Chiefs prove there is such a thing as too many heroes

Jeffrey R. Plum

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I was approached twice last weekend to do something on Okemos starting catcher Katie King, who had been instrumental in the Chiefs' success throughout the year. Did you know, she reached base on a bunt, twice from the quarterfinal game against Alpena to the championship game against Jenison. An amazing feat when you think about it. It's hard enough just to catch a Jessicas Beach fastball, but to help your team by reaching base in three of the most important games of the year is incredible.

She also sacrificed her body in the eighth inning, going hard into the screen to make a catch on a foul ball that she could have let drop for a strike.

I informed the gentleman I would. I took pictures of her during the state championship game, and I was going to feature her a little bit more in this issue. But then a thought hit me. Katie King wasn't the only one who helped Okemos capture its first state championship in softball.


er. Andrea Oster's sacrifice bunt against Lansing-Everett in the Division I district semifinal game allowed Allison Ellsworth to move into scoring position.

• Jennifer Lynch, who struggled much of the regional tournament, collected a single and scored the winning run against Grand Ledge.

• Ellsworth's game-winning double against Grand Ledge, sending Okemos to the Elite Eight and three wins from a state championship.

• Erin Fabey's two-run double against Alpena gave Okemos some breathing room against an impressive Wildcats team.

• Amy Pelle's mad dash to home to score the winning run in the Chiefs' most impressive run in school history.

• Tracey Budden may not have batted during the tournament, but she proved herself on the field with a steady glove.

• The Okemos bench players who continually cheered and pulled for their teammates throughout the tournament.

They may not have played in the ball games, but their hard work in practice helped the team become a state championship team.

Okemos coach Dan Stots said throughout the tournament run it was a team effort, no one was greater or higher than anyone else.

Sure, a pitcher like Jessicas Beach is going to get the words of praise and the recognition, but she wouldn't have looked very good June 19 against Jenison if she had to chase down each ground ball and pop-up.

In other words, you need good, steady players to surround your top players. Each team that captures a state championship has its stars and has its role players. But without your role players, your stars wouldn't be anything to write home about.

I was impressed with Katie King's style of aggressive play, but I was more impressed with the Okemos team.

Congratulations, Okemos!

Jeffrey R. Plum is hoping to coach his team to a state championship, or two, or five before his life is over, but for now, he is a substitute teacher and a free-lance high school sports writer.

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Holding a 30-24 lead at halftime, Hudson continued its torrid shooting while Morenci want ice cold.

Cassy Luma, who netted 21 points off the bench, was fouled on a 3-point attempt and made 2-of-3 free throws to give Hudson a 43-29 lead with less than two minutes remaining in the third period.

The Bulldogs didn't help their cause in the stanzas, making only one field goal in 10 tries.

"We held them to one basket in the third quarter, and I think that was just a key," Reed said of the decisive period. "We were really flat tonight," Reed admitted. "It looked like we were a step slow."

Morenci's Scott Gallagher scored a team-high 10 points, while Michael McDowell, who hit a couple of 3's late in the game, and Roger Phebus each scored nine points.

Shannon Blesheider tacked on eight off the bench.

The Tigers put the game away with a strong fourth quarter, spreading the floor and knocking down 31 points, including a 15-for-14 effort from the charity stripe.

Hudson received a big boost from Brock Rybicki and Joshua Vance in the fourth quarter, as the duo scored 18 of his 28 points in the final period, while Vance scored seven of his 10 points.

"Everybody, when it was their time, stepped up," Reed said.

Hudson-Morenci JV's

Brian Gleason scored 16 points in Morenci's 78-58 win over Hudson. Dustin Santana netted 15 points, and Robert Rupley added 10 for the Tigers.

Jeffrey R. Plum was a special writer for The Daily Telegram.

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