



Tim Woods

Miracle on Bonham Ave.

DENISON — Among the many tales being tossed about the jubilant Abraham Lincoln boys basketball locker room here late Monday night was a reference to the 1951 New York Giants.

You know, stories of Bobby Thomson and Sal Maglie and coming from 15 games back and The Miracle on Cogan's Bluff.

No, Lynx Coach Dan Koch said. "It's more like, 'The Miracle on Bonham Avenue,'" a grinning Koch said.

Fair enough. The A.L. boys created their own version of that legendary baseball scenario here Monday night, rallying from the brink of elimination to edge No. 7 Ames 58-56 in the Class 3A substate round.

The Lynx trailed by as many as nine points in the third quarter, and by seven twice in the fourth, before turning the game around with a dramatic defensive surge.

"This was the key," Coach Dan Koch said, tracing a heart on his chest. "These kids play with such courage, such tenacity."

Assistant Coach Larry Kenny, his eyes glistening, asked, "Aren't these kids amazing?"

Yep. "We never gave in," said junior Dave Tornabane, who came off the bench and contributed three steals to the late defensive rally. "In school, people would say, 'Oh, you guys aren't going to make it.' But we've never stopped believing."

When A.L. senior B.J. Coburn went down with a foot injury with 3:17 left in the third period, and the Lynx trailing 42-37, the team's chances of winning seemed all the more remote.

After all, the senior guard had scored nine points, providing practically the only offensive support to Nixon, and had handed out four assists.

But, Coburn said, not every team has a backup point guard like A.L. junior Brian Mains.

"We've had a good backup all year. Brian's worked hard, and he's done a great job," Coburn said of his teammate. "Next year, he's going to be one of the best around."

Mains said, "We were behind, with a lot of pressure on. I was super-nervous. But Coach just told me, 'You've got to run the ball. You can do it.' That gave me a lot of confidence."

And down the stretch, the Mains-led Lynx made the most of their possessions.

Koch said of Mains, "Brian's a good basketball player who's getting better. He took right up where B.J. left off."

Backups Todd Johnson and Matt Johnson also played well, Koch added.

"To win a game like we did, everyone has to contribute," he said. "That includes the starters, the reserves and the other kids on the bench who root for them. We got that kind of contribution."

Wearing a lucky penny inside his right shoe has been like money in the bank to A.L. Assistant Coach Larry Kenny.

Kenny found a penny prior to the Lynx's 66-63 overtime win over No. 5-rated Harlan on Feb. 29 in the first round of a 3A district tournament.

He held onto the penny, and wore it inside his right shoe for A.L.'s 67-60 victory over cross-town rival Lewis Central last Thursday in the district final.

The Penny is now 3-for-3, having been in its customary spot during the Lynx's win Monday night.

"It's charmed," Kenny said. And for the upcoming state tournament, The Penny will be joined by a twin. Guess what Kenny found Monday night?

Like it was last week during the district tournament, the A.L. student section was at its noisiest Monday night.

Even a power outage in Denison Community High School's lighting system that forced a 14-minute delay in the opening tipoff couldn't quiet the Lynx faithful.

"Man, did you hear that crowd again?" A.L. senior Eric Hubbert asked in admiration. "They were fantastic."

The vocal support also was evident during the Lynx's low moments.

When seniors Coburn and Kevin Nixon went down with injuries, the fans buoyed them, no doubt, with "Let's Go" cheers.

And when Coburn had left the gymnasium to have his injured foot X-rayed, the students implored the Lynx to "Win it for B.J."

The victory finally secured, the students mustered roars of approval for the individual A.L. team members, including Koch, who cut down the net from the Lynx's second-half offensive basket.

Like Koch said, a team effort.

Tim Woods is a sports writer at The Daily Nonpareil.

Unbelievable! Lynx to state

By **TIM WOODS**
Nonpareil Sports Writer

DENISON — Finally, the Abraham Lincoln student section must change its tune. Last week, the A.L. fans cheered on their favorite boys basketball team with chants of "Go to state."

But by 9:22 p.m. here Monday, the Lynx were being serenaded with the ultimate cheer: "On to state!"

"That's right. On to state." "Words can't express how I feel," A.L. senior Kevin Nixon said a few minutes after hitting two free throws to give the Lynx a dramatic, come-from-behind 58-56 victory over Ames in a Class 3A substate game at Denison Community High School.

WELL, KEVIN, AT LEAST TRY. "This is unbelievable!" Nixon said, shaking his head.

The Lynx followed the lead of senior super-sub Ned Greer, who scored all 11 of his points in the final frame, to earn their first state-tournament berth since 1963.

"It's sweet. Awfully sweet," Greer said. The Lynx are just 8-14 overall — but, more importantly, 3-0 in the 1988 post-season tournament.

"We're playing our best basketball of the year right now," Greer said. In the 3A quarterfinals, to be held at Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines, A.L. will face No. 2-rated Cedar Rapids Kennedy on March 16 at 1:45 p.m.

"Cinderella in Nikes," a beaming A.L. Coach Dan Koch said of his players. "I can say how proud I am of these kids, but it still doesn't seem enough."

Kennedy (22-1) whipped cross-town rival Prairie 75-53 Monday night in another 3A substate contest.

THE LYNX SPENT MUCH OF the final three quarters on the ropes. After leading 21-16 at the first-quarter break, Ames' zone defense packed in around Nixon and limited his scoring opportunities.

The Little Cyclones (16-5) built leads of 33-29 at halftime and 46-39 after three periods.

"We were doing a pretty good job of denying Nixon the basketball," Ames Coach Wayne Clinton said. "We were able to come up and get our hands up to keep it away from him."

But Greer spoiled all that in the final frame.

The 6-foot-1 senior hit a jump shot from the left side to open the period; scored from the lane with six minutes to go in regulation time; and stole the basketball, then scored a layup, with 5:25 to go as A.L. climbed back to within three points at 50-47.

"He turned the game around," Clinton said of Greer.

NIXON SCORED ONCE and Greer twice, on inside plays to put the Lynx ahead for the first time since the opening quarter. But Danny Daniels countered twice for the Little Cyclones — his second

basket, with 2:27 left, giving them their final lead at 54-53.

Following an A.L. timeout with 2:13 to go, the Lynx's Dave Tornabane stole the basketball from Mike Gabrielson, and Nixon finished off the play at the other end of the floor with a short jumper to make it 55-54.

But with 1:15 left, Ames' Duane Magee flashed across the lane to score his team's final basket.

That set the stage for the final furious seconds. Greer sank a free throw at 0:52 after being fouled by Magee, tying the game. And with 19 seconds left, Nixon swished a pair after being fouled by Daniels.

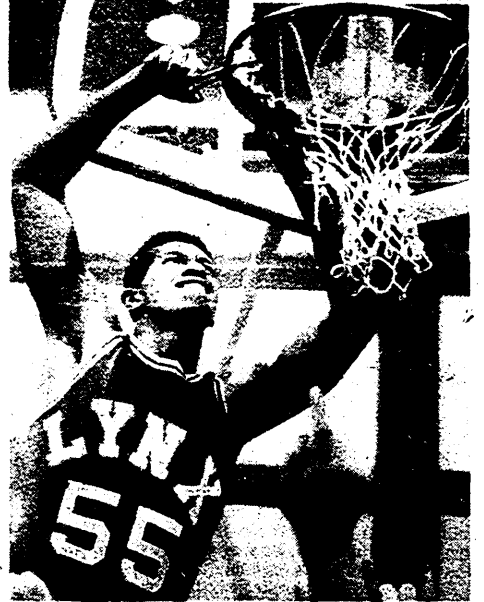
ABRAHAM LINCOLN (58)
B.J. Coburn 4 0-9, Rob Goodwin 1 1-3, Eric Hubbert 2 3-5, Kevin Nixon 9 5-7 2-4, Chuck Miller 0 0-2, Ned Greer 5 1-11, Todd Johnson 1 2-4, Dave Tornabane 0 0-0, Brian Mains 0 0-0, Matt Johnson 0 0-0, Totals: 22 12-24 58.

AMES (54)
Joe Girolletti 4 0-10, Bill Hoelle 1 2-2, Danny Daniels 5 3-13, Duane Magee 7 2-3, Mike Walsh 1 0-2, Jeff Isaacson 2 2-2, Fred Haggard 1 0-2, Chad Spencer 0 0-0, Totals: 22 9-11 54.

Three-point goals: Abraham Lincoln, Coburn, Nixon; Ames, Girolletti 2, Magee. Total fouls: Abraham Lincoln 10, Ames 20. Fouled out: none. Technical fouls: none.



Abraham Lincoln senior Ned Greer scores a momentum-turning layup in the fourth quarter Monday night while being fouled by Ames' Joe Girolletti (22). The shot brought the Lynx back to within three points after they had trailed by seven. — Nonpareil photo by Tim Woods.



Abraham Lincoln senior Eric Hubbert takes his turn at cutting down the net Monday night. Hubbert had seven points and six rebounds in A.L.'s 58-56 win. — Nonpareil photo by Tim Woods.

Drake's Garner 'shocked' at being fired

DES MOINES (AP) — Gary Garner said he was "shocked and disappointed" after being fired Monday as Drake University basketball coach Monday, two days after his team ended the 1987-88 season with its sixth consecutive loss.



Gary Garner

"If you gave us four more wins, we'd have 18 wins and we'd be in the NIT and everyone would be happy," Garner said. "That's why I was shocked and disappointed."

Athletic Director Curt Blake said he dismissed Garner because the program had not improved the way he had expected over the past two years, a time in which the university had put more money into basketball.

Drake had a 95-104 record in seven seasons under Garner, including a 14-14 mark this year.

The Bulldogs lost to Illinois State 72-60 on Saturday in the first round of the Missouri Valley Conference tournament, their ninth loss in the last 10 games.

Garner's seven years at the school produced only two winning seasons.

"We were hoping for and anticipating continued improvement in that area," Blake said. "It simply did not occur. It was a situation where basically our expectations were not met in regard to the team's progress and improvement."

WHEN DRAKE SCALED back its football program from NCAA Division I-AA to Division III following the 1985 season, university officials said they would step up their commitment to basketball.

Garner had his best season at Drake in 1985-86, guiding the Bulldogs to a 19-11 record and a berth in the National Invitational Tournament. However, Drake lost seven of the final 10 games the following season to finish 17-14, then slumped again this year after standing 13-5 at one point.

"The bottom in all of this is that we have to make progress," said Blake, who has been Drake's athletic director since May of 1986.

"We have not made progress over the last two years. We intend to make progress and move forward."

Asked if he felt the university had backed the basketball program strongly enough, Blake replied, "Yes, I do. If I did not, we would not be in this position today."

GARNER SAID HIS team was developing and he needed only one more year to establish a winning team.

"The most frustrating thing is knowing what's ahead next year," Garner said referring to the number of players he will have back. "Next year's team will be the best since the Maury John era."

John had a record of 211 wins against 131 losses from 1958 through 1971. John's 1968-69 team finished second in the NCAA tourney, losing to UCLA 85-82.

Garner said he had no immediate plans for the future.

"I'm not bittersweet toward coaching," Garner said. "I want to coach, not to say that's for sure that's what I'm going to do."

Blake said he hoped to appoint a screening committee within 24 hours to select a new coach and that the committee would move as quickly as possible in recommending a successor to Garner.

The committee is expected to include faculty, administrators, alumni and students. Blake said Drake President Michael Ferrari and other administrators have assured him the university will provide the resources needed to hire the best coach he can find.

"From this point on I think it's extremely important to take the proper steps and select the right person so we can begin to move forward," Blake said. "That is the goal. That is the objective. And I have the utmost confidence that we are going to be able to accomplish that."

GARNER, WHO WAS an assistant at Missouri before taking the Drake job, had one year left on his contract.

Garner said he and Drake

reached an agreement about financial and legal matters, and details won't be divulged.

"We resolved legal problems and came to an agreement and it's confidential," Garner said.

The private, four-year university does not disclose its coaches' salaries.

Blake said the decision to fire Garner was his alone and he was not pressured by any grumbling in the community about the coach.

He also said that while he was concerned about Drake's falling attendance, that was not a factor in Garner's dismissal. Average attendance at Drake games has fallen from 4,000 for the 1980-81 season to about 4,500 this season.

In addition, Blake said he wasn't influenced by rumors that some players would transfer if Garner were retained. Drake has a good nucleus of players returning for next season, including four starters.

"Although I will say I do pay attention to them, I always take rumors with a grain of salt," Blake said.

Lions hope to roar in NCAA

By The Associated Press

Now that Loyola Marymount has run through the West Coast Athletic Conference, the Lions expect to run over some more prestigious opponents in the NCAA tournament.

Loyola, the nation's top-scoring team with an average of 110 points, passed 100 for the 22nd time in 30 games and beat Santa Clara 104-96. The Lions were one of four teams that clinched NCAA berths Monday night.

La Salle beat Fordham 79-70 for the Metro Atlantic title, North Carolina-Charlotte took the Sun Belt by beating Virginia Commonwealth 81-79, and Richmond downed George Mason 74-71 for the Colonial Athletic Association crown.

Loyola extended the nation's longest winning streak to 24 games and moved to 27-3.

La Salle, won its 15th straight game to earn its first NCAA bid in five years. The Explorers, winners of all 17 conference games and 24-9 overall, got six 3-point goals and a career-high 24 points from Rich Tarr. He was helped by Lionel Simmons, the MAAC player of the year, whose 23 points pushed him past Tom Gola for the Explorers' single-season scoring mark.

Greg Pedro led the Rams with 32 points.

UNC81, Va. Commonwealth 79

UNC-Charlotte, 22-8, won its first Sun Belt crown since 1977 as conference player of the year Byron Dinkins scored 26 points.



Colorado's Crystal Ford (30) has her shot blocked by Kansas' Deborah Richardson during Monday's Big Eight Conference Tournament championship game in Salina, Kan. The Jayhawks won, 70-69. — AP Laserphoto.

VCU's Phil Stinnie, who finished second in the top player voting, had 25 points for the Rams, 21-11.

Richmond, 74, George Mason 71.

The Richmond Spiders improved their record to 24-6 in clinching a NCAA invitation. Benjy Taylor came off the bench to hit four straight free throws to ice the win. George Mason finished 20-10.

Kansas 70, Colorado 69.

Lisa Baker hit a short bank shot in the lane with one second remaining to give Kansas a 70-69 victory over Colorado in the championship game of the Big Eight Conference Women's Postseason Basketball Tournament and the automatic bid to the women's NCAA tournament.

Michigan's Abbott named top U.S. amateur athlete

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Michigan pitcher Jim Abbott was named Monday night as winner of the Sullivan Award in recognition of being voted the nation's top amateur athlete of 1987.

Abbott, who despite being born without a right hand has become the top baseball player in the country. He was voted the country's outstanding amateur player by the U.S. Baseball Federation last year.

Abbott, 20, of Flint, Mich., is the first baseball player to receive the award in its 58-year history. He's also the first Sullivan winner from Michigan.

"I would like to think that pure athletic ability (was the reason he won), although I know the other thing (his handicap) had a lot to do with it," Abbott said. "But I think that's good too. If this helps other people out somewhere else in the United States to move out and do things, then I'll accept it and keep going on."

The left-hander had an 8-1 record, a 1.70 earned-run average and 51 strikeouts in 47 1/3 innings in helping Team USA to a silver medal in the Pan Am Games tournament last summer.

Jackson in form

NEW YORK (AP) — Mark Jackson scored a season-high 33 points to lead New York past Chicago, 110-98, to top a four-game NBA slate Monday.

Michael Jordan led Chicago with 39 points.

Magic Johnson had 22 points, 17



Jim Abbott

Mark Jackson

SPORTS BRIEFS

assists and 11 rebounds to pace the Los Angeles Lakers past Philadelphia, 110-104.

Thurl Bailey and Karl Malone scored 21 points each and Bobby Hansen added 20 as Utah decked New Jersey, 105-81. Tim McCormick led the Nets with 25 points. Reggie Theus scored 33 points, including three foul shots in the final eight seconds of overtime, to lead Sacramento over Denver, 116-114. The victory made Jerry Reynolds' debut as an NBA head coach a success. Reynolds was named earlier in the day to replace Bill Russell, who was reassigned as the Kings' vice president of basketball operations.

NCAA slaps Gophers

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota Coach Clem Haskins says

Boddie leads Jays

MIAMI (AP) — Eric Boddie hit a three-run homer in the first inning to help lead Creighton over Navy 8-4 in men's college baseball Monday.

Freshman Mike Heathcott, 1-0, pitched the win. Freshman Tom Shafer got the save for the Bluejays, 5-0.

Todd Bibza, 0-2, pitched the loss for Navy, 2-3.

Quinn gets hot

CALGARY (AP) — Dan Quinn scored three goals to lead Pittsburgh past Calgary, 5-4, to top Monday's two-game NHL slate.

Edmonton blanked Winnipeg 6-0 as Wayne Gretzky assisted on five consecutive goals and goalie Grant Fuhr had one assist and 21 saves.