

Strange Ending to Miller City/Columbus Grove Game Bulldogs Finish Game with just THREE Players

Columbus Grove Vidette – February 28, 1987

I thought I had seen nearly all the ‘weird’ happenings when it comes to sporting events, but two new ‘strange, but true’ oddities were added to my list in back-to-back Columbus Grove basketball games last weekend.

I’ve witnessed football games where a team never kicked off, round trippers in baseball that never left the infield, come-from-behind victories in all sports, and ‘survived’ the 8-overtime basketball game between the Bulldogs and Ottoville.

Last Friday at Perry was the first basketball game that I’ve witnessed without the familiar ‘jump ball’. New high school basketball rules call for just one jump ball to start each game, and then teams receive the ball on alternating possessions. However, a technical foul called prior to tip-off erases the need for that one jump ball.

Saturday was even more bizarre, as a fouling free-for-all created an unusual situation for Columbus Grove at the end of the game with Miller City.

Columbus Grove was whistled for 28 fouls and Miller City was called for 31 infractions. The Bulldogs, playing a ‘limited’ amount of varsity players this year anyway, had four of the seven varsity regulars foul out and all junior varsity players dressing varsity, had each used up the 80 quarter per year or five quarters per night playing limit.

The Bulldogs, already struggling to stave off a ferocious Miller City comeback, were forced to finish the final few seconds of the game with just three players.

Although the Bulldogs held on for the victory, this error of not foreseeing a player shortage nearly cost Columbus the ballgame. Coach Brown is still in the ‘fledgling’ years as a head coach and I’m sure he’ll remember February, 28, 1987 every time he’s coaching a game near the end of a varsity season.

Columbus Grove’s official scorebook keeper, John Koch, and I, were talking about this possibility prior to the game. As I was waiting to get the junior varsity

scorebook from Koch (he was filling out the varsity book) when he stated, “I don’t know why Coach Brown wants all these JV players listed in the book; they’ve all used up their 80 quarters of eligibility and can’t play anyways”.

One of us probably should have said something to Coach Brown, but neither one of us (like Coach Brown) suspected a game in which 59 fouls would be called.

Two of the JV players, Lance Seyer and Matt Barkimer, had played less than 80 quarters, but quickly exhausted their five quarter per night maximum when Columbus Grove began to get in foul trouble in the middle quarters and it became necessary for them to enter the game.

An unusual side note in the game was the fact that Rob Edmiston, Nate Stechschulte and Todd Hermiller were the only three Columbus Grove players remaining on the floor at the end of the game.

Edmiston, who was slapped with three fouls in less than one minute of floor time in the first half, survived to the end.

Nate Stechschulte did not commit a foul, in the game that featured 59 fouls and 83 free throws.

And last, but certainly not last, Todd Hermiller, who played every minute of the game with out a break, committed only three fouls and did the most damage to Miller City’s chances of a victory with 33 points.

It was basketball game that will be remembered, and was kind of amusing now that it is in the record book as a Grove victory.