

Delphi retains Bacon Bowl Skillet

Comet staff report

The Battle of the Books season ended Feb. 26 with the Delphi team being victorious and retaining the prized Bacon Bowl skillet for the third year in a row.

"Teen Read Week" kicked off the season in October with students receiving a list of 10 selected reading books.

Competitions were held Feb. 23 at Delphi Community High School and Carroll Jr.-

Sr. High School. Teams answered 150 questions chosen from books which appeared on the reading list. A total of 250 students were involved this year.

The winning teams from Carroll and Delphi faced each other for the championship round at Delphi, with Delphi winning 111 to 101.

The county middle school competitions will be March 10 and the Bacon-Bits Bowl will be March 16 at Carroll.

Oracle swimmers end season at state

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50 and 100 freestyles and finishing in the top 16 in both events. He obtained the state cut times (21.98 and 48.18) in both events, but finished 17th in the 50 with a time of 21.78 and 18th in the 100 with a time of 47.78. The state cut times are a three-year average of 16th place. Burton moved up from 29th in the 50 and 20th in the 100. Both swims are school records.

Andy Flora place 15th at last Tuesday's diving regional. Flora would have had to place 8th or better to move on to the state meet

Knights edge Cougars for HHC title

By Greg Hoffman
Contributing sportswriter

Carroll finished regular season with a 16-win, 4-loss record (4-1 in the Hoosier Heatland Conference) as they split a pair of home games, defeating Twin Lakes (2-19) 74-65 and falling short to Lafayette Central Catholic (15-6, 5-0) in the battle for the HHC title, 52-48.

Coming into the CC match-up Friday, Carroll had 10 straight losses by an average of 19.4 points, none by fewer than 3 points to the Knights. The last time the Cougars beat CC was in the conference title game in the 2002-03 season, the last time Carroll won the conference.

It was a packed house at Memorial Gymnasium and Senior Night as Coach Jeff Hodson started his seniors - Primmer Zook, Brad Benson, Carson Spesard, Adam Spesard and Riley Eller. Eller, who tore the ACL in his right knee at Delphi Feb. 6 and left the

game right after the opening tip. (He underwent surgery on Monday.)

The noise level was high all night as both teams left everything on the floor. There were one tie and three lead changes before Carroll opened up a 16-7 with 1:41 left in the first stanza. CC scored the final 5 points of the quarter to trail 16-12 at the stop. The second quarter saw two ties before the Knights took their first lead of the night at 27-25. The visitors led 29-25 at half-time.

Carroll fell behind by 5 points, 34-29 with four minutes left in the third quarter. Baskets by Benson, A. Spesard and a three pointer by Zook capped off a 7-0 run, giving Carroll the lead back at 36-34.

See Cougars page 3B



Squares up
Carroll's Kyle Geheb attempts a jump shot late in the game against Central Catholic. The Knights defeated their conference rival 52-48. Bill Stauffer photo



Battle of the Books competitors

As winners of this year's Battle of the Books, Delphi team members are pictured holding the traveling skillet. They are (left to right): Front - Grace Currie, Abbey Mose, Jordan Hudelson, Payton Windell and Grace Mears. 2nd Row - Chloe Fivecoate, Denise Kendall, Jimmy Reed, Amanda Payne and Autumn Britton. 3rd Row (Carroll team members) - Samantha Pickens, Emma Packard, Holly Peters, Aaron Spesard, Tavish Matthews and Rachel Parker. 4th row (Carroll) - Susanna Taylor, Blake Mills, Jackie Tussinger and Alyssa Ingram. Photo provided

Red-hot Oracles win regular season finale 5 game win streak entering Sectional

By John J. Dunn
Contributing sportswriter

The winning streak continues after last week's 53-45 victory at Clinton Central. In a game that saw the Oracles continue to shoot lights out from the field, the Delphi boys' basketball team won its fifth game-in-a-row for the first time since it won six straight during the 2003-04 season. That was the season that the Oracles played for a Regional championship, won a Sectional title and finished with the school's last winning record of 17-8.

Although this year's edition has not yet enjoyed as much success, it does appear to be heading into tournament play finally clicking on most all cylinders. Once again, the Oracles set new standards for the season in both shooting percentage overall (.692 percent on 18-of-26) and from inside the arc (.714 percent, 15-of-21), while continuing to light it up from three-point range at .600 percent (3-of-5) and distributing the ball to get layups and open shots (14 assists on 18 made baskets). It marked the fourth straight game in which Delphi has shot above .559 percent from the field overall and the sixth-in-a-row in which it has shot at least .435 or better, which appears to be a measuring point for this team.

Dating to last year, all 13 Oracle wins have come when they have shot at least .435 overall from the field, while they are 0-20 during the same span when failing to at least shoot at that mark. They have lost eight times over the last two seasons when shooting .435 percent or below, but as much as stats can lie, this trend seems to be an indicator of the team's success. "We shot the ball very well once again," head coach Brian Tonsoni said. "We were very patient and attacked the lane for easy points." One area that was not as

strong but has been during the winning streak is free throw shooting. The Oracles were an abysmal .519 percent (14-of-27) after shooting a combined 26-of-30 (.867 percent) in its last two wins.

Delphi (7-13) never trailed against the Bulldogs after Austin Hawn pulled up for a three-pointer from the top of the key on the Oracles first possession, setting the offensive tone early. The Oracles led 9-6 at the end of the first period along with baskets by Kris Bender, Tanner Cripe and Justin Snider.

Clinton Central (3-17) would only get as close as one point on two occasions the rest of the way, after scoring the first bucket of the second period to make it 9-8, then hitting two foul shots after a Bender hoop made it 11-10 at the 5:08 mark. Hawn then nailed back-to-back three-pointers to extend the lead to a first half-high of seven points at 17-10, forcing a Bulldog timeout with 4:27 remaining in the half.

The Bulldogs came out of the timeout with a familiar defensive adjustment - "shadowing" and "face-guarding" Hawn for the rest of the game in order to try and limit his touches. But once again the strategy backfired as the rest of the Oracles picked it up at the offensive end, as they have each game during the winning stretch when the opposition switches into a "gimmick" defense.

Bender hit three free throws to close the half and allowed the Oracles to hold onto a 20-16 lead at halftime.

Delphi then began methodically extending its lead, to 38-25 after a Paul Zink basket to end the third quarter, then to a game-high 16 points at 41-25 after a Zink free throw and a Bender bucket to open the final period.

But Clinton Central hit consecutive three-pointers to cut it to 41-31 at the 3:52 mark and continued to cut away to get within six at 48-42 with 40 seconds left. The Oracles struggled mightily from the foul line, at one point missing 10-of-13 free throws. Bender nailed two at the 34.7 second mark to help clinch it.

Bender led another balanced attack with 13 points, followed by Hawn with 11 points and a team-high 6 boards, Zink with 9 points, Cripe with 7, Snider 5, Jordan Wagner 4 and Dustin Salyer and Matt Brown with 2 apiece.

"We had a 16 point lead in the fourth quarter and let up some," Tonsoni said. "That is not acceptable; we need to learn to put people away when ahead in the fourth."

"But I am very proud of these men and their ability to handle adversity and turn the year around," he added.

Delphi now sets its sights on the Class 2A Sectional back in Michigantown, waiting to face the Carroll-Fountain Central winner from Tuesday night (played too late for inclusion in this week's Comet) in Friday night's semi-final round slated to begin at 7:30 p.m., immediately following the Seeger-Clinton Central game at 6 p.m.

Saturday night's Sectional 37 championship game is

scheduled to begin at 7 p.m.

JV wins, finishes 9-11
The Delphi JV team also capped off its season with a 57-53 overtime victory over the Bulldogs. The Oracles used some timely three-point shooting from both Ethan Ross and Cole Whitaker and some clutch free throws by Tyler Smith to end the season on a high note.

Ross nailed four treys and Whitaker added one, along with 6-of-8 overall shooting from the field, while Smith finished 10-of-12 from the charity stripe to lead Delphi with 14 points apiece.

Benoit Gafford added 6 points and a game-high 10 rebounds, while Nick Zink had 6 points, a game-high 4 steals and 6 boards, Zach Condon added 2 points and 7 rebounds and Cody Lohrman had a point.

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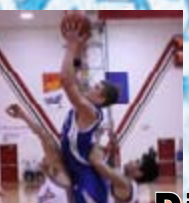
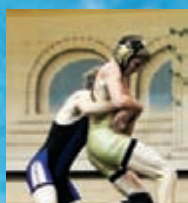
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