

Wilson alumni beat principal in hoops rivalry

BY MEGAN CROUSE
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WEST CALDWELL TWP. – The game of the year was on in West Caldwell's Wilson Elementary School the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

That's when Wilson alumni Allie Nufrio and Savanna Edighoffer, juniors at James Caldwell High School, returned to their former elementary school to participate in their annual basketball game with Wilson School Principal Scott Keena. The two-on-one game was begun when the students were still attending the school.

Keena shoots hoops with his students almost every day during lunch period since he started working at the school in 2004.

For the past five years, Nufrio and Edighoffer have returned for this unique reunion after Keena, in 2009, suggested a game "for old time's sake." Both girls often came back to visit siblings attending the school.

"We used to play him when we were here in Wilson," Nufrio said. "We wanted to keep the tradition going until we beat him."

The annual after-school basketball game, set on the day be-

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SCOTT KEENA

Principal, Wilson School

fore Thanksgiving has been dubbed "The Turkey Bowl" by Savanna's mother, Dawn Edighoffer, who bought a trophy and had the winner's name engraved each year.

And each year the winner's name was Keena.

Except this year.

In the end, the girls beat him, 15-12.

"The streak is officially over after four years," Keena exclaimed, adding, "They kept on playing as well as they did."

The girls joked with Keena throughout the game, with Keena and the Nufrio family quipping and finishing each other's sentences.

During the competition, stu-

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Photo by Megan Crouse

Flanking West Caldwell's Wilson School Principal Scott Keena, James Caldwell High School (JCHS) junior Allie Nufrio, left and JCHS junior Savanna Edighoffer, celebrate a win after their pre-Thanksgiving game of two-on-one basketball, which is now in its fifth year, against Keena. Both Nufrio and Edighoffer are alumni of Wilson School.

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dents who were part of the after-school program sat on the stage at the end of the room, and chanted "Keena! Keena!" even before the game began.

The girls "thought out a game plan," Nufrio said.

"We've been planning for a few weeks," Edighoffer said.

Keena, who stands much taller than the girls at 6'1," had hoped for a fifth consecutive victory. "I'm feeling good...They have youth, but I have height," he said.

Nufrio and Edighoffer, friends since they were three, both play varsity basketball at James Caldwell High School.

Keena stays sharp too. "I play at lunch," he said, explaining that the school gym also serves as the lunch room. One half of the room holds the lunch tables. In the other half, Keena plays basketball. "Every lunch I pull a few kids for one on one. I'm always playing."

When asked why she plays basketball, Nufrio pointed at Edighoffer: "I like working with her a lot."

Edighoffer pointed to her mom who she said encouraged her to get into sports.

Nufrio's mother, Donna

Nufrio, called Wilson School "the best experience, for not only the kids but the family. We'll probably always have a connection with (Keena)...we look forward to this every year.

It's really fun, and it's very competitive."

Keena said the girls plan to come back next year. After all, the Turkey Bowl is now their Thanksgiving tradition.