

Crosgile and DePaul win Wayne battle

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WAYNE - Wayne sports fans always seem to get whipped into frenzy whenever Wayne Valley and DePaul High Schools find themselves pitted against each other in an athletic event. What adds to the fervor is that these matchups occur rarely, since the schools had always resided within different divisions in the Northern Hills Conference.

This year, area fans were treated to conference crossover games between the two. In November, the two schools delighted town fans with a high scoring, thrilling football game that was won by DePaul, 42-35.

The sequel was due to take place less than a month later when the two teams were to meet in the boys' basketball opener. Unfortunately, a snow storm short circuited the game. It was postponed to mid season.

The game finally took place last week at DePaul. When fans showed up for the game, emotion was sky high. Everyone, it seemed, was decked out in DePaul-green or Valley-blue. Good natured cheers echoed throughout the gym. Healthy school pride was evident for all to see.

DePaul won the game, 70-54, but

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in a shocking twist, no one seemed to care . . . at least not that much.

DePaul entered the game in a state of despair. And it had nothing to do with basketball. In fact, the team is off to an impressive 9-5 record.

The feeling of sadness stemmed from a loss that does not count on the record. The DePaul community lost a family member when Keith Elwood, a former boys' basketball player (1972-1975), suddenly died of a heart attack. He was 51 years old.

Elwood was DePaul's all-time leading scorer, until Justin Crosgile broke the mark two weeks ago. Elwood's family and several former DePaul classmates attended the DePaul-Wayne Valley game. DePaul retired his number prior to tip off. Presenting the family with a framed Elwood No. 20 jersey, fittingly, was Crosgile.

Tears filled the gym. There were even a few tears and wide shows of support from those dressed in Valley blue. And that was a little more than a polite show of respect. Elwood was a Wayne resident. His loss was not just hard felt at DePaul, but all over town.

Once the heart rendering ceremony ended, the game tipped off. The ensuing excitement over a clash between DePaul and Wayne Valley seemed to offer fans a temporary escape from the grief.

Sadly, the "escape" would not even last until halftime. With 1:37 left in the first half, shock struck Wayne Valley when point guard Jason Rosenberg, the team's second

leading scorer and leading assist man, went down with what appeared to be a very serious neck injury.

The hard playing Rosenberg slammed head first into a DePaul player in an attempt to pick up a loose ball. The collision sent Rosenberg to the ground. He displayed no movement right away, but lay prone on the floor for over 30 minutes while trainers for both schools were at his side. Wayne Township emergency personnel arrived quickly and carried him off in a stretcher.

The injury caused a complete role reversal in the gym. Valley began the night by lending support to grief-stricken DePaul. In less than an hour, it was Valley grieving in what appeared to be a serious injury to a 17-year old. And it was DePaul lending support to a fallen foe. The gym turned quiet for some time.

Play did not immediately resume after Rosenberg was carried off the court. Referees declared that the first half was over, even though there was still 1:37 left. Instead, an extra 1:37 was tacked on to the third quarter.

"That was the right call," DePaul coach Bart Fazio said. "Everyone was concerned about Jason. We were all worried. Both teams, I think, needed to get into the locker room to collect their thoughts."

The two rivals have likely never been more united. They shared in each others sadness. They were there to support each other. The game got played. DePaul won. But the only thing that separated these two schools was the color of their uniforms.

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