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## **BEMUS POINT GYM “DOOMED” Relief for B League: ‘Snake-Pit’ Closing**

BEMUS POINT – What probably is the biggest pain in the neck for a lot of Chautauqua County coaches passed on Saturday night when Bemus Point entertained Cassadaga Valley in a Chautauqua County B League contest.

It was the last basketball road game that will ever be played in Bemus High’s “match box” gym. Students, athletes and fans will be studying, playing and watching in a brand new school which will be ready by September.

Over the years, and especially since Mel Lewellen took over the reins during the 1951-52 campaign, playing at Bemus has been a problem for the opposition.

Figures dug out Saturday bear this out.

Since Lewellen took over, 114 games have been played before the screaming fans in the gym, and only 26 of those contests were lost by the Bemus ball club. In one 1957-58 home-and-home series, Bemus won 98-37 over Randolph at home then lost 58-56 to the Cardinals on the road.

This year was the third in which no club won in the Bemus Point “snakepit.” But this year as something special anyway because no club that has faced Bemus came out a winner anywhere.

The other years of perfect home records were 1957-58 when the team ran up nine straight wins at home, and 1959-60 when it beat all eight opponents it faced.

The most home games any Bemus club has lost under Lewellen is four. That was during the 1962-63 campaign when this year’s undefeated club was underclassmen and getting their lickings.

Playing at Bemus was like playing in a closet. This won't be the case in the future, because the new gym will be full sized.

At the gym, fans not only had to get there early to get a seat, they had to get there early to get in.

The seating to say the least was limited. The majority of the crowd sat on bleachers put on the stage and the rest climbed the stairs and watched the game from the balcony.

If you go there after the jay-vee game got started, it was even money that a sign was on the door and an officer on duty informed you there was no more room.

That was the case Saturday night when the "Sorry" sign went up twenty minutes before the preliminary game.

Inside, the Bemus followers raised the roof with their screams with every Red Dragon basket, volunteered their services to the officials, and more than likely, scared Cassadaga into submission.

But, this was something special. Never before had a Bemus Point team finished the regular season with a perfect record, and, they figured as long as this was the last game here, this might as well be the club to do it. They did, too, whipping Cassadaga 80-38.

The ball club, with little Terry Woodfield, the trigger-man, and Ray Head, doing the leg-work, quickly picked up the tempo of the crowd.

Woodfield was all over the court on defense, and was a big factor in holding Cassadaga to only eight field goals during the first three quarters. Just to keep the Cassadaga defense honest, he had the range from outside and connected, when he wasn't passing inside to Head or Perky Carleton.

If any individual deserves credit for the win, it would have to be Head. The big guy was flawless operating from his inside position. He made eight of 11 shots from the floor in the first half, then added six of 12 during the last half to wind up with 29 points. He left the game with 1:45 to play.

A pleasant surprise for the upcoming sectionals was John Evans, last year's leading scorer in the county who has been sidelined with an ankle injury. Evans came off the bench in the last quarter and pumped in 10 points.

He hit on three straight buckets from 20 feet out, missed one, then bombed in two more.

After the ballgame, Lewellen was accepting congratulations from fans when someone asked why he wasn't wet, referring, of course, to the traditional shower.

"I'll take it after 21 straight," he said.

Three more wins and Bemus becomes the Sections Six Class B champion. But, Mel will be the first to admit that the next three could be the toughest.

A healthy Evans, teaming up with Randy Chamberlin, who probably deserves the title of the best sixth man in the league, could make the going a lot easier.