



Change of Pace

BY TOM HORTON

Armstrong Youths Suffer Most

What do you tell a 16 or 17-year-old kid when he asks why his school is being discriminated against on the athletic field by other schools.

This is the plight of youngsters at Bishop Armstrong High School. It is these young football and basketball players who are the innocent victims of the Metropolitan League's freezeout policy toward Sacramento's only parochial high school.

While students at city schools such as Hiram Johnson, McClatchy and Sacramento High are reading in textbooks of the value of good citizenship and the high principles of democracy and equality for all, a situation that repudates these very doctrines exists right outside the classroom.

The Metropolitan League's defiance of Bishop Armstrong, and the Sac-Joaquin's subsequent roadblock, presents an ugly condition in California's state capital that fails to exist in cities of supposedly smaller stature.

And the sad part of the whole affair is the fact that the young athletes of Armstrong suffer the most.

Take an example of two young boys who grow up together in Sacramento. They play football, basketball and baseball together from the time they are old enough to lift a bat.

Question Should Be Answered

One young man, however, attends a parochial grammar school and then Christian Brothers in his freshman and sophomore years. The other goes to one of the city schools. Both are outstanding athletes and look forward to the wonderful experience of playing on the varsity football team.

But the lad who moves to Bishop Armstrong High School discovers his team is not allowed to compete against the big city schools. The Falcons are not even wanted in any league.

When track season comes, the Armstrong team must travel some 100 miles to some unfamiliar place such as Chico to qualify for the State Meet. On the same afternoon, city athletes may be qualifying at Hughes Stadium, but a few blocks from Armstrong High.

And the spirited football rivalry between the respective schools attended by the two boys never comes to pass. Armstrong has been passed over for meaningless games against teams from Lodi, Stockton and Modesto.

Why? This is the question the city schools, the Metropolitan League and the Sac-Joaquin Section must be made to come forward

More on Armstrong Mystery

The Bishop Armstrong "freezeout" story is an old one, we'll grant you, but from all indications the issue may take on new impact this time.

We have encountered tremendous support from many sources concerning Armstrong's fight to enter the Sac-Joaquin Section and the Metropolitan League. Men who once played at Christian Brothers, Sacramento or McClatchy have called to voice their feelings on the ridiculous turn of events that have killed, for the moment, all football relations between Armstrong and the city schools.

The average fan is up in arms, as well as men in high positions. And important action is forthcoming on the matter.

The Big Three, meanwhile, sits back like a fat cat and waits for the storm to subside. "But we're not going to let it die this time," is the emphatic report from Armstrong backers.

Running the risk of turning this corner into a mailman's column, we would like to present two more letters on the problem:

Dear Mr. Horton:

It was with a great deal of interest and dismay that I read your article in Sunday's paper. Our son, who incidentally is playing his last year of high school football for Bishop Armstrong, has just indicated to us last Friday night that this was probably the last of many of the good matches that would be played between the previously mentioned schools and that he felt it a great shame that the boys to come in the next years of Armstrong High, in such a large area as Sacramento, would not have the opportunity of competing with the local schools as they had in years past.

I was not as aware of the conditions that were existing and your article certainly made me think, especially when we had noticed so many adults eagerly attending the games and in all good sportsmanship aware of the best of each team. We especially noticed those that did not even have children in high school any more.

I was very pleased to see so many sports enthusiasts turning out for all of the games between the local rivals. I do hope that the sports minded people in the community of Sacramento and those of your paper do all they can to adjust a situation that could hurt the spirit of fair play.

Sincerely,
Mrs. John J. Mullin

Dear Mr. Horton:

Mr. Bert Chappell (Hiram Johnson principal) is issuing a poor excuse in dropping Bishop Armstrong from the schedule. At a time when his vice-principal is yelling because of the cost of buses for trips, Mr. Chappell is seeking trips. A very poor, lame excuse. This is decidedly a discriminating act.

A disgruntled football fan.

Mrs. Mullin points up the real shame of the matter, as we pointed out in Tuesday's column; that is the fact that it is the young athletes at Armstrong who suffer. Can the Big Three silence the public voice once again and trample under Sacramento's parochial school for reasons they have not as yet reasonably stated?

Sacramento Section Ugly Duckling in CIF

The Sac-Joaquin Section—more specifically, the Metropolitan League—is looked down upon by many men of high standing throughout northern California as an ugly duckling among the otherwise highly-respected California Interscholastic Federation.

A stubborn refusal by the Sacramento Section to admit parochial schools, namely Bishop Armstrong High of Sacramento, into the section is in direct contrast to the policies of other sections—and conferences—in northern California.

Armstrong made an attempt in 1953 to switch from the North Section, which admits them, into the section in which they rightfully belong, the Sac-Joaquin. That move failed when the section, in a unprecedented secret ballot, voted against the measure that would change the constitution language.

One word, "public," stops Armstrong. Delete that word so that the constitution reads merely schools of secondary grades instead of "public schools," and the Falcons would be a member of the same league that next year will comprise four schools in the city and four in the Grant School District.

The league was originally

drawn up in 1957 as a lineup of local schools, thus eliminating travel. Woodland, however, remains an outside team in the league.

Six other prep leagues in northern California have parochial schools as vital members. St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart are two of the oldest—and most respected—members of the San Francisco prep league.

Marine Catholic High in San Rafael is a member of the Marine County League with six public high schools; Diablo Valley League has St. Vincent's of Vallejo and Humboldt-Del Norte League has St. Bernard's of Eureka. The San Joaquin Memorial High School is a member of Fresno's league and the Bakersfield circuit has Grace High.

San Francisco is a shining example of how a league can operate smoothly and successfully with parochial schools.

"It's a wonderful arrangement as far as we're concerned," said George Canrinus, co-ordinator of health, physical education and recreation for San Francisco's public schools. "St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart are two of the finest members of the league. They are no different than public schools as far as athletic com-

petition is concerned. We have no problem whatsoever and never have had."

This is typical of leagues with parochial schools. Persons connected with these leagues are puzzled over the strange situation in Sacramento, where the city schools have even crossed Armstrong off the non-league schedule.

"I've heard about your problem up there," said Hy Jennings, commissioner of the North Coast Conference for more than 20 years. "It's too bad. What you need there is some personal contact with the persons in the section and some education on the problem."

Jennings pointed out how some of the leagues in his section once had the same clause in the constitution restricting membership to public high schools.

"They did it, maybe, without really thinking. Then when it became obvious that the parochial schools were of a high order, the leagues changed their constitutions to read 'any schools of secondary grades,' and the schools were admitted to the leagues. Since then, I have had no indication that everyone is not getting along fine, both public and parochial schools."

The North Coast Section commissioner also said that in his dealings he has found the parochial schools among the finest when it comes to meeting required standards and adhering to

league rules. "They take great pride in meeting the standards of the CIF," Jennings said.

Now, is Sacramento and the San Joaquin Section in a position where it is justified in keeping

Catholic schools out in the cold?

Bishop Armstrong will gladly follow the rules set up by the Metropolitan League. If only someone would give them the chance.

Council Alerted to 'Freezeout'

J. F. (Sam) Dunne of Sacramento, former director of athletics at Santa Clara University, Monday wrote to a member of the City Council, Dain Domich, in connection with the refusal of the city's three public high schools to schedule football games henceforth with Bishop Armstrong High School.

The letter:

Dear Dain:—

Since you are the only member of the City Council with whom I am personally acquainted and because I know you to be a crusader for all that is right and just, I am taking the liberty of writing you concerning the "freezeout" of Bishop Armstrong High by the three public high schools.

If Bert Chappel, principal of Hiram Johnson, is serious about taking the football squad on a trip, the writer will organize a

committee to raise funds not only to take his team but the squads of Sacramento High and McClatchy as well, on a no-expense tour of San Francisco.

The three principals who approved this "freezeout" should talk to the athletic officials at Stanford, California, USC and UCLA, who made the mistake of "freezing out" Santa Clara, St. Mary's and USF in the 30s. Since then the pros have moved in and have taken over the Sunday dates. There is no substitute at the box office for local rivalry. Stanford and California played both Santa Clara and St. Mary's and did not have to guarantee them a single dollar.

They drew packed stadiums and got round shouldered lugging the money bags to the bank.

Now they draw only fair crowds and have to put up \$25,000 guarantees to fly in teams from the South, the South-

west, the Middle West and the East. Locally, are our citizens more interested in seeing boys from Lodi play in our stadium in preference to Sacramento boys from our own neighborhoods?

I don't see why Brother Eugene has to run around with his hat in his hand waiting for athletic crumbs to fall from the tables of the local high school principals.

Let's handle this matter in the good old American way. Kindly take this matter up at the next Council meeting and right this great wrong. We want the members of the Council to stand up and be counted.

Thanking you for the action you will take on this matter and assuring you of our support in the coming election, I am

Cordially,

J. F. "Sam" Dunne
1220 Ridgeway Drive