

Lack of chat hurts v-ballers Croft injures wrist in Junior cage loss

BY DOUG HARRISON

The Acton Tanner

Ken Ellis is getting good practice being a drill sergeant.

That's because his Acton High Redmen Junior Boys' volleyball players aren't following orders and subsequently are being shot down during combat.

Proof of this was against Burlington's Lord Elgin Lancers, who handled the Redmen 2-1 (15-6, 15-8 and 6-15) on Thursday in the Acton High gym.

The Redmen found themselves down 6-0 early in the first game

after absorbing some punishing spikes from their purple and white opponents and their own failed attempts to softly tip the ball over the net.

"We gave the ball away with little dinks over the net. They (dinks) have to be proper, forceful ones. It came back to haunt us," said Redmen coach Ken Ellis following the game, which drew a crowd of 23, four of whom were Elgin supporters and three parents.

"Drills we did at practice (last week) they didn't follow through

on and there was a communication problem. It was all individual stuff."

The visitors continued to find holes in a shaky Redmen defence and after realizing the home side only sent one blocker to the net, extended their lead to an insurmountable 13-1.

Too often, the locals could have been charged of standing flat-footed. They were slow reacting to the ball and aside from a brief stint where Trevor Malloy's net play helped in closing the gap to 13-5, the Redmen were invisible.

"We stunk and deserved to lose," Ellis pointed out. "If the players don't realize after a game like that what they did wrong, they never will."

Redman Steve White continued his torrid early season serving as he fired four straight service points to begin the second match. However, Elgin bit into the lead quickly, courtesy of Brad Skerrett's powerful right arm.

Unfortunately for the Redmen, Skerrett, a Senior player last year, decided to return to the Junior circuit and play with his friends. He drilled the ball at all areas of the Redmen side and answered White's effort with three service points himself.

The Redmen proceeded to fall into a defensive lull and it was soon 9-4 Elgin. But the locals had a spurt of four points and cut the lead to 9-8 before Elgin boss Bill Everett signalled for time.

His troops responded with six unanswered points and a 15-8 win to take Game 2 and drop the Redmen to 0-2 on the year.

The Redmen led 5-1 to start the third game and pulled out a 15-6 victory.

"We have a habit of standing there and not anticipating the next play," offered Ellis, who added that tomorrow's (Thursday) game in Milton is up to his players.

"The ball is definitely in their court, literally. If they don't want to go through the drills and take them into a game, there will be no payoff."

The Redmen's next home game is Tuesday against E.C. Drury. Game time is 3:45 pm.

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The Acton High Redmen Junior Girls' basketball team took 13 players to Burlington Lord Elgin on Thursday for the season-opener.

They came back with 12 of them healthy.

Robin Croft, one of the new gunners on an inexperienced outfit, fractured her right wrist pursuing the opposition.

"She was charging up the court to scoop the ball or defend an Elgin player and she hit the wall (behind the basket) with her wrist," explained co-coach Anne Andrews on Friday. "There was padding on the wall, but her hand hit the edge of it."

Croft will find out in a few days if a cast is needed.

With Croft and Jackie Jahn out, it was time for Jenny Goy, last year's Most Valuable Player, and the rest of the squad to give that little extra.

Goy played earlier in the day with her Senior teammates, but came back for a one-game stint with the Juniors and popped in 11 points. Under Halton high school rules, Goy was able to play in the Juniors' season-opener if it was played before the Senior team's second game.

Shelley Hand contributed two

points, while Janice Coxe and Jennifer McKay added one apiece in the 35-15 loss.

"I think Jenny (Goy) got a little frustrated in the Junior game," said Andrews. "She had a terrible time shooting. There was panic shooting by all the Juniors."

Up against a younger Elgin Junior team, Redmen co-coach Lyn McLaren stressed a zone defence.

"Our younger players had only played man-to-man and they watched the Senior game earlier," said Andrews, referring to Elgin's penchant for outside shooting. "(McLaren) tried to teach them to stay in a zone, deny the passes and not to go too far outside."

It helped somewhat, but the 35-15 score told the story.



CANDY CAPER: Acton's Mike Overland is shown here holding the 1,857 jelly beans he won from a contest at the Acton Fall Fair sponsored by the Acton Five Pin Bowlers Association. Cathie Ahearn, AFPBA president, presents the candy while Overland's son Jordan, 4, seems hungry. (Doug Harrison photo)

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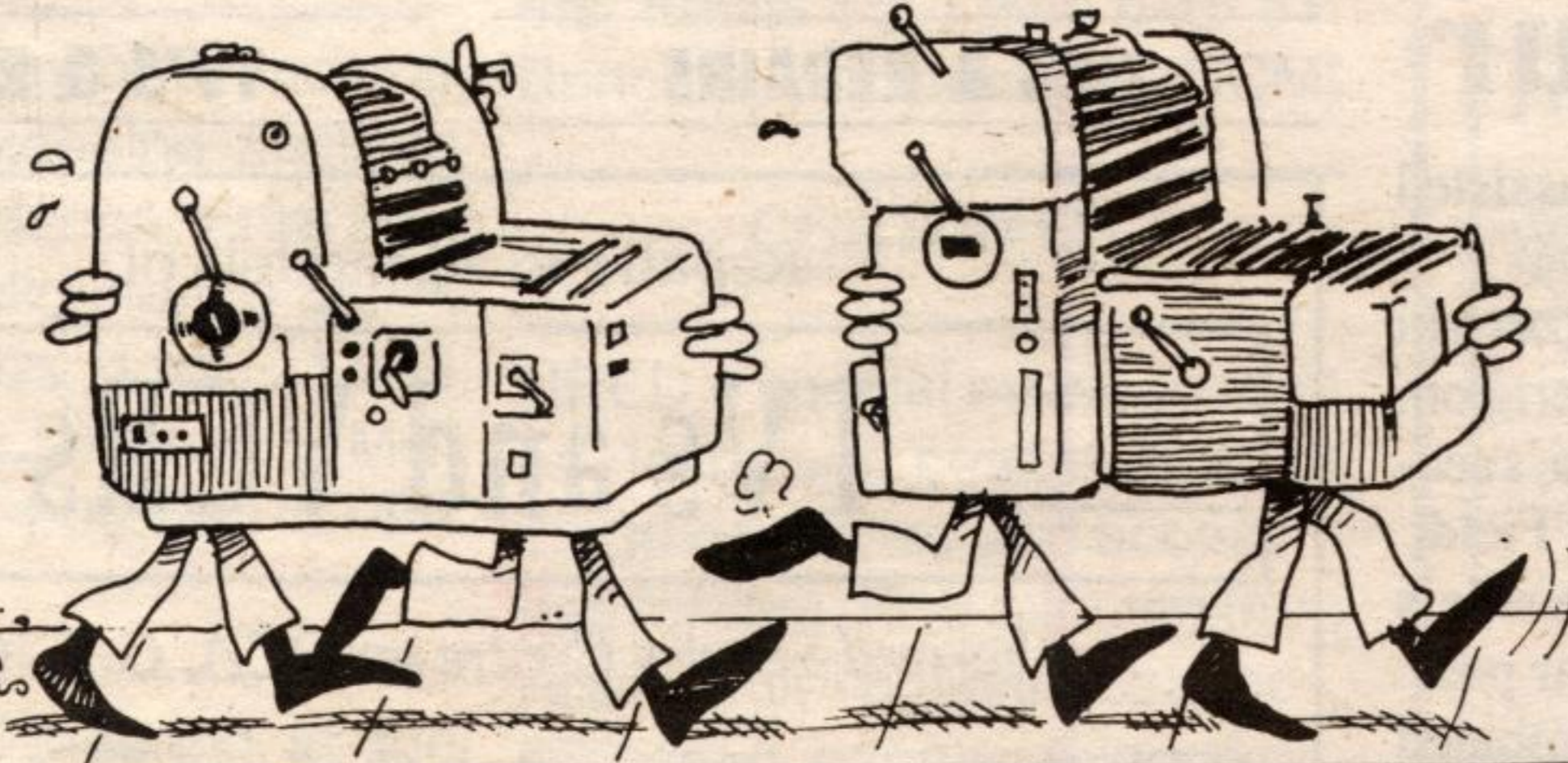
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