

Don't Penalize the Girls – Give Them Organized Programs Too

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In a recent column a daily newspaper sports editor said something to the effect that high school athletes today are more girl conscious and romance minded than they are basketball conscious. He then went on to blame the girls for this unhealthy condition and suggest that they go in to hibernation during the basketball season.

For verification of the fact that players are girl conscious all you have to do is ask any coach. He will probably relate the same story and tell that too many players go in for “grandstanding” than for the actual business of playing the game.

However, to blame the girls for making them romance minded is getting a little off the beaten track. Players are only human and, with all the added attention and pampering they get nowadays, it is natural for them to become big wheels or at least thing than they are. The glamour in the big time sports comes from the emphasis placed on it.

WE'RE MISSING the boat if we expect the girls to keep out of circulation all winter. In the first place, they have a right to have as many activities as the boys. It's not that we approve of their running around all hours of the night with players who are supposed to be in training, but they need as much of a supervised program as the minority of the student body that composes the various athletic teams.

Maybe we should get down to fundamentals. In the first place, any sports program is an extracurricular activity of a school, with emphasis placed on the “extra.” The primary purpose of a school is education and not sports.

PLAYERS SHOULDN'T get the idea that they go to school for basketball or football, but they should keep in mind that those are secondary items. Still there have been instances in the past several years of players quitting school after the season has ended, making their reason for school attendance a dead give-away.

However, many schools and athletic directors are placing basketball and football teams in a primary position. Sports are being commercialized and players are given special privileges, even in a few cases to the extent of a padded grade to keep them eligible for competition. Now don't get us wrong. We're all in favor of a good sports program for a school. However, it should be an over-all program for the whole student body, girls included.

SOME SCHOOLS have intramural programs, but in others this is sadly lacking. Especially is this true in smaller schools as we have in Putnam County. Of course it takes money to pay for such a program, but with varsity sports being commercialized to the extent that they are today, there should be no excuse for a lack of funds to sponsor an all-around program for all member of the student body.

An intra-mural program of this sort could include volleyball, softball, tennis, badminton, etc., for both boys and girls. There could also be boys' and girls' basketball teams other than the varsity teams.

In schools where the enrollment is large enough, participation in the various intramural sports could exclude member of the varsity squad in that sport so that it could not be dominated by a certain clique.

This could then be broadened out and interschool matches be arranged for those students who do not participate in major sports like football, basketball and baseball.

ANOTHER THING to consider is that big time sports are beginning to do just the opposite of what they were intended to do – that is create an ill feeling between schools and even towns should something occur on the playing floor or field that fans do not like. Major sports are being taken too seriously today and a lot of fans and even some players are starting to forget that the outcome of a game is not a matter of life or death.

This ill will, which is sometimes, created could be overcome by having a good old fashion “play-for-fun” game between minor sports teams from the various schools. If a program of this nature could be set up, many coaches would find that the “boy-conscious” girls would let their star players alone and the “big wheel” varsity members would discover that they really aren't so big after all.

In the end we would find few cases of varsity member debating whether to dress for the game or sit this one out with their favorite heart throb of the moment.