



Junior High Tournament Victors



COUNTY CAGE CHAMPS--This is Robert O. Gibson squad that won Clark County Junior High post-season basketball tournament with 67-65 victory over city league titlists from Roy Martin Junior High. Front (from left) Lanny Massey, Steve Waite, Lee Mott, Gary Stange and Charles Finley. Rear (from left) Coach Lloyd Booth, Ralph Litster, Joe Pinckney, Billy Powell, Larry Wilson and William Prater, manager.

By MARK QUEEN
OUR CONGRATULATIONS to Las Vegas High's fine basketball team on its victory in the state "big-school" basketball tournament in Reno. In marching to the local school's first state championship in five years, the Wildcats demonstrated that poised team-play can accomplish "miracles."

No one gave Las Vegas much of a chance to go all the way this past season and even Coach Dick Truman described his current crop of cagers as a "bunch of discards" when the campaign started last fall. But alert ball-hawking and a stout defense, coupled with a coolly-calculated team effort on offense, turned this so-called "raggedy-tag" outfit into an unbeatable combination when the blue chips were down.

We also would like to congratulate Morris Stowers on being selected for the all-tournament team after a rather disappointing performance in the Southern Zone eliminations a week earlier. Morris and his superb Rancho High teammate Chuck Eaholtz, together with the rest of the Ram squad, almost upset the Las Vegas applectart in the state final. But the Wildcats were not to be denied, and after watching Rancho come from behind to tie things up in regulation time, they had what it took to win out in the extra period.

Had Rancho managed to beat Las Vegas in that hectic final game, it would have climaxed a "rags to riches" story to rival the Wildcats' own saga this season. The Rams looked like a well-beaten team right up to the final seconds of its semi-final game with Sparks. But with Eaholtz and Stowers playing inspired ball, the Rams rallied to edge the Railroaders by two points and earn the shot at Las Vegas.

Rancho's inspired finish against Sparks left the Railroaders wondering what hit them. When they returned to their dressing room after it was all over, the Sparks boys just sat there in stunned silence.

BEFORE RINGING DOWN the curtain on the high school basketball season, it behooves us to agree with sports editors Bruce Banke of the Las Vegas Sun and Chris Schaller of the Carson City Appeal that selecting entrants in the state championships through post-season zone tournaments is patently unfair.

The experience of Reno's Wooster High, which swept to the regular season AA championship in the northwest while compiling an 18-0 record, points up the injustice of this system. A let-down in the zone tournament eliminated Wooster and sent Fallon and Sparks, two also-rans in league competition, into the state finals.

This same condition exists in certain sections of the NCAA post-season eliminations to determine a so-called national college champion. Davidson and Duke were victims of this arrangement this year. It's about time both the Nevada and NCAA authorities initiated reforms.

And by the same token, it has always seemed a little ridiculous to us for the National Basket-

ball Association to hold similar "playoffs" at the close of the regular season to determine which teams will eventually play for the pro title. Under this setup, it is possible for the third place team in either division of the NBA to wind up as champion. The same goes for the National Hockey League, with its tortuous Stanley Cup playoffs.

But we see little prospect of any changes in these sorry situations in the near future. And the reason can be given in one word--"money." As long as zone tournaments and playoffs rake in large gobs of dough-re-mi, the guys in the front office are going to see that the "system" is preserved.

Thank goodness the major baseball leagues don't prostitute themselves by going through such shennanigans to arrive at a World Series winner each year.

PREDICTION: Sugar Ray Robinson will wind up fighting for the world middleweight boxing crown again before he's much older--and he's plenty old already!

The five-time former champ is beating the drums for another crack at the 160-pound title following his second round knockout over once-potent Jimmy Beecham in Jamaica the other

night. Jimmy was a good boy not too long ago.

Robinson, at 165 1/2 (it says here is small print), reportedly showed flashes of his former skill and hitting power as he finished off Beecham in exactly five minutes and four seconds of actual fighting. If he can get past one of the ranking middleweights--say our own seventh-rated Gene Bryant, for instance--don't be surprised if Joey Giardello or his successor isn't matched in a title bout with the Sugar Man.

Stranger things have happened. And as we said before, "money" can produce some ridiculous situations.

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