

Kortokrax Defends Way of Selecting All-Star Teams

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A neighboring newspaper last week strongly criticized the method of selection for the Putnam County League All-Star teams and the Coach of the Year. The target of the item mostly was the choice of Ottoville's Dick Kortokrax as Coach of the Year, who received the honor for the second straight year and the fifth time in his 16 years of coaching in the league.

The writer felt that at least one of the county's top scorers was overlooked and that Kalida's Dan Neff should have been named the outstanding coach. He also felt that Jerry Stechschulte of Columbus Grove should have received the honor over Kortokrax last year and concluded that other persons than the coaches should do the picking.

Coach Kortokrax this week issued a strong statement defending the method in which the selections are made. Voting is done by the eight coaches in the league, much in the same manner as it is done in most other leagues. Coaches are not permitted vote any of their own players.

Implying that another group would be more capable of making these selections than the coaches "shows a lack of respect for the coaches of this county," Kortokrax said, and added, "my close association for the past 16 years with the coaches of this county.....certainly have to be among the finest in this state."

He continued "Concerning the all-league selections, the players do feel the honor more keenly when it is granted to them by the opposing coaches who should understand their true worth as players better than any other group who might make these decisions and selections."

"In defense of the coaches, since Putnam County basketball is as fine of basketball as could be found year after year in the state, it is impossible to put all of the best players in the county on the PCL All League top ten."

"In fairness to the coaches, it must be clearly understood that according to present criteria the

above-mentioned honors are to be bestowed upon play prior to tournament action. Had this not been the case for Coach of the Year selection a year ago, I would have voted for Coach Don Huber because of the great effort he and the Continental Pirates put forth in tournament play. As it was, I voted for Coach Jerry Stechschulte of Columbus Grove, whom I greatly respected because of the disciplinary action he took knowing it would be costly in tournament play.

Because the above-mentioned cases reflect mostly tournament play the coaches had to base their selection for Coach of the Year on other criteria." "Concerning this year's award, I agree that Coach Dan Neff of Kalida High School was a worthy candidate. In fact, I did cast my vote for Dan this year; but, on the other hand, I can see how the coaches might have based their opinions as to the Coach of the Year on the fact that Kalida had their five returning starters back while Ottoville had to replace two PCL selections for this year's team."

"I would again like to state that being chosen as Coach of the Year is a great honor in this county and is more meaningful to me since this honor was bestowed by my fellow peers rather than by someone else. Also, as I said at our meeting and here repeat, I had a great bunch of players at Ottoville this year who really gained this honor for me."

In closing, Kortokrax said he would trade all five Coach of the Year awards he has received for the opportunity to have coached his full team in the tournament this year. Ottoville's leading player was felled by an attack of appendicitis five days before the tournament and Ottoville lost its first tournament game.