

## Coaches fall short in pay

by TOM DERBYSHIRE

Last year attention was finally brought to girl's sports in Stratford school system, mainly due to the success of the Stratford high girls basketball team, (which won the MBIAC crown) and the Bunnell high girls softball team (which also won the MBIAC crown in addition to being voted the number two team in the state.)

Recently, however, there has been a new development. The very two coaches that built up girls sports in the Stratford school system and led their teams to prestigious positions last year have resigned from their coaching positions in a salary dispute.

When Lea Dickson, ex Bunnell basketball and softball coach, and Barbara Hall, ex Stratford high girls swimming and basketball coach, received their 1974-75 coaching contracts they were only offered \$265 for each sport.

Some people may think that \$265 is a lot of money for the twelve games they coach, but a closer look at the hours that these two people put in shows that what they are working for is practically nothing by today's standards.

For example, look at the hours Lea Dickson put in last year as Bunnell's softball coach. Team practices started as early as March 18, with practice running every weekday from 2:30 to as late as 5:30. Once the season started on April 16, practice ran until 5:00 with Sunday afternoon practices. With the season running into the first week of June, Dickson put in approximately 180 hours in the field alone.

With her salary of \$255 for softball, she earned approximately \$1.25 an hour. This does not include the countless hours that were spent off the field scheduling games and planning strategy essential to the existence of the team.

Besides having the responsibility of being on the job she also

had a tough responsibility to the members of the team to do your best to bring out their talents. (a job coach Dickson did very well in leading the Bunnell softball team, which was only in its second year, to the number two position in the state.)

This is just one of the many cases in Stratford where the coaches of girl's sports are being offered low salaries for the amount of time required by the job.

The male coaches have things a little better. For example, the boys varsity baseball coaches receive \$835 a year for putting in the same, if not fewer, hours than the softball coaches do. Boys varsity basketball coaches receive \$885 per year.

Some people may also claim that boys basketball and baseball are established sports in this town while girls sports are only in their third year. With that idea in mind how can a \$600 salary for soccer

coaching, a first year sport in Stratford, be justified?

While not questioning the salary of the soccer coaches, which appears to be a fair amount, it shows the gross difference between the salaries of the male and female coaches in the Stratford school system. What it all boils down to is that women coaches should receive the same pay as their male counterparts for equal work.

So as the teachers and coaches contracts are being reviewed this month, the people of Stratford and their representatives should recognize the plight of the girls sports coach and rectify the situation.

If they don't, they will only be hurting themselves, as they will lose two excellent coaches who were the foundation on which girl's sports in this town were built up during the past three years.