

BASKETBALL'S NOT FAIR

The St. Peter Lutheran High School basketball team recently competed in the state championship final game. Here is the account of that unusual match.

Skip: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Skip Wallace reporting from the State High School Basketball Championships. Our broadcast this afternoon covers a match in Division 1A between the St. Peter Rams and the Dogleg Corners Hounds. Both teams have played their hearts out to get here, Bob.

Bob: Yes, they have, Skip. It should be an interesting game, because St. Peter and Dogleg Corners have radically different styles of play. At 6'5", Tommie Willis, the Rams center, is the tallest kid on the floor. So, I'm sure they'll be looking to feed him a lot. The Hounds, though, rely predominantly on speed and the fast break.

Skip: Hang on, Bob. I'm getting word on something in my ear. What was that, Maggie?

Maggie: There has been a development regarding the Dogleg Corners team. A washed-out bridge has stranded the team and, apparently, they will not make it.

Skip: Have the officials said what they're going to do, Maggie?

Maggie: The Dogleg Corners team has invoked Rule 12, Paragraph 15.

Skip: Maggie, did you check the rulebook on that?

Maggie: Yeah, Skip. It's a never-used option in the high school rules that allows them to elect a proxy team to play for them in a case like this.

Skip: Okay. Bob, what do you think?

Bob: Well, Skip, it's a new one on me. But if that's what the rules say, then I guess it's a matter of deciding who they're going to pick as their proxy team. If I had to make a guess, I'd say the Hootville Owls. They're from the same conference and have a long history between them.

Skip: You could be right on that, Bob. Let's go down to Zach, who has the captain of the St. Peter team with him.

Zach: Thank you, Skip. Jimbo Walker, as captain of the Rams, how do you feel about this afternoon's game? Are you a little nervous?

Jimbo: Yes, sir, maybe a little.

Zach: Jimbo, are you aware of the situation with the Dogleg Corners team?

Jimbo: Yes, sir. They just told us.

Zach: How do you feel about it?

Jimbo: Well, sir, if it's in the rule books, then we just have to go along with it. We'll be playing our hardest, whoever we face on the court.

Zach: Well said, Jimbo. There is some speculation they might elect Hootville to replace them. How do you think you would match up against them?

Jimbo: I know they are like Dogleg Corners in size and style.

Zach: Okay ... I'm getting word that the team Dogleg Corners has chosen is coming into the building now. Bob and Skip, back up to you.

Skip: Thanks, Zach. Buddy, can you get a camera on them coming in the door?

Bob: Skip, isn't that ...?

Skip: Yes, it is, Bob. It's unusual to have someone of his stature at a Division 1 High School

Championship game. Maybe he has a relative playing in another division or something.

Bob: Look, Skip. It looks like there are a bunch more NBA players coming in.

Skip: Yeah, Bob. There must be something going on that we don't know about. Buddy, I know it's fun to show the celebrities and that it is certainly unusual for all those NBA stars to be here for this small school game, but if you could give us a camera on the substitute team that will play St. Peter ... what?

Buddy: That is the substitute team.

Skip: Are you serious, Buddy?

Buddy: Yes, sir.

Bob: Can they do that, Skip?

Skip: Well, Bob, I see the referees huddled down on the court, I would say they have the same question. Maggie, can you help us on this? What exactly does the rule say?

Maggie: It doesn't seem to put any restriction on whom they can elect.

Bob: I don't believe I've ever heard of anything like this.

Skip: Zach, are you still there?

Zach: Yeah, Skip. Can you believe this?

Skip: Zach, do you still have the captain of the Rams with you?

Zach: Just one second, Skip. I'll grab him ... Jimbo, have you gotten the word on who your opponent will be? Jimbo. Jimbo.

Jimbo: Yeah, uh ... uh ... they just told us.

Zach: How do you feel about playing against some of the best players in the NBA, Jimbo? Jimbo?

Jimbo: It's not fair. It's not fair.

Zach: Well, Skip, I would say that about sums it up. Back up to you.

Skip: Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to make broadcast history here this afternoon. It's only two minutes till tipoff. This match between St. Peter and ... who do we even call them? I guess since they are surrogate players and not from any specific team, we will have to call them the Dogleg Corners Hounds. Bob, what do you think?

Bob: My guess is this will either set a precedent for other states or this will cause the State Athletic Association to change the rules. I'd bet on the latter. Either way, it will certainly go down in the record books as a "Believe it or not".

Skip: Okay, sports fans, we're ready to go. There's the tip, and a Ram player has slipped around the larger Hounds player to come up with the ball. They're on a fast break and, wow, Bob, did you see that? They blew right by the Hounds defender for an easy layup. Wasn't that a shocker?

Bob: Actually, Skip, I think the Hounds player had just bent down to tie his shoelace when they went by.

Skip: Never-the-less, Bob, the Rams of St. Peter have put up the first score against the highly favored Dogleg Corners team.

Bob: Yes, ... ip ... th ... was a ... play.

Skip: Okay, t ... Ho ... have t ... pla ...

Rod: Bob? Skip? Can you hear me? ... We're sorry for the inconvenience, ladies and gentlemen, but we've apparently lost the signal from the basketball game. We will return to the game as soon as we restore the satellite connection ... While we

work on those technical difficulties ... I believe ... we have alternate programming for you to enjoy ... Yes, please stay with us for this presentation of “Heidi”.

(An hour later)

Rod: Rod Nance here with an update for you on the St. Peter and Dogleg Corners basketball championship game. I believe we have a visual. Yes, Skip, can you hear me?

Skip: Yes, I hear you, Rod.

Rod: I see it's halftime, Skip, and by the look of the scoreboard, it appears to be an unusually close game. The Hounds, highly favored, are only leading by four points in a low scoring contest, 12 to 8.

Skip: Actually, Rod, the scoreboard only has two digits for each team's score. The Hounds are ahead by a score of 112 to 8 at this halfway point.

Rod: I see. Well. What can you tell us about the game?

Skip: Rod, I'm going to give you to Zach, down on the court. Go ahead, Zach.

Zach: Yeah, guys, I have Jimbo Walker, the captain of the St. Peter Rams here with me. Jimbo, what can you tell us about this first half from a player's perspective?

Jimbo: It's not fair. It's not fair.

Zach: Jimbo, what do you think the coach will tell you to do differently in the second half?

Jimbo: It's not fair. It's not fair.

Zach: Well, Skip, that about sums it up down here. B ... k ... o yo ...

Rod: Ladies and gentlemen, I apologize once again for the loss of our signal. Please continue enjoying

our special broadcast of “Heidi” while we work on the problem.

(An hour later)

Rod: Skip, can you hear us?

Skip: Yeah, Rod, I hear you.

Rod: I see the game’s over. What was the final score?

Skip: The final today was Dogleg Corners Hounds 325 and St. Peter Rams 8.

Rod: A tough loss for the Rams, Skip.

Skip: Yes, it was, Rod ... Zach, are you there?

Zach: Yeah, Skip. I have Jimbo Walker, captain of the Rams, here. Jimbo, any closing thoughts on the effort today?

Jimbo: It's not fair. It's not fair.

Zach: Back to you, Skip.

Skip: Buddy, did we get an audio on the Rams coach when they huddled up before heading off the court?

Buddy: Yeah, we got it, Skip, but I don't have access to it right now.

Skip: Okay, can you at least summarize it for us quickly?

Buddy: "But many that are first will be last, and the last first."

Skip: Kind of sounds like something Biblical, doesn't it, Bob? ... What was that, Maggie?

Maggie: It is something Biblical.

Skip: That about wraps it up. Back to you, Rod.