with summertime and extra outside instruction, my vote still falls on the side of having success on multiple high school athletic fronts and letting men and women choose what they want to concentrate on by participating in more activities. So a tip of the fedora on that to the Lions' now total program. It's not just about girls and boys basketball anymore.

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NOTES: It has been recorded that Robert Smith, former Iowa football player, Big Ten referee and high school football/basketball official, worked the Linn-Mar vs. Washington basketball game and also worked the BCS national championship football game.

But there was also, thanks to Bill Quinby, my referee correspondent, news that the chief replay official in the BCS game was Steve Beckman, longtime Big Ten on-field official and a graduate of the former Cedar Rapids Regis High School. He, too, had a great career as an official in big games.