

Florida basketball

Inexperience big problem facing Minon

4th in a series

By LOU HANSEN

FLORIDA

Florida High School basketball coach Jack Minon knows exactly what his job will be this season—to keep the Spartans out of the basement in the B Division of the Orange County League.

But Minon, who doubles as Mayor of Florida, wasn't discounting the Spartans entirely. "If we can overcome our inexperience, we'll be in a position to give somebody trouble," he said.

Florida finished with a 3-7 record last season to take fifth place in the six-team circuit, but graduation has left Minon with only two experienced players.

Among those to graduate were Lou Sosler, Len Weslowski and Bob Kosior, who were three of the league's top 10 scorers. Sosler was one of the league's

most prolific pointmakers with a .193 average, while Weslowski averaged 11.5 and Kosior 15.

Jim Wheeler, a 6-foot-1 senior, and Rick Illobre, a 5-7 junior, are the only players with varsity experience that Minon will have to work with.

Minon, however, who hasn't had to cut a player during his 12-year coaching tenure at Florida, is used to the task of rebuilding. "A lack of depth was our big problem last year, but we're faced with complete inexperience this season. I really don't look to do much better than we did last year. I just hope we don't do any worse," he explained.

In addition to the problem of selecting a team from a host of jayvee players, Minon is faced with a lack of height. "We'll have to rely on Wheeler for rebounds and hope the rest of the team can put the ball in the hoop," Minon said.

Minon calls Wheeler a "close range" shooter and says he's hoping Illobre, juniors Rich Kowalic and Bob Slack.

Eugene Conklin, a 6-2 sophomore, and classmate Dave Moonan, a six-footer, will be the tallest substitutes Minon will be able to call on for extra rebounding.

The rest of the team will be comprised of juniors Bruno Pilch (5-6), Bill Howell (5-6) and Mike Stramiello (5-8).

Minon contends Chester will repeat as league champion. "They've got three starters back, so I have to go with them," he explained. "Minisink is big and strong, though, and stands the best chance of beating Chester," he added.

"Tuxedo is always tough and Burke Catholic has one of the best players in the area in Joe Dombrowski. They're all tough. I guess it should be a pretty good race this year."

Bob Abborino:



Games people play-- kiddy football, anyone?

At last, Joe Namath and I have something in common -- besides our beards and mutual admiration for Joe, that is.

I, too, have been thinking about suing Sports Illustrated. The reason I don't is because my lawyer tells me I'd be clobbered in court. What a country! They can steal a guy's idea and he can't do a thing about it.

What's got me hot is this:

In its Nov. 17 issue, SI printed a story about some birds in Chicago and points east and west who play what they call tabletop football.

Tabletop football is played with those kid games you see at your local toy stores. The three games mentioned in SI were Pro Quarterback, APBA and Strat-O-Matic. They're played with dice, cards and slide rules.

They're intended for kids, the manufacturers claim, but are so sophisticated they'd give Giants' quarterback Fran Tarkenton a brain-lock. Of course, sometimes I wonder if Tarkenton doesn't get a brain-lock with the real thing.

So what's the big deal?

What the big deal is, is that I had the idea first. I've been meaning to write about it for eons. In fact, I've been a tabletop quarterback for as long as forever.

We have our own league in The Times Herald-Record sports department. And we have been thinking of going national -- well, at least county.

Like I said, you play it with the kid football games. The game we use is Pro Football. It's got all the big-time goodies like halfback options, fullback draws, screen passes, off-tackle slants, and sweeps, forward passes, fieldgoals, punts, etc.

You can call your own defenses, too -- 5-3-3, 7-2-2, pass defense and kick defense, plus formation shifts to the right, left or balanced.

It's cool. Can you think of a cooler way to do your thing?

So far, we have only four teams in the league: Louie's Lions, Roger's Raiders, John's Jets and Bob's Broncos, but we've been thinking of

expansion.

What's really great is that there's all the action and tension of being a real coach, just the thing for frustrated Vince Lombardis or Joe Namaths.

Louie, for instance, was so shook-up recently that he almost didn't make it for a scheduled game with John's Jets. His defense hasn't been functioning too well of late and he was afraid the Jets' wide-open offense was going to rip him to shreds.

Roger scouts all three teams, keeping charts so that he can work out his game plans. Apparently, it works pretty good for him. He's leading the league in defense.

My style is wide-open passing -- just like Joe Willie. The one time I shelved my game plan, I got beat 14-0, the only shutout in the league. Pretty bad, when you realize that I average about 24 points a game.

It's not easy going, by any means, though. When the other guys -- and a few gals -- in the office hear about our league they shake their heads and give us funny looks. Sometimes, I even give myself a funny look.

At least we don't go as far as the guys in the SI article. Some of those weirdoes wear the strangest get-ups, like Mickey Mouse suits, G.I. Joe uniforms and Beatle wigs. All we wear are the standard football uniforms and pads. After all, it's a football game, isn't it?

Where those Chicago copycats have outdone us, though, is in the cheerleading department. We have yet to figure out something in that direction. The trouble is that everytime we approach one of the girls with the idea, they scream -- not for help, but with laughter.

Anyway, we have fun. And, Jim Wilson, if you're laughing while you read this, consider yourself challenged to a game. You don't scare any of us with your Coach of the Year award. You won't have those Minisink Valley studs to help you out in this game. And there's no way you can psyche-up the dice at halftime.

Highland cagers flexing for title shot

5th in a series

HIGHLAND

Highland High School basketball coach Rich Becker is hoping that two forwards totaling 430 pounds will enable him to muscle in on the Ulster County Athletic League championship.

Senior Dick Sears and sophomore Perry Monroe both stand 6-foot-2. Sears tips the scales at 240, while Monroe weighs 190. "They should at least be able to cover a lot of acreage underneath the basket," Becker said with a sly chuckle.

Sears is one of two starters returning from last year's 5-7 fifth place team. Senior guard John Crawford (5-11) will be working towards his fourth varsity letter this season.

"I like to think of Crawford as being one of the better backcourt men in the county," Becker said. "he sets up our plays and hustles all over the place."

The Highlanders will have two other returning players--Joe Cristaldi and Tom Distasi. cristaldi, a six-foot senior, will be a guard along with 5-11 Distasi.

Monroe, who started out last season as a jayvee player and then moved up to the varsity, is also considered a returnee by Becker.

550-pound bear taken

ALBANY

A huge black bear, scaling 550 pounds live weight, was the most impressive taken during the early bear season held in nine Adirondack counties, according to a report issued by the State Conservation Department.

The mammoth animal, was taken in Herkimer County.

When Monroe left the jayvees they had an 8-2 record. Without him, however, they finished 9-9 for the season.

Senior Hardy Marz (5-11) has also caught Becker's eye. "He didn't see much action last year but he has a lot to offer," the coach said.

Ron Monroe (6-3), Perry's sophomore brother, is listed as a guard candidate along with classmate Clifford Hicks (5-10). Becker classifies Hicks the team's

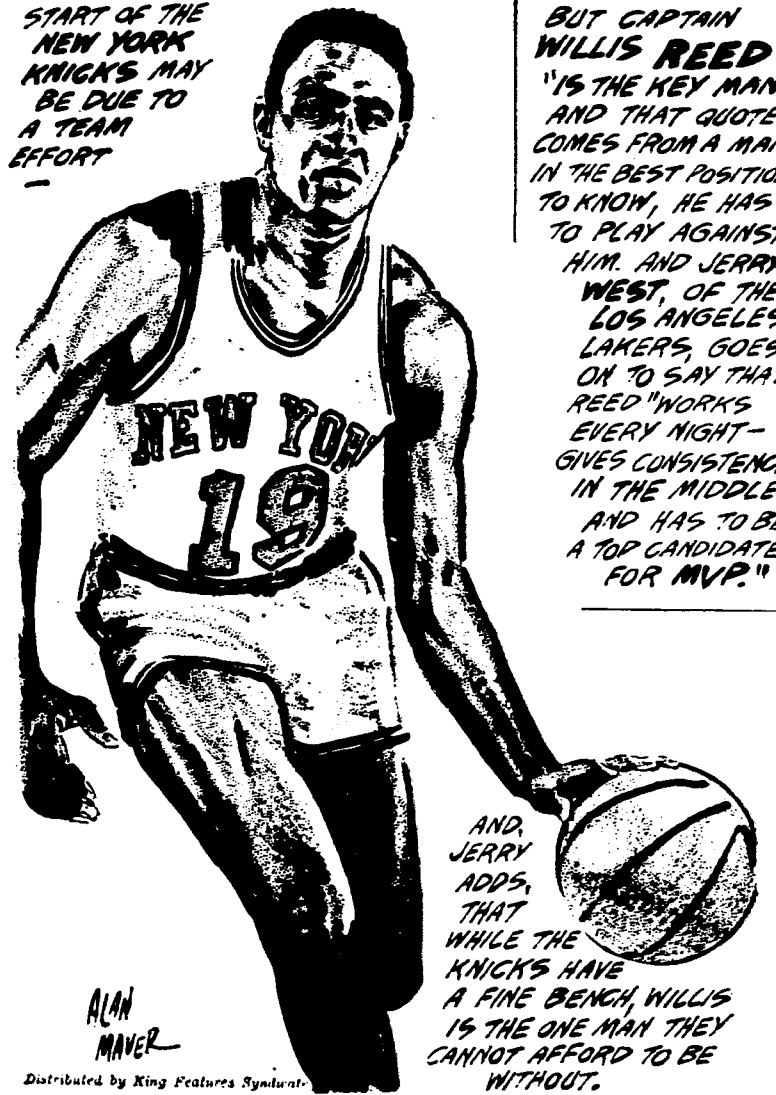
best jumper. Juniors Joe Scaggero (5-11) and Keith Williams (5-10) are also vying for a guard spot.

"We'll be a countering ball team this year," Becker said. "By that I mean we'll do just the opposite of whatever the other team's defense does. We'll try to upset their game plan or strategy. Basically, though, we've got the good big boys inside so we'll try to go to them as much as possible."

"We have good depth expect to use everybody on the team quite a hit, though", Becker added. "I think Rondout, Onteora and Pine Bush will be the team to look out for besides ourselves."

Highland opens its UCAL season Friday at home against New Paltz.

THE FANTASTIC START OF THE NEW YORK KNICKS MAY BE DUE TO A TEAM EFFORT



BUT CAPTAIN WILLIS REED "IS THE KEY MAN." AND THAT QUOTE COMES FROM A MAN IN THE BEST POSITION TO KNOW, HE HAS TO PLAY AGAINST HIM. AND JERRY WEST, OF THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS, GOES ON TO SAY THAT REED "WORKS EVERY NIGHT-- GIVES CONSISTENCY IN THE MIDDLE-- AND HAS TO BE A TOP CANDIDATE FOR MVP."

AND JERRY ADDS, THAT WHILE THE KNICKS HAVE A FINE BENCH, WILLIS IS THE ONE MAN THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO BE WITHOUT.

Rally slated

POUGHKEEPSIE

The Poughkeepsie Sports Car Club will hold a time-speed-distance (TSD) rally at noon Sunday.

The rally will cover 70 miles, starting and finishing at Gibson's Colonial Inn, Red Oaks Mill, south of Poughkeepsie on Rt. 376.

Registration opens at 11. For more information, call Mrs. W.K. David at 462-1723.

Laurel results

1ST \$3,500 c/mg 2 yo m 6 fur			
off 12:30 1-2 time 1:13 3-5			
Jemarjo Pet (Howard)	19:20	7:40	6:20
Hypothecate (Grove)		3:20	3:00
Ray Bee (Imparato)			19:00
2ND \$3,200 c/mg 3&up f&m 1 mi			
off 12:58 1-2 time 1:39			
Martome (Castillo)	12:20	6:40	4:40
Sindao (Rincon)		50:80	25:60
Adaptable Son (Lee)			10:00
Daily Double (4-5) paid \$77.80			
3RD \$4,300 m/mg 2 yo 1 mi			
off 1:24 time 1:38 2-5			
Cispar (Lee)		5:00	2:80 2:40
Our Senator (Cusimano)		3:20	2:80
Cohee (Baboolal)			3:00
4TH \$3,300 c/mg 4&up 6 fur			
off 1:49 1-2 time 1:12 1-5			
Pulltight Knob (Maple)	12:00	4:60	3:60
Bright Beam (Nelson)		3:20	2:80
Madi (Feliciano)			4:40
5TH \$3,500 c/mg 2 yo m 6 fur			
off 2:18 time 1:12 3-5			
Brick Castle (Giovanni)	7:60	5:20	3:60
Tudor Winds (Canessa)		15:00	6:80
Cockney (Howard)			4:20
Exacta (3-11) paid \$147.80			
6TH \$3,900 c/mg 3&up f&m 6 fur			
off 2:44 1-2 time 1:12 1-5			
Loftily (Cusimano)	7:60	4:60	3:00
Leander (Imparato)		7:20	4:80
Princess Touchy (Kunitake)			5:20
7TH \$11,000 alw 3 yo 1 mi			
off 3:14 1-2 time 1:36			
Native Heir (Baltazar)	14:00	6:40	2:80
Never Wink (Rincon)		4:40	2:80
Honey Taylor (Gress)			2:40
8TH \$4,500 alw 3&4 yo 7 fur			
off 3:39 1-2 time 1:24			
Heavenly Robes (Passmore)	19:40	6:00	4:40
Attempt to Spin (Culmore)		7:20	4:80
Foelie Fiend (Cusimano)			3:20
9TH \$3,500 c/mg 3&up 1 mi			
off 4:05 1-2 time 1:38 4-5			
Meatball (C Cooke)	23:60	7:60	5:40
Hy Vimy (Giovanni)		4:00	3:60
To The Point (Sigler)			5:00
Attendance 6,323. Handle 3089.900.			