

Huskies hope bumpy road ends in Des Moines

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 04 February 2013 23:14 -

Somebody should write a movie about the Cedar Valley Christian boys basketball team, especially if the story has a surprise and happy ending for the Huskies this year.

SCENE I: Only six boys report for practice in November, so the principal and coach (played by the same guy) scours the hallways for help.

SCENE II: The Huskies lose four consecutive games in December by 28, 27, 41 and 27 points, but a key player joins the team after recovering from a knee injury and helps turn things around. Now there are 12 guys on the squad.

SCENE III: Cedar Valley, a small school that's located in southeast Cedar Rapids, plays most of its "home" games at an elementary school in Shellsburg because its own gym is too tiny.

SCENE IV: The team catches fire and wins 11 of 13 games, inducing the principal and coach (still played by the same guy) talk about making the Class 1A state tournament.

SCENE V: The beloved team bus has two breakdowns on road trips, once with a flat tire and once with a locked brake, and the principal/coach/bus driver (played by the same guy) gets home from a trip to Wheatland last week at 1:30 a.m.

SCENE VI: Still to be written as the Huskies get ready for the postseason tournament.

Cedar Valley Christian has a 12-8 record with one or two games left in the regular season. They'll play at Lisbon Tuesday night and are trying to schedule a makeup game with BGM, then they'll head into the Class 1A district tournament Feb.14 at Highland of Riverside.

Jeff Pospisil, who wears all of those hats at CVC as principal, coach, bus driver and teacher,

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thinks the Huskies have a realistic shot at putting a few more patches on the bus and taking it all the way to Wells Fargo Arena for the state tournament.

"I've put down all the scenarios, I've looked at the bracket," he said. "There's definitely a possibility that we can make it to Des Moines.

"Then there's the other possibility, that we can stub our toe in the first round. It's hard to say."

The Huskies would have to win four straight postseason games to reach Des Moines. If they knock off Highland, Pospisil figures they'd probably have to beat Lone Tree, Preston and Dunkerton to make the state meet.

Dunkerton whipped the Huskies, 64-37, on Dec. 15, but that was just about the time Will Muhlbach joined the club after missing the first few weeks with a knee problem. The team jelled shortly after Muhlbach returned.

"That's when we started winning," said Pospisil.

Cedar Valley Christian joined the Iowa High School Athletic Association last season and fashioned a neat 13-10 record. The Huskies are slightly ahead of that pace this season and have clinched another winning record.

"I feel real good about it," said Pospisil. "It shows we can be competitive and that we can have success."

Pospisil is building the program and hopes to raise enough money to build a new gym at the school, but the time to strike is now. All five members of the starting lineup are seniors and he rarely goes to the bench. In fact, Pospisil did not use any subs at all Saturday night when the Huskies whipped Waterloo Christian in Waterloo.

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Jeremy Strutz is averaging a healthy 18 points per game. Muhlbach is scoring at a 15-point clip, followed by Jon Landis (10.7), Spencer Zielke (9.5) and Evan Koch (6.6). Tom Scroggs, the sixth man, is a sophomore.

Cedar Valley will have a young, inexperienced team next season, but Pospisil thinks he has the ingredients to do some damage this year.

"If I can get all five of those guys to click on the same night, I don't know if there's anybody that can beat us," he said. "But we have yet to have a night where all five of them were clicking."

The biggest obstacle to reaching Des Moines could be the bus. "We've had two trips where the bus has broken down," Pospisil reported.

The Huskies got to North English for their game against English Valleys High School on Jan. 24 and noticed there was a three-inch hole in one of the tires.

"I must have run over something," said Pospisil. "I didn't notice any difference in handling and I didn't hear it blow out or anything.

"We got there and somebody said, 'You have a hole in your tire.' Very strange."

Fortunately for the Huskies, their bus has double-tires and the good tire supported the bad one on the trip to North English. Everything turned out all right, because a kindly bus driver at English Valleys put one of his spare tires on the CVC bus and the Huskies had a smooth trip home.

The second mishap happened this past Friday night on the trip home from Calamus-Wheatland. Pospisil drove a short distance and was having trouble turning the

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steering wheel, so they limped into a gas station along Highway 30 in Wheatland. As it turned out, there was a problem with one of the brakes.

The Huskies managed to reach most of their parents, who doubled back to the gas station and formed car pools, but Pospisil stayed at the gas station with a few more players while they called for help.

"We had to call somebody to come get us from Cedar Rapids," he said. "We sat an hour while they drove from Cedar Rapids to pick us up."

The gas station in Wheatland was closed, so Pospisil figured he'd make some phone calls Saturday morning and have somebody take care of the bus.

He was waiting at the gas station Friday night when his phone rang.

"I got a call from the Clinton County sheriff's department," he said. "They said the gas station there was all freaked out because they had a bus sitting right in front of the station."

Pospisil told the sheriff's department what had happened. They gave him the phone number for the gas station and a couple of phone numbers for wreckers.

"We got it taken care of," he said.

Pospisil got home from Wheatland at 1:30 Saturday morning, then had the game in Waterloo Saturday night.

It's been quite a ride for the Huskies this season, and Pospisil hopes the best is yet to come. He's serious about taking a shot at the state tournament.

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"I think we can take a real run at it," he said. "If everyone stays healthy, if we can stay out of foul trouble, if we can manage the game well, I think we can do OK."

He's already planted the seed with his players.

"We've talked about it a little bit, just as kind of a challenge to them," he said. "I think they're seeing there is a possibility."

"I don't think they want to get their hopes up too much, but I think they're seeing they can have something special here."