

Commentary

King's message not lost on youth

It's easy to say today's youth doesn't appreciate the sacrifices and differences made by its parents, grandparents and every older generation. Because usually it's true.

Children pay more attention to iPods, Playstations and the latest reality shows than civics.

But those kids who took the court at Buffalo State College Monday in the fourth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Basketball Challenge knew full well what that day meant. And it's a heck of a lot more than giving up a day off of school to play ball.

The kids, whose parents were children themselves when King was murdered, came to play a slate of non-league games in memory of the great civil rights activist. But history was not lost on the athletes who suited up Monday. They know the stories and lessons learned from King's triumphs and eventual tragic death, even if it is only from their social studies classes.

"It means a lot for all that he did for everybody, by showing every type of race that we all should be equal," St. Joe's senior Domonic Cook said. "It's great to have so many races out here playing against each other. It shows everything that he has done."

The Challenge featured a wide mix of talent from all

across Western New York. It had Buffalo schools McKinley and City Honors, Catholic schools St. Joe's and Canisius and suburb schools Kenmore West, Franklinville and Batavia. It represented the melting pot of our country with athletes from many different ethnic backgrounds.

It may look like just a four-game series showcasing some of the best talent in Western New York, but there is much more to the Challenge than that. It demonstrates all of the advancements we as a society have made in the 40 years since King's tragic death.

His dream may not have been realized yet — racism remains prevalent in this country despite the strides made to eliminate it — but King was crucial to laying the foundation for future generations to enjoy a day of basketball without having to worry about who is drinking from which water fountain.

"Today is a great deal," Buffalo Public Schools Supervisor of Athletics Aubrey Lloyd said Monday. "We're celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther

King Jr., and what better way to do it than have eight great teams from the Western New York area come out and play basketball. We've invited several teams from as far away as Batavia. These are high-powered teams that wanted to come here and show their talents."

In his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, King said he wanted to see the day when "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers." Well that's what happened Monday, when race wasn't an issue. The only thing that mattered was good basketball between teams that were still learning to play together.

Not even the freezing rain and harsh winds could put a damper on the Challenge. Inside the warm walls, fun ran rampant.

The Challenge and the athletes playing in it provide a view of the future King envisioned. While it may be out of reach for the older generation, the hope is still there with these kids.



MATT KRUEGER

Sports Reporter

e-mail: mkrueger@beenews.com

North

(Continued from page 14)

Desmond Little (152), Constantinou (160), Abbarno (171), Aloisio (189) and Brad Adkins (215) all won by pinfall.

North also took 16th out of 38 teams at the Niagara Frontier Wrestling Officials Association Tournament at Niagara County Community College on Jan. 5-6. Caprow went 6-1 to place third. DesSoye was sixth at 275. Carbrej was 2-2 at 135.

North wrestles at Sweet Home at 6 p.m. on Wednesday before travelling to ECICs at East Aurora High School on Friday and Saturday.

"The kids are working extremely hard and it's starting to finally show for a lot of them," said Swatland.

Williamsville East

The Flames have excelled at the North Tournament and the trend continued this year.

East, winners of the tournament in 2004 and 2005 and third in 2006, took sixth this year with 10 1/2 points.

The Flames had six place winners. Freshman Ben Mikac and junior Max Cohen lost in the 96 and 125 finals, respectively. Mikac lost 5-2 to Grand Island's Joe Amsdill; Cohen was taken down at the buzzer to fall to Lackawanna's Kaled Abdulla, 9-8, at 125. Each were 2-1 on the day.

Junior Sean Trabert, freshman Zach Horton and sophomore Matt Calleri each finished third. Trabert went 4-1 at 135. Horton was 4-1 at 103. Calleri was 3-1 at 130.

Freshman M.P. Joseph was 2-2 at 189. Ryan Cravatta went 2-2 at 112.

One of East's better wrestlers, Jason Deickman, currently 9-2, did not compete.

"To have have six place winners out of 13 kids and one of our starters weren't there, I was very pleased," said East coach Henry Fumerelle. "I see so much development. There is a bright future for Williamsville East wrestling."

Prior to the tournament, East dropped a 35-24 home meet last Wednesday with Iroquois. Overtime losses at 119 (Biechner, 6-4) and 140 (Trabert, 15-14) along with Ernest Jacobs bowing out at 171 with an injury default, hurt the Flames' chances of winning overall.

Horton (103, 7-4), Cohen (125, 6-3), Calleri (130, pin), Joseph (189, pin) and Paul Morales (215, forfeit) picked up victories.

East (2-3) wrestles at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Williamsville South before competing at ECICs.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com



Although Williamsville East's Will Kelly, front, was pinned by Kenmore East's Carl DeSalvo at 171 pounds, the Flames managed to finish sixth overall at the Williamsville North Tournament.

Photo by John Rusac

Devlin takes second at tournament

Senior Steve Devlin's second place finish highlighted Amherst Central wrestling's performance at the Lockport Tournament last weekend.

In the varsity tournament, Devlin went 2-1 at 135 pounds, defeating Greece-Olympia's Mike Knorr, 13-0, and Lockport's Andy Norris, 8-1, before losing to

Roy-Hart's Jeff Brigham, in the finals.

Scoreless in the third period, Devlin attempted an escape but Brigham took him to his back for a pinfall.

Andrew McCauley went 2-2 at 130 and did not place. McCauley beat Roy-Hart's Jordan Cudzilo, 7-4, and pinned Canisius' Kevin

Keating.

In the JV tournament, freshman Nick Celano (119, 3-2) and sophomores Nick Hernandez (152, 3-2) and Pete Battaglia (171, 2-2) fared well.

Devlin had Amherst's only points, a pinfall at 135, in a dual match with West Seneca East last Wednesday.

Marko

(Continued from page 14)

fano. Thirty seconds later, Eric Charlton scored from Anthony Clair.

Charlton scored his second of the game at 13:02 of the second from Jon Toole.

"I thought the kids played very well and limited their chances," said East coach Mike Torrillo. "We controlled the play. In the third, we had a couple power-play chances and hit a few posts."

"Amherst did a sound job defensively and didn't give us a lot of extra chances," he added. "They did a good job in front of the net and made it tough for us to give clear shots."

East had 31 shots on Amherst goalie Sean Smith. Jay Hall made 13 saves for the Flames.

Besides the East game, the Flames play Bishop Timon-St. Jude at 3 p.m. Saturday on the Pepsi Center Feature Rink.

e-mail: pnagy@beenews.com

Amherst
PEPSI
Center

A Town of Amherst
Recreation and Entertainment Center



Amherst's Premier Ice
and
Recreational Facility

FAMILY
GENERAL SKATE
Every Sunday Evening
6:00PM - 7:40PM

1615 Amherst Manor Dr. • Williamsville • 716-631-7555 • www.amherstpepsicenter.com

Join us for one of our many open skating sessions.