

B O X S C O R E

A Publication of the Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society

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EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

A featured program on Saturday, June 25, co-sponsored by IHSBHS and the ITFCC (Indiana Track & Field and Cross Country) Hall of Fame Museum, will be held at the Museum which is situated at the intersection of Interstate 70 (Exit 11B) and State Road 86, on the east side of Terre Haute. The afternoon part of the program is open to the

public, free of charge. The room opens at 1 p.m. for guests to get acquainted and exchange comments. IHSBHS speakers begin their presentations at 1:30 p.m. and conclude by approximately 3:30 p.m.. For those wishing to stay around, at 5 p.m. a HOF track & field induction banquet will begin at 5 p.m. A cover charge of \$30 covers the cost of the meal.

Details of the program are shown as a full-page notice on page 17, toward the end of this *Boxscore* issue. Questions in advance can be directed to IHSBHS President Roger Robison at (812) 331-8018 or ITFCC Director Marshall Goss at (812) 345-2121. The Museum opens at 11 a.m. that day and closes after the evening banquet.

2022 State Finals Review by

**Tim Puet, Boxscore Associate
Editor**

It was great to be able to attend the state finals at what's now Gainbridge Fieldhouse after a two-year absence caused by COVID. This year was a sweep for teams representing the southern part of the state - Marion County included - for the first time

since 2011. Final scores were: Indianapolis Cathedral 65, Chesterton 31 in 4A; Beech Grove 53, Mishawaka Marian 43 in 3A; Clarksville Providence 62, Central Noble 49 in 2A; and North Daviess 48, Lafayette Central Catholic (LCC) 46 in 1A.

The state titles were the first for everyone except Cathedral, the 3A champion in 1998. It also was the first state finals appearance for six of the eight teams, with the exceptions being Cathedral and LCC, which was the first Catholic team to win a state title in 1998, the first year of class basketball. This was also LCC's sixth state championship game, overall. It also was the first time four Catholic schools played four public schools for the respective state crowns.

I was delighted, as I expect most fans were, that this year ended a streak of two championships and three title game appearances (excluding 2020, when there was no tournament) for Carmel. Representing the state's largest school with 5,000 students, in a wealthy Indianapolis suburb with great facilities, the Greyhounds always will be contenders, but they

remind me of the New York Yankees when I was a growing up and to a lesser extent today – the team most people want to see lose because they're always so good.

With those preliminary comments in place, now on to the championship games. The 4A final probably was the most anticipated, with Chesterton trying to be the state's 14th unbeaten champion and the first team from the Region in northwest Indiana to win 30 games since Gary Roosevelt in 1991. Cathedral had started the season ranked No. 8 in the Associated Press poll and was the survivor of the always-tough Indianapolis sectional and regional rounds. But the game turned out to be the most disappointing of the four championships because it was so one-sided. Cathedral got off to a 10-0 lead in the first three minutes and kept stretching it. Cathedral was 9 for 15 from the floor in the first quarter to Chesterton's 3 for 12 and had a 22-10 lead at the quarter stop. Final shooting figures were 27 for 58 (46.5%) for the Irish and an abysmal 11 for 52 (21.2 %) for the Trojans.

The Irish didn't have a dominant player but were bigger and more athletic overall and Chesterton didn't have any one to match. Cathedral had four players in double figures – Jaron Tibbs with 15, Jaxon Edwards with 14, Xavier Booker with 13 and Tayshawn Comer with 11. Jake Davis, the other Cathedral starter, had 9. Brothers Tyler and Carson Parrish led Chesterton with 7 each. Comer, Cathedral's all-time leading scorer, will play for Eastern Kentucky next year. Booker (6-foot-11) and Tibbs (6-5) are juniors, with Booker having scholarship offers from several major universities. Their presence is likely to have Cathedral ranked first in the initial 2022-23 AP poll. Cathedral coach Jason Delaney became the first coach to win a state championship at

three different schools – Waldron in 2004 and Indianapolis Tech in 2014 being the others. He's also the second coach to take three schools to a championship game. The other was Basil Mawbey at Connersville, Kokomo, and Lewis Cass. Cathedral's 34-point win set a 4A record for largest margin of victory and its 14 blocked shots were the most in any state championship game. Chesterton's Chris Mullen won the Trester mental attitude award.

The 3A game was the classic "tale of two halves." Beech Grove got off to a terrible start, going 2 for 13 in the first quarter to Marian's 5 for 7 (3 for 5 from 3-point range). But the Hornets never let the Knights get too far ahead, with Marian's biggest lead being 8 points. Marian was up 22-20 at halftime, Beech Grove led 34-32 after three, and the Hornets pulled away in the last quarter, making their final six shots.

Beech Grove's Anthony Ball put on an impressive performance with 17 points and 20 rebounds, 11 of them off the offensive boards. He's a junior, as are three of the other four starters and the Hornets' top six scorers, so look for the Hornets to be a strong contender again next year. Much of the postgame news conference was a tribute to Matt English, who was Beech Grove's basketball coach for 10 years until his death from brain cancer in 2018. His successor, Mike Renfro, is credited with building the program to the point where it could win a state title. Coach English's "We Before Me" motto was cited by Renfro, Ball and teammate Jeremiah Tate as inspiring them throughout the season. Renfro aptly described the Hornets as "a blue-collar team which goes 10-deep and ultimately was able to wear Marian down. "Everybody trusts everybody and there's no drop-off when the starters

come out," Ball said. He also said that he felt he had to have a big game after fouling out against Sullivan in the semistate the previous week.

Cameron Brown scored 13 points and Jeremiah Tate had 12 for Beech Grove. Tate was a real hustler, with his 9 steals setting an all-class state finals record since that statistic began being recorded in 1977. Unranked Beech Grove (22-6) won its 11th straight game. Second-ranked Marian (24-4) had a 12-game winning streak snapped and was led by Trester award recipient Richard Brooks with 13 points and Deaglan Sullivan with 10. Marian's 43 points set a Class 3A finals record for fewest points scored.

In Class 2A, Connor Essegian of Central Noble has signed with Wisconsin and was the only Power 5 recruit playing in the four games. His Mr. Basketball candidacy could have been notably enhanced with a strong performance, but Providence played strong defense against him, putting a different player on him for seemingly every possession. He still had 18 points, but that was 9 below his average and 10 of them were in the last 9:25 of the game, long after the outcome had been decided. He finished with 2,526 career points, ranking him 10th all-time in the state. The Pioneers (21-6) ended any suspense early, taking a 25-9 lead after the first quarter, when they were 4 for 5 from the 3-point line and 10 for 14 overall.

I was seated directly behind the Providence bench and heard their coach, Ryan Miller, use the phrase "gang rebounding" during a time out, and I thought that was an apt way to describe their scrappy play. As a 5-player unit, they impressed me more than anyone else that day. Miller had a great line at the end of the postgame news conference when he said the team had "no superstars, but they'll make one heck of an

intramural team at IU next year.” He also noted that preparing to face Romeo Langford of New Albany five years ago when he was an assistant at Floyd Central was great preparation for Essegian, who was most gracious in defeat, saying “We fell short, but I consider myself blessed” to have gotten this far. Having mentioned Mr. Basketball, I’ll note here that the winner was Purdue recruit Braden Smith of Westfield, which ended the state’s longest sectional drought, going back to the original 1911 tournament. The game’s best player was Casey Kaelin, Providence’s only double-figure scorer going in, who finished with 21 points despite missing stretches with foul trouble. Grant Williams had 13 and Quentin Hesse 12. Ryan Schroeder scored 12 and Logan Gard 10 for the Cougars (28-3). Providence’s Cade Carver, who won the Trester award, didn’t score a basket and finished with 3 points, but seemed to be the player who was running the Pioneers’ swarming defense and frustrating Essegian the most.

The Class 1A game was loaded with drama, embracing both heartbreak and elation at the end--depending on which team you were rooting for. North Daviess was ahead 48-45 after two overtimes, but LCC’s Clark Barrett, coach Dave Barrett’s son, was fouled while taking a 3-point attempt as time ran out. That gave him three free throws and a chance to tie the game. He made the first but missed the second, giving North Daviess the championship. “I will always be confident in myself, but obviously that’s probably one of the hardest situations I’ve ever been put in,” he said. “I’ve struggled from the free throw line all year and haven’t had the highest percentage (58.2 percent for the season). ‘It’s something I’ve worked on in practice constantly.’”

Barrett’s six fourth-quarter points allowed the Knights (20-10) to outscore North Daviess 10-4 in the final period and make it into overtime with the game tied at 34 after the Cougars (27-3) had held the lead most of the way. He finished with a double-double of 13 points and 10 rebounds. Teammate Clark Obermiller also had 13. Devin Collins scored 15 and Jaylen Mullen 13 for North Daviess, with Collins scoring eight overtime points and Mullen making 1 of 2 free throws with 10 seconds left to set up the final drama. It was no surprise that the game was low-scoring, since North Daviess had allowed only 37.2 points per game. Every Class 1A record for fewest points would have been broken if it hadn’t gone into overtime, and even after eight extra minutes North Daviess’ winning total still was lower than the previous record of 50, set by Triton in 2008. Obermiller won the Ray Craft award for mental attitude, renamed in 2016 in honor of the longtime IHSAA official and member of the 1954 Milan state championship team.

Finally, a personal note: Given what has happened in the last couple of years, with overdue recognition of a racist past resulting in the tearing down of statues of Confederate leaders, the renaming of buildings formerly bearing the name of racist individuals and so forth, I think it’s time for the remaining Trester awards in Classes 2A, 3A and 4A to also be renamed. Arthur Trester’s role in preventing black-only schools and Catholic schools from becoming IHSAA members (which shouldn’t have existed in the first place) has been well-documented in these pages and needn’t be explained further here. Perhaps the honors should be renamed the Gimbel awards in honor of their original donor, or maybe the names of important figures from the past such as Oscar Robertson, Bobby

Plump or Ray Crowe. Trester’s name should be replaced. Crowe, in fact, was honored by the IHSAA through creation of a new Ray Crowe Excellence in Leadership Award, dedicated to someone who carries on Crowe’s legacy, “exemplifying the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and moral character.”



Ray Crowe, Coach

SEASON OF UPSETS

**by
Matt Werner**

Editor's Note: Matt Werner is an accomplished writer of Hoosier basketball stories. He graduated from South Central H.S. (a 1962 consolidation of Union Mills, Hanna, and Clinton Twp.) in LaPorte County in 1992. He participated in basketball and track & field during his high school years. He received his B.A. from Purdue University a few years later, followed by an MBA from Bowling Green State University. This article is an abridged version of Matt's book of the same title, containing excerpts. The book reveals many fascinating details that go well beyond the scope of these pages in Boxscore. The full 284-page book would enthrall any Hoosier basketball fan.

After the war ended in 1945, one man after another found his way to the teaching and coaching profession in LaPorte County, Indiana. Fifteen

in all. Charles McComas of Westville and Norm Hubner of LaPorte were beyond the draft age at the start of the war and taught and coached during that time. The rest of

on favorite among the county schools to repeat its success from the previous year. Nine seniors--seven who had significant playing experience--rounded out the team

Uridel) highest scorers. The team was missing one piece of the puzzle to have a great team, but Sanders found it in a transfer student from Lakeview High in Chicago, Eben Fisher. Fisher was fast and an all-around athlete. He played baseball and ran track, besides excelling in basketball. The team seemed complete.

Stillwell had another senior-laden team: six boys with significant varsity playing experience. The boys had reason to be optimistic with their second-year head coach, Hobart Martin. Martin delivered newfound hope. "When Martin came to coach, everybody had a chance (to play)", according to Bill Singleton, one of the veteran players. "It was a different environment entirely (from what it was two years earlier)", Singleton added. The previous season of 1948-49, Martin's first year as coach, Stillwell finished second in the County Conference. But two key players were lost to graduation, and someone had to step up to the plate and fill the void in 1949-50. There was only one question. Who would it be?

Two weeks later, LaPorte opened its season at home in the magnificent Civic Auditorium, a multi-purpose palace built in 1930 for the people of the city. It included a full-length basketball court with 2,200 stadium seats elevated around three sides of the court. For the opening game, it was filled to capacity with a sea of people dressed in orange and black. The Slicers hosted the Horsemen of Gary Horace Mann H.S., one of the stronger teams of the NIHSC, and were defeated 52-43 to the disappointment of its throng of supporters. LaPorte was to finish the 1949-50 year at 9-12, its first losing season in eight years (since 1942-43).

At Michigan City St. Mary's, the two coaches came as a package deal

<u>High School</u>	<u>Mascot</u>	<u>Head Coach</u>	<u>War Service</u>
Clinton Twp.	Trojans	Noel King	U.S. Navy
Hanna	Panthers	Harland Siegesmund	Marine Corps
Kingbury	Kings	Waldo Sauter	U.S. Army
LaCrosse	Tigers	Lenny Black	Marine Corps
LaPorte	Slicers	Norm Hubner	--
M.C. Elston	Red Devils	Dee Kohlmeier	U.S. Navy
M.C. St. Mary's	Blazers	Steve Pavela	U.S. Navy
Mill Creek	Wildcats	Bob Gray	U.S. Navy
Rolling Prairie	Bulldogs	Harlan Clark	Army Air Corps
Springfield Twp.	Indians	Bill Yates	Marine Corps
Stillwell	Vikings	Hobart Martin	U.S. Army
Union Mills	Millers	Park Sanders	Army Air Corps
Union Twp.	Tigers	George Bock	Civ. Pub. Serv.
Wanatah	Midgets	John Dunk	U.S. Army
Westville	Blackhawks	Charles McComas	--

them trickled into the area after they completed their military service and in many cases their college degrees. Noel King returned home to Clinton Township, Harlan Siegesmund arrived in Hanna, Lenny Black landed in LaCrosse, Waldo Sauter in Kingsbury, and Steve Pavela at St. Mary's High School in Michigan City. In 1949 schools added three more coaches: Dee Kohlmeier at Michigan City Elston, Bob Gray at Mill Creek, and Bill Yates in Springfield Township. With that, the field of fifteen coaches at fifteen high schools was set for the 1949-50 school year.

Orange and black were the colors of the previous season's most dominant basketball teams. The Westville High School Blackhawks won both the County Conference championship and the county tourney in 1949 while the LaPorte High School Slicers beat Michigan City Elston three times and breezed through the sectional to win its 16th sectional championship. That gave the Slicers six more sectional titles than Michigan City and fifteen more titles than the twelve county schools combined. Westville was the odds-

that expected to build on its success. Not only did Westville return seventy-five percent of its high-scoring offense, but the team returned its first (Don Layton), second (Bill Hannon), and fourth (Ron Wozniak) highest scorers. Many people believed Don Layton was one of the best athletes in the county and six-foot-four-inch Bill Hannon could play the post as well as anybody. And the team gelled well. "We spent all of our high school and really our grade school time together, so we came to know each other. 'We had a lot of confidence that things were going to go well our senior year,'" Bill Hannon said.

Coach Park Sanders expected his Union Mills boys to have a good season too. The previous year, his team finished the season with eleven wins against nine losses. They suffered a two-point overtime loss to County Conference champion Westville, and split two games against the Conference runner-up, Stillwell. The Millers also had a trio of experienced seniors including the first (Tony Hadella), second (Ray Rosenbaum), and fourth (Loren

from the University of Notre Dame. There, Steve Pavela played baseball and basketball and Joe Yonto played football. The two men were in their second year as teachers and coaches and under Yonto's leadership as head football coach (with Pavela's assistance), the Blazers recorded their best football season ever--seven wins and two losses. Now the two coaches switched positions--Pavela headed up the varsity basketball team while Yonto assisted with the B team. Many local schools hadn't bothered to schedule St. Mary's in the past because the school had (earlier) been barred from official IHSAA competition. All-black high schools were not permitted in the IHSAA statewide tournament either, due to their "exclusive enrollments." In 1942 the IHSAA finally ended the ban and admitted these schools into its membership. Coach Steve Pavela managed to put together a team in 1949-50 that was able to improve markedly upon the prior year's mark of 6-15. This season's schedule included several strong Northern Indiana High School Conference (NIHSC) teams, but his varsity team fought its way through the tough schedule to post a reasonable 9-11 record by season's end. After losing its initial four games, the opener to a very tough Gary Mann 52-33, the team bounced back with seven wins in its next nine games.

A few blocks away, Elston High School completed a fine football season of its own in one of the toughest athletic conferences in the state. The NIHSC counted twenty-one schools as members. Eleven members of the Western Division played in Lake County while the Eastern Division included Michigan City and LaPorte as well as teams in South Bend, Elkhart, Goshen, and as far away as Fort Wayne. As basketball tryouts got underway at Elston, competition was tough. Far

more boys went out for the team than were available spots on the varsity and B teams. By mid-fall, Coach Dee Kohlmeier had whittled his roster down to thirty boys with probably more to come. While LaPorte started its season at home and the county schools played each other, Michigan City Elston started its season on the road, travelling all the way to Frankfort the day after Thanksgiving to do so. Frankfort had one of Indiana's most storied basketball programs. The Hot Dogs, as the team was known, already had won four state championships in the tournament's first thirty-nine years of experience, and on Friday night Frankfort pounded Michigan City, 60-28. By the end of the season, the Red Devils had concluded with a so-so record of 11-13, but almost exclusively against stiff NIHSC competition.

As the city schools continued to finalize their basketball rosters, all twelve county schools were ready to play, and so they did. Opening night witnessed no surprises. Westville, defending County Conference champ in 49-50, powered to a 60-28 win over Union Township on the latter's floor. Union Mills beat Hanna 44-33 at Union Mills. Stillwell crushed Kingsbury 42-16 at Stillwell, Rolling Prairie rolled over LaCrosse at home 52-28, Mill Creek nudged Springfield 36-32 at home, and Clinton topped Wanatah 46-29 in its own gym. And just in case anyone accused Stillwell of running up the score on Kingsbury, it was pointed out that Coach Hobart Martin played all eleven boys on his team in that game.

In the County Conference, many upsets marked the first half of the season, most notably Springfield Twp's shocking win over Union Mills, 40-35. Several other game results were considered surprising, as well. One of things that many

observers attributed to the upsets was the size and configurations of the home school gyms and their playing floors. Several gyms were simply outdated and considered to be throw-backs from an earlier era of basketball. Joe Eyster, sports editor of the LaPorte Herald-Argus, wrote: "there are only four county schools with adequate playing floors right now. They are Hanna, Mill Creek, and Stillwell, in addition to LaCrosse. Four others come under the category of barely passable. They are Clinton, Westville, Rolling Prairie, and Union Township. Kingsbury and Springfield might be rated as poor. Wanatah and Union Mills might just as well be playing outdoors." Eyster went on, "Some great teams have come out of the county. Great, that is, on county floors. But the vast expanses of the Civic Auditorium or the Michigan City high school gym ruin most county teams before they have a chance during (state) tourney time. You can't expect a county powerhouse like Westville (or any other) which spends the whole season scraping elbows in a "cigar box" to step on a large floor and run with the Slicers, Red Devils, or St. Mary's Blazers in the sectional." When asked about Union Mills' gymnasium, Rolling Prairie head coach Harlan Clark summed it up best: "It was *the* worst." "You couldn't even shoot a free throw!" one opponent complained, and that was true. The top of the backboard butted up against the low ceiling. When a player arched the ball for a simple shot, it would hit the ceiling. Players were forced to shoot line drives and try to bank it in. The short length and width of the playing floor along with using walls to serve as boundary lines were other significant misgivings at the Union Mills gym. But several other gyms in the county were nearly as bad.

By Dec. 31, 1949, and just before the county tournament was to begin, the standings in the County Conference were as follows:

<u>County Team</u>	<u>League Games</u>	<u>All Games</u>
Stillwell	6-0	7-1
Rolling Prairie	5-0	7-2
Union Mills	5-1	9-2
Westville	4-1	7-2
Hanna	3-3	6-6
Springfield Twp.	3-3	4-5
Clinton Twp.	2-4	5-5
Mill Creek	2-4	3-6
Union Twp.	2-4	2-5
Kingsbury	2-4	2-6
LaCrosse	1-5	2-7
Wanatah	0-6	0-11

In January 1950, the days were short and winter weather gripped the landscape. But basketball carried on indoors and as the season's play heated up, the games provided a welcome escape from the cold, dreary days and nights. In its first game of the new year, Springfield traveled to 11th-place LaCrosse where the home team played its best game of the season and won handily, 45-31. That same night, the two County Conference leaders Stillwell and Rolling Prairie faced off in front of a packed house, and the game treated fans to a thrilling contest. Stillwell won at the very end, 33-31 and sat all alone atop the standings, the sole undefeated team in conference play. But it was a precarious perch. Union Mills, Westville, and Rolling Prairie each had a single loss and in one week, Stillwell would host Union Mills. The moment had arrived for the Stillwell Vikings' next big contest for the county school supremacy. Union Mills needed the victory to stay in the race and create a tie for first place. Stillwell needed the win to stay atop the standings all by itself. When the game ended, Union Mills had prevailed in a hard-fought game, 48-42.

Westville and Rolling Prairie were tied for second place and now it was time for these two teams to play in a make-up game. The first time they

met back in mid-November, it was considered the biggest game of the young season. On January 17 fans again crowded into Westville's gymnasium. Rolling Prairie jumped to an early lead before Westville ultimately took control. The hometown Blackhawks led the rest of the way, with 6-4 Bill Hannon pacing the winners with 20 points. The margin of victory, 69-36, shocked everyone. It stamped Westville as a potent club for sure. That same night, Joe Eyler the sportswriter was back in Stillwell to cover its game against out-of-county opponent Grovertown, a team that was undefeated and had beaten four LaPorte County Conference teams. This night, however, Stillwell unflinched its twin howitzers, Gene Johns and Goog Dunfee, along with jumping jack Gael Swing, to snap Grovertown's winning streak of 13 games. It was a narrow win, 51-49, and somewhat of an upset.

Meanwhile, the Wanatah Midgets (not really a short team, except possibly on overall talent this year) lost their 14th straight game in Union Mills' cigar box of a gym, 63-19. The Millers used all 12 of its players but still couldn't keep from running away from the Midgets, who had only a single star on the team, Arnold Rosenbaum, who usually scored all the points. Union Mills, Westville, and Stillwell crowded the top of the County Conference, and all three teams were peaking at the right time, with the county tourney coming up. Ah yes, the county tourney. Basketball fever rose as county school fans anticipated the most important event of the year: the LaPorte County basketball tournament, scheduled to be played this year in Michigan City Elston's huge 3,400-seat arena rather than at LaPorte's 2,200-seat Civic Auditorium that was built more for comfort than capacity. School

officials realized that even though Michigan City was further away from most of the county schools than was LaPorte, the potential extra gate receipts there were worth the added mileage. Besides, there had been player complaints in earlier years regarding LaPorte's "dead" playing floor that sometimes interfered with dribbling the ball. Although the IHSAA had always favored alternating between LaPorte and Michigan City as the site for the sectional tournament, it seemed more indifferent regarding the county tournament's location.

In the hearts and minds of the small-town cheerleaders, fans, and players, the annual county tourney maintained top billing. The county tourney was *the tourney*. As one Westville player pointed out, "Well, to us it was more important (than the sectional) because most of the time you didn't have a chance against LaPorte or Michigan City in the sectional." In fact, LaPorte had never lost a game to a county school in all 58 past sectional matchups. The tournament opened on Wednesday night and Wanatah faced its arch-rival LaCrosse in the first game. The Midgets had been the only team to win the county tourney three consecutive years, but 1950 wasn't their year to recapture those glory days some sixteen years earlier. The team still hadn't won a game this season. Wanatah's Arnold Rosenbaum, with his 27 points that night stole the show, but it wasn't enough to avoid the team's 15th straight loss of the season, 57-46. In the second Wednesday night game, Hanna deployed a shifting zone defense that kept 6-4 Walt Zolman and 6-2 Bill Rehlander of Rolling Prairie away from the basket. The strategy worked and Hanna pulled off a 54-45 upset win. In the nightcap, the Springfield Indians played Mill Creek. In a slowly

played and defensively oriented game, the Indians trailed the Wildcats for three straight quarters before finally surging past their foe in the fourth quarter and winning the game, 33-26. In Thursday's games, Stillwell shelled Kingsbury 35-20, and Union Mills prevailed over Springfield 44-34. On Friday, LaCrosse won its second game of the tourney, squeaking by Clinton Twp. 44-43. Then Hanna was knocked out by Westville 50-37, and Stillwell got an easy win over Union Twp., 49-27. Four teams remained alive for the semi-finals on Saturday afternoon: Westville, Union Mills, Stillwell, and underdog LaCrosse.

In the first game, the LaCrosse Tigers gave Westville a better fight than anybody had anticipated. The Blackhawks maintained a narrow lead throughout the whole game and won by five points, 57-52. In the second game, Stillwell and Union Mills met for the second time in the season. Only two weeks earlier, Union Mills delivered Stillwell's first conference loss, 48-42, and the Vikings wanted redemption. The two teams proved to be equal matches as the score see-sawed back and forth with several ties and lead changes. When the game ended, the scoreboard captured the spirit of the contest, 46-44, advantage Union Mills.

Before the final game Saturday night, the Westville Blackhawks hadn't forgotten that early season loss at Union Mills and Coach McComas kept his boys focused on the prize: the county tourney championship. The two great centers, Bill Hannon and Ray Rosenbaum, fought for rebound after rebound while shooting a variety of hook shots and making nifty passes. Don Layton was in a scoring groove for Westville, and Tony Hadella of Union Mills was showing why he led the county in scoring so far that

season. The game began to tilt to the Millers' favor. However, after gaining an eight-point lead late in the game, Union Mills began to take some shots that were counter to Coach Sanders' instructions to hold onto the ball. The lead quickly evaporated, and the door opened. Westville capitalized. With 1:05 to play in the game, Layton tied the score at 41-41, and was fouled during his shot. He missed the free throw, but since the game was in the "restricted" three-minute foul rule period, Westville retained ball possession. Hannon scored a jump shot to make it 43-41, Westville. At the other end of the court, Westville committed a foul and the free throw was made, closing the gap to 43-42. The Millers kept the ball with just seconds left in the game, and set up for a final, game-winning shot. The ball went to Ray Rosenbaum in the pivot. He moved, took a hook shot, and missed--but he was fouled! With only a few seconds remaining, Ray stepped to the line for a tie game, but missed the FT. A scramble for the ball ensued, but nobody scored. Westville held onto the one-point victory to capture its eighth county tourney title.

After the county tournament was concluded, a month's worth of games remained to be played among the county teams, prior to the sectional. A few of the results were noteworthy enough to mention, in passing. Hamlet, a mighty mite superpower in nearby Starke County to the southeast, pounded Kingsbury to the tune of 88-27 in late January, and then on Feb. 16 dealt Stillwell its worst defeat of the season, 46-32. Westville and Union Mills, co-champions of the County Conference, each ended their regular seasons with a loss. Westville lost an overtime heartbreaker to North Judson, another Starke County dynamo, 67-65, while Union Mills

was eked out by Hanna, in a surprise 49-48 cliff-hanger. The Hamlet Tigers and North Judson Blue Jays ultimately met in the Plymouth sectional, with the Blue Jays turning in a resounding 10-point victory. Bourbon, a team that featured high-scoring ace and Indiana All-Star Keith Stackhouse, then prevailed in that sectional with a one-point win over North Judson, 62-61, in the championship game. Back in LaPorte County, Wanatah, in its final game of the regular season and winless in 18 straight games, finally won a game. It scored only 33 points in a conference win over lowly Kingsbury (3-16 overall), but it was two more than the Kings could muster, that game.

As for the city schools, Michigan City Elston (8-12) finished its season on a high note with a 38-32 win over NIHSC foe Goshen, while St. Mary's (8-10) completed its own brutal schedule by beating a difficult opponent, Fenger High School of Chicago. After sporting a 9-8 win-loss record by the first of February, LaPorte lost its final four matches of the season and finished 9-12.

The LaPorte County Sectional began on Wednesday night, Feb. 22. The first game pitted St. Mary's against Hanna. Hanna had the better record (13-7) but St. Mary's had by far the stoutest schedule of the two. The Blazers sailed to victory over the Panthers, 43-32. Fifteen minutes later, Clinton Twp. (6-12) and M.C. Elston tipped off. Even though their starting five sat on the bench the entire fourth quarter, the Red Devils manhandled the Trojans, 59-30. Right off the bat, St. Mary's and Elston demonstrated what everyone knew all along: the tiny county schools and their County Conference schedules were no match for the larger city schools.

Thursday night meant two more games. The first game brought Mill

Creek and Jackson Twp. of Porter County together. Jackson Twp. was brought into the LaPorte County sectional to make it an even 16-team tournament. The taller Jackson Panthers were favored to win. However, Mill Creek sent the Panthers back to Porter County with their tails between their legs in a decisive win, 46-37. Westville and Springfield Twp. played in the nightcap. Earlier in the season, Springfield's school had burned to the ground and its students were forced to travel thirty miles south every day to attend classes in worn-out military Quonset huts. The team practiced at an elementary school to the west of the high school ruins and held its home games to the east in Rolling Prairie. Despite their hardships, the boys kept battling all season. They had even defeated Union Mills, one of the two conference co-champions, during the county tournament. Their record, going into the Westville game, was a respectable 7-10. However, on this occasion Westville just had too much talent and scored a 47-35 win over the Indians. Because of its school fire and resultant circumstances, this would be Springfield's final year of existence. The next school year it was swallowed up by consolidation into the city of LaPorte's school district.

Nobody liked to play the Friday early morning game that started at 8:30, but it was an easy game for the boys from LaCrosse who manhandled Union Twp., 50-31. The second game, starting at 9:45 a.m., matched up the two conference cellar-dwellers, Wanatah and Kingsbury. A mere seven days earlier Wanatah had secured its single precious win with a come-from behind victory over Kingsbury. This time, Wanatah led from the opening tip to the fourth quarter but almost faltered at the end, hanging

onto a 29-27 white-knuckle affair. The Midgets now were on an actual win streak!

LaPorte vs. Stillwell was the next game up, scheduled for 11:00 a.m. The Slicers had seven players at least six feet tall, including 6-4 Bill Phillips and 6-3 Ralph Jones. Stillwell had only two boys standing 6-1, the rest all under the 6-foot mark. Off to a shaky start, the Vikings fell behind in the first few minutes but rallied back and led 15-14 as the first quarter ended. LaPorte turned on the steam during the 2nd quarter while holding Stillwell to a single field goal and led 25-18 at halftime. When the two teams returned after halftime, LaPorte jumped all over the Stillwell bunch and expanded its lead to thirteen points, 45-32, after the first few minutes of the fourth quarter had passed. With victory imminent, Coach Hubner backed his team into a tight zone defense, forcing Stillwell to resort to long-range goal tries. Hubner's tactics didn't work though, as the Vikings began to steadily snap the nets with unguarded long and mid-range shots. Stillwell went on an 11-0 run to close the gap to 43-45 before Hubner finally decided to abandon the zone. It was a *real* game now, and Stillwell had all the momentum in its favor. After a series of FTs were made and with only 42 seconds left to play, Stillwell led by a single point, 50-49. Another FT by Gail Swing and two FTs by LaPorte via a Stillwell foul tied the game at 51-51. The tension was nearly unbearable. With only a few seconds left, Stillwell reserve player Allen Dickson was fouled. He calmly stepped to the line and dropped the ball into the net and the game was over. LaPorte's record against county schools fell to a tarnished 58-1.

The Michigan City crowd couldn't have been more delighted with the

fate of the Slicers. Their chances for a sectional championship were enhanced by the result. They had just witnessed perhaps the greatest surprise victory in county basketball history, but there were another three rounds of basketball action remaining, back-to-back-to-back. In the first Friday afternoon game at 1:30, the Union Mills Millers, who were conference co-champs and had recorded a fine 16-4 regular season record, faced the Rolling Prairie Bulldogs who were 7-4 in the conference and 9-9 overall. The Bulldogs featured two of the taller players in the area, 6-2 Bill Rehlander and 6-4 Walt Zolman. Most fans picked the Millers to win, but surely the Bulldogs weren't going to just roll over and play dead. Everyone expected a competitive game, and given the way earlier contests had turned out, who knew what might happen? But it was a blow-out! Union Mills left no doubt which was the better team, as it administered a 60-39 thrashing.

Second round action started at 2:45 in a rematch for city supremacy as neighboring schools M.C. St. Mary's and Elston played. The game proved how tough the city schools were. The rivals battled back and forth before Elston controlled the ball at the finish and won, 56-50. The Mill Creek Wildcats (9-11 on the season) faced the formidable Westville Blackhawks in the last contest of the afternoon. With Bill Hannon leading the Blackhawks with 22 points, Westville easily cashed out Mill Creek, 51-32. At 7 p.m. that night, Wanatah and LaCrosse--two distinct underdogs in the tourney--clashed. Could the Wanatah Midgets make it three wins in a row after a dismal 18 straight losses during the regular season? With 2:59 left to play in the game, Wanatah, with Arnie Rosenbaum in good form, actually clung to a five-point lead. If

they could stall through the 3-minute restricted fouls period, a win was guaranteed. However, the Midgets couldn't control the stall, and the Tigers chipped away on the lead to tie the game at 46 all. But with Wanatah in ball possession and 30 seconds left to play, LaCrosse fouled a Midget player in the act of shooting. Two FTs coming! He missed the first, but sank the second one, giving Wanatah a 47-46 lead while keeping ball possession. They kept the ball for most of the remaining time, but with only a few seconds left, they turned it over. The Tigers' Ralph Meiss, a 78% charity line shooter during the county tournament, was fouled with two seconds left on the clock. Meiss stepped up to the line, took the ball from the referee, lined up his game-tying FT, and--missed it! Wanatah had outlasted its rival for a one-point victory and executed its third win in a row, by a total margin of five points.

In the finale on Friday night, Union Mills and Stillwell were scheduled to meet. Stillwell seemed to be the crowd favorite, owing to its earlier upset win over LaPorte. At 8:15 p.m., as the two teams warmed up, fans contemplated the situation about to unfold. Stillwell and Union Mills were good. *Very good!* The two teams had a combined 33-9 record and had met twice already that season. Union Mills won both games--the first one by six points and the second by a 2-point nail biter. Beating a good team was one thing. Beating a good team twice was no easy task. But beating a *very good* team *three* times? That was something entirely different, and *that* seemed nearly impossible. The two teams played an even game that night. Union Mills took sixty-seven shots, Stillwell took sixty-three. Union Mills shot eighteen free throws, and Stillwell tossed twenty.

Union Mills relied on its steady one-two punch of Hadella and Rosenbaum who combined for thirty points, while Stillwell's center Gael Swing put forth a Herculean effort scoring 27 of his team's 49 points. The lead hovered between three and five points throughout the game in the Millers' favor and that's how it ended, at 53-49. Four teams remained now for the Saturday afternoon semi-finals: Union Mills, M.C. Elston, Westville, and upstart Wanatah--now on a late season rampage of three straight wins, its only conquests for the entire season. Saturday should prove interesting, but most of the fans fully expected Elston to capture the sectional crown.

Early Saturday morning the outside temperature bottomed out at five below zero. Although there had been a nationwide coal shortage because of union worker strikes, sufficient coal had been preserved by the M.C. school administration to heat its gymnasium for the four days of sectional play. After that though, the supply might be open to question since the union demands had not yet been fully met. At 12:45 p.m., the Elston Red Devils and the Westville Blackhawks ran through their warm-up drills for their game. At 1 p.m., Bill Hannon and Gene Eggers stepped into the center circle and the game was underway. Belying most fans expectations, the battle ran close throughout. With 1:10 remaining, Hannon's shot actually gave Westville the lead, 38-37. The entire 3,400 sell-out crowd was on its feet, cheering and screaming. With 55 seconds left to play, Joe Tanski took a shot from the top of the free throw circle that gave the advantage back to the city team. Down 39-38, the game was now in Westville's hands. But the ball never again fell through the net for the Blackhawks. Unable to score, the ball wound up back in

Elston's hands and after a free throw, the city boys held on to win, 40-38.

In the second game, everybody wondered, could the Midget Miracle continue for Wanatah against Union Mills? At first, the two teams took turns stringing together points, with the Millers slightly holding the upper hand. By halftime, however, the spread had increased to ten points, 31-21. In the second half, the Millers went on a tear, outscoring the Midgets 18-3, thus assuring themselves of a possible chance for the championship title that night against the Michigan City Red Devils. Final score: Union Mills 61, Wanatah 31.

At 8:15 p.m. on Feb. 25, 1950, Ray Rosenbaum of Union Mills and Gene Eggers of Michigan City Elston stepped into the center circle to start the final game of the LaPorte County basketball season and determine who would be the sectional champions for 1950. The two teams immediately traded baskets. Back and forth they went. There were five ties and three lead changes in the first five minutes of play. At the end of the first quarter, Elston Coach Dee Kohlmeier gave his starters a rest and the Millers used that opportunity to finish the period with a run to take the lead, 16-10. In the second quarter, Michigan City battled back and tied the game at 18 all before Rosenbaum and Hadella scored to give Union Mills a 3-point lead, 22-19, at the halftime break. With the clock ticking off the final seconds of the third quarter, the score was tied, 30 to 30. Unbelievably, the Millers were showing that they *could* become sectional champions. The spectators began to sense the same thing the players realized: It was anybody's ballgame now. The Union Mills coach, Park Sanders, probably realized it more than anyone because he had physically conditioned his

players all season to keep running and outlast opponents in endurance toward the end of games. And the Red Devils, sure enough, were beginning to show signs of wearing down, as reflected by the pace of points scored during the final quarter. Still full of pep, Uridel and Rosenbaum connected on three pivot shots to give the Millers a five-point lead at 40-35. Then 42-35, 44-35, 46-37, 48-37, and 51-39 with one minute remaining. It was settled. Final score: Union Mills 54, M.C. Elston 44. The Millers rang up

Hammond the following Saturday, Union Mills was vanquished in the first afternoon game by the host team, 14th-ranked Hammond High, 71-40. The Wildcats were ultimately edged out of the tournament by state runner-up Lafayette Jefferson in the semifinals, 50-46. On March 18, Madison High School became the state champion by soundly defeating Lafayette in the final game, 67-45.

By any measure, the 1949-50 season had been a success for Union Mills, as well as for other teams in the LaPorte County Conference who

From the annals of The Hickory Husker Book of Indiana High School Basketball Records comes this story of crazy antics witnessed during Indiana's early hardwood years.

ANDERSON, Ind. --The Cicero High School Red Devils won the (local) 1916 sectional in dramatic fashion, downing Anderson, 18-12. However, it seems Cicero Coach A. Landreth had a unique tactic, that while not specifically against the rules, clearly smeared the spirit of it.

The Red Devils came out of the locker room for the tip-off covered in olive oil. Eyewitnesses account that it wasn't just a small amount either. "Gleaming in the lights head to toe," one spectator noted. One newspaper remarked about the Devils' "sleek appearance" in warm-ups, and when they moved, "their bodies flashed like mirrors." It wasn't only their appearance that had changed. The Anderson five had almost no success in keeping the slick Devils away from the basket. When the half had ended, Cicero was on top in a near walk-away for the time, 13-6. But this is when things get interesting because on hand in the capacity crowd of 2400 frenzied spectators was none other than the IHSAA Secretary himself, "King" Arthur Trester.

Trester demanded and received a halftime audience with Coach Landreth. A newspaper account indicates that as soon as he entered the Cicero locker room, his nose told him all he needed to know – olive oil! The coach didn't deny the heavy application, but instead justified it for its medicinal properties, as it helped "keep his boys' muscles more pliable." The no-nonsense Trester wasn't having any of it, stating wonderfully that, "In this great and glorious state of Indiana, you cannot mix olive oil and basketball. 'Off with the grease!'"

Coach Landreth immediately took



Union Mills Millers, Sectional Champs 1950

Left to right: Harold "Bub" Clindaniel, Sherm Lute, Tony Hadella, Dean Werner, Woody Jacobs, Coach Park Sanders, Gene Goad (holding ball), Dick Tillinghast, Loren Uridel, Warren Malstaff, Eben Fisher, Ray Rosenbaum.

twenty-four points solely in the fourth quarter, more than they'd scored in the entire first half, while the weary Red Devils managed to score just 14. Hardy conditioning and focused play seemed to have won the night for the Millers. And for the second time in two days, a city school had been defeated by a county school. At the regional in

had proven themselves worthy to compete with the larger city schools and with each other. It was indeed a season of upsets.

Cicero Red Devils (1916) Oil-Up, right into State Finals!

by

**Leigh Evans, Editor/Publisher of The
Hickory Husker and IHSBHS Board
Member**

to trying to towel the boys off and even attempted to apply powder to foil the oil, but again Trester was not going along with it. "To the showers!" ordered the state's most powerful secretary. And off they went. Every Cicero player showered, and each uniform was personally inspected by Trester before the Red Devils were allowed to return to the bench. One report indicated the halftime period lasted more than an hour. Cicero, now sans grease, held on for an 18-12 sectional championship victory. One Anderson fan actually credited the halftime showers as the true advantage gained by Cicero. "Those showers freshened-up the Cicero players considerably, and they went back into the game as frisky as comic opera chorus girls," said the fan.

Anderson was not the only victim in the historic greasing of the 16-team sectional. Cicero opened up the action by downing Mt. Comfort, 73-9. Its second round was a 45-15 pasting of Yorktown. Cicero next slipped past (literally) a game Muncie squad in the semifinal, 23-19, setting-up its noteworthy championship tilt with Anderson. It has been reported over time that Trester allowed the sectional title to stand but denied Cicero the right to compete at the upcoming state finals a few days later. To the contrary, Cicero did in fact compete in Bloomington, but was martyred by Valpo in its first game, 34-23. Cicero finished the season 18-4-1 (25-25 tie with New Castle.) There is no reference of any oiling during the team's regular season games, just the last two sectional games with Muncie and Anderson. A new IHSAA rule emerged shortly thereafter.

And this from the IHSAA Board minutes from later that spring: **ANDERSON VS. CICERO. IN RE-**

OILING OF PLAYERS. *The Board hereby censures the management of the Cicero team for using tactics meant to give advantage and which marred an otherwise successful tourney at Anderson. The Board does not sanction such methods and its stamp of disapproval is hereby placed on the conduct of the Cicero management and upon all such management in the future. In the absence of any rule or precedent in the case, the decision was free from a severer penalty. The following ruling will govern all future cases of a similar nature and the Board offers no leniency whatever to any school. "No school shall at any time use any methods in any contest which are meant to be unfair and which appear on the surface as being unsportsmanlike. The burden of proof here will be on the school violating the spirit of courtesy, friendliness, co-operation and clean athletics."*

A national sportswriter actually picked up this story as it ran in a New York paper. He summed it up nicely with this: "The moral of the story? 'Use olive oil for salads and medicinally, but don't extend its uses to basket-ball contests."

Indiana's Game: The Rise and Decline of High School Basketball in Indiana (Part 3--Final)

by

Michael Wohlford

Editor's Note: This is the third of a three-part series sequence. It is a synopsis of Indiana basketball's great history and then its precipitous drop in popularity during the decade following the 1996 decision to adopt class basketball.

What Went Wrong?: The Decline of Indiana High School Basketball

Without much debate, Plump's shot in 1954 is referred to as the most famous event in the history of

Indiana high school basketball. For the decades following that fateful 15-foot jump shot, Milan's victory served as a flicker of hope for all the small schools in Indiana. Many of these schools believed that they too could win the state championship. Long after many states around the nation had gone to a multi-class tournament format, Indiana's famous and nearly unique "one-size-fits-all" single-class tournament lived on. Each and every school around the state, from the smallest to the largest, vied for state supremacy each March. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Indiana's state tournament was still something that brought the entire state together. The tournament and its "one champion for one state" motto still served as the featured event each year.

Despite all the acclaim it was still receiving, the sport that was once as "Hoosier" as the citizens themselves was on the decline. Initially, the popularity of high school basketball declined gradually. Little by little, the attention of Hoosiers was being drawn away from the game they once held so dear. At first, attendance at regular season games declined. Then, it became less and less common for communities to be identified by their basketball team. People simply didn't care about high school basketball as much as they used to. Hoosiers started rewriting their list of "things to do." Going to the local high school basketball game was no longer the #1 option; it had become less appealing to the people of Indiana. Next, something happened that most Hoosiers never thought possible. The state tournament started drawing fewer fans. What once drew packed gymnasiums throughout the four-week tournament began to feature empty seats. The game that was just recently king of Indiana was officially on the decline.

When comparing tournament attendance data from 1983 to 1994, the disparities are glaring. The total number of fans attending the sectional in 1983 was 743,141, compared to 503,030 in 1994. Comparing those same two years, we see that the regional in 1983 out-attended the regional in 1994 by a count of 200,784 to 154,536. And, finally, the semi-state drew 88,456 fans in 1983, greatly outnumbering the 62,130 fans who attended in 1994. To add insult to injury, during this time the state's population steadied at around 5.5 million people. The drop in attendance was not the result of a decline in population, but the drop in attendance was a clear sign that the game was on the decline in the eyes of many Hoosiers. Throughout the period in which tournament attendance declined, a group of individuals in the state began clamoring for a multi-class state tournament. This group was comprised of small school principals who felt it was in their student-athletes' best interest to make a change to the single-class tournament. The aura of Milan's miracle had begun to wear off on much of the state, as many of the small schools who once used Milan as an example began to feel that it was impossible to realize their dreams (of winning a state championship) while playing against the state's big boys. What started as a whisper grew to a deafening yell in the mid-'90s. Supporters of class basketball said that a multi-class system "would provide more teams with the honor of being champions" and that it would be "the best thing for the students. Traditions die hard though, as many Hoosiers lashed out against class basketball. Some said that by introducing the new tournament the IHSAA would be dismantling "an 86-year-old Hoosier

tradition.". Each side lobbied its case, but in the end class basketball won the day. In March 1998, Indiana crowned four state champions for the first time in the history of Indiana high school basketball.

The new class basketball system was something that the state would just have to get used to. Instead of pairing all Indiana high schools together in an "all-comers" style tournament, the IHSAA took the entire list of high schools participating in basketball and separated them into four classes based on enrollment. The four classes (1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A) each consist of 25% of the total number of high schools, with Class 1A consisting of the smallest 25% of schools and Class 4A consisting of the largest 25%. This new system is set up to crown four class champions, allowing more schools than ever the opportunity to call themselves a 'state champion'. Class basketball gives smaller schools (classes 1 A and 2A) a better chance to realize their dreams by not only giving them a better chance to win the state title, but more of a chance to win the sectionals, regionals, and semi-states as well. It is true that class basketball has achieved all that its supporters had hoped; more schools, in particular small schools, have won state titles since its 1997 inception.

Indiana high school basketball historians often argue that the sport died when four teams cut down the nets in 1998. In fact, many say that this singular event killed our beloved game the moment it was passed by the IHSAA board of directors. I both agree and disagree with this theory. The evidence shows that high school basketball has been on the decline in Indiana since the 1970s. Of course, there were some moments when high school basketball appeared healthier

than ever, but as a whole Indiana did not feel the same way about high school basketball in the 1980s and '90s as it did in the 1950s and '60s. The heyday of high school basketball has come and gone in the Hoosier state. It is my opinion that there are various factors that have contributed to the creation of the state of Indiana high school basketball today. Indiana high school basketball was once the only show in town. As the main event for most communities, the game flourished. Packed gyms were the norm in Indiana, as larger and larger "labors of love" were built to keep up with the number of fans attending games. Hoosiers had a passion for the game of basketball; a passion complete with an undying faithfulness that spanned many winters. This passion was put to the test when other options for things to do were made available for Hoosier citizens. There were now other shows in town, other shows that could take Indiana's attention away from high school basketball.

One of the first options available was television. As mentioned earlier, television was utilized by the IHSAA to broadcast the state finals throughout the state in the mid-1950s. This ploy was useful in delivering the finals to a wider audience, but the number of homes with a television at that time was very limited. In 1950, only 9% of U.S. households owned a television. Though this grew to 64% by 1955, many Hoosier homes were still left without television programming. The number of homes with televisions grew rapidly, and by 1965 at least one TV was in 92.6% of households. Families could now spend nights together watching television. As something new and exciting, watching television became a popular option for many households.

Another attention-grabbing change

to Hoosier society that gained traction in the late 1960s was the growth in popularity and availability of professional sports. Baseball had been an American pastime since the late-19th century, but many Hoosiers had to follow their favorite team from afar via radio, newspaper, or the occasional weekend venture to Chicago (Cubs or White Sox), St. Louis (Cardinals), or Cincinnati (Reds). When combined with television, baseball was now at the fingertips of every Hoosier. Many Hoosiers had followed their favorite team for many years without actually seeing them play, but the emergence of television allowed fans to stay home and "see" them for the first time. Watching professional sports was yet another option offered by television in the 1960s and beyond. In the professional basketball world, the Indiana Pacers first played in 1967. Playing in the old American Basketball Association (ABA), the Pacers (located in Indianapolis) gave Indiana basketball fans one more team to cheer for. Winning ABA titles in 1970, '72, and '73, the success of the Pacers garnered the support of the Indianapolis community and its surrounding areas. High school basketball now had another basketball rival other than I.U. and Purdue.

Though television played a large role in diverting fans' attention away from high school basketball, and professional sports gave Hoosiers another outlet for their obsession with sports, the single largest factor that led to the decline in popularity of high school basketball was school consolidation. The number of schools participating in the state tournament went from 755 in 1955 to 411 in 1975. Originating in the 1960s and 1970s, it has been said, "In many ways, the class basketball struggle of the 1990s was a result of the fight over consolidating Hoosier

schools." Small town schools, often with enrollments of fewer than 200 students, were being consolidated into "county school systems with enrollments of a thousand students or more." This consolidation created "super" schools with huge enrollments, while fewer small schools remained. Consolidation created a stratification of schools that still exists today. There are simply more big schools than there ever have been, giving rise to the thought that the little guy no longer has a chance to win. Consolidation created other problems as well. First introduced to improve "the quality of education in the state's hundreds of rural schools," the creation of large, better maintained school buildings full of highly qualified teachers was meant to replace small rural schools that had many structural problems and a small faculty less qualified to teach. The introduction of such large schools came with a cost: some four-hundred rural Indiana schools have been the victim of school consolidation since 1959. Gone are many of the school buildings and gymnasiums of the past. Gone with them are the tradition and community identity that they once sparked. High school basketball was at a fevered pitch in these locales, where nicknames reflected the community's livelihood. Some of these nicknames, e.g., the "Bedford Stonecutters," "Stinesville Quarry Boys," "Monon Railroaders," and "Holland Dutchmen" gave identity to the small community they served. They also told the rest of the state the story of these dots on a map. With school consolidation some communities lost their identity all together, never to regain what had made them special and unique.

Consolidation disturbed many Hoosiers, who for so long had followed their local high school basketball team. During tournament

play, these small schools faced off for sectional titles, sectionals that often consisted only of teams from that particular county. Games were fierce and rivalries were heated. With the advent of consolidation, these rivalries were quashed, and the sectionals were now being played between schools encompassing a larger geographical area of the state. Pairing small schools together to form one large school also sparked much angst between individuals. In Huntington County, eleven such small schools were consolidated into one "super" high school (Huntington North) in 1966. This consolidation didn't happen without an uproar. Consolidation divided families. The president of our school board, e.g., his brother and their families, just completely split because the brother was so opposed to consolidation. In the school itself, there was also much in-fighting, as students from once rival schools now struggled to properly integrate. My grandfather, now deceased, was a graduate of Roanoke, one of those small rural Huntington County schools. He was also a longtime teacher at the consolidated Huntington North High School. He once told me that many students refused to go to school because they didn't want to mix with their once-hated rivals. "It took a long time for students to get over the change," he said, "but it took even longer for the people of the county to do the same." Like Huntington County, the other ninety-one counties in Indiana experienced problems with consolidation in the 1960s and 1970s. Small communities seemed to have lost their niche in society forever.

Consolidation caused many problems in Hoosier society, but it especially hurt high school basketball. Indiana high school basketball was cut pretty deeply by this change, as many communities

lost their high school and thus their identity. What were once places to stop for Friday night's game were now just signs that passers-by saw on their way to someplace bigger. Rural Indiana was losing its claim to high school basketball. Consolidation also caused other problems for high school basketball. The sport lost popularity during this time, as the IHSAA began sanctioning other sports for boys. The impetus for such expansion was the consolidation of schools. In *Play On*, the IHSAA cites larger schools for the drive behind the growing number of sanctioned sports. "Fewer but larger high schools in Indiana after 1970 meant that far more students could participate in athletics." Larger school sizes, more teachers, and larger and better facilities led to the introduction of more sports for high school students. Not only did the IHSAA sanction tennis and baseball in the late 1960s, but more schools offered track, swimming, golf, and wrestling. Sports that had once been played at a select few large schools were now being played throughout the state. High school basketball now had many rivals.

The major rival to high school basketball in Indiana was football. Once prominent mainly in the large urban areas of the state (where very few schools, proportionately, were located prior to consolidation), football was not sanctioned as an IHSAA tournament sport until 1973. Even before it became a tournament sport, football was becoming increasingly popular by the early 1960s. In 1962, Indianapolis Tech and Indianapolis Cathedral played for the city championship before nearly 14,000 fans at Victory Field. Requiring a large number of participants to field a team, football prevented many prospective basketball players from honing their

skills in the summer and fall. The sport also kept many of these athletes from playing basketball altogether. Another by-product of the introduction of football was the fanfare it "stole" from high school basketball. No longer were barber shop patrons talking exclusively about basketball, they were now incorporating football and other sports into the discussion.

Another major change in the high school sports world that aided in the decline of popularity of high school basketball was the introduction of girls' sports. Prior to 1972, all IHSAA-sanctioned sports were for males. The introduction of girls' sports was a huge departure from the past, when women were basically forbidden to play organized sports. These sentiments changed in 1972 when the United States Congress passed Title IX, which read, "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in ... any education programs or activity receiving federal financial assistance." The popularity of girls' sports had been on the rise for some time. Since the 1950s, girls had participated in sports outside of mainstream society. With the advent of Title IX, the road was paved for high school girls to participate in IHSAA-sanctioned sports. The introduction of girls' sports took much of the attention off the boys and placed it onto the girls. High school basketball was no longer just *boys'* basketball, girls were playing it too.

The introduction of more boys' sports, as well as the introduction of girls' sports, caused a great change in the importance of high school basketball to Hoosiers. Once an only child of sorts, high school basketball was now one of many, garnering less attention than it had in days past. The change in the high school sports scene changed the feeling among

some Hoosiers about their once beloved game. According to *Play On*, "It is undeniable that the all-encompassing aura of boys' basketball has faded in the past years as the IHSAA member schools fostered a broader, far more participatory version, of high school athletics for both genders!" With these changes, high school basketball would have to deal with sharing the spotlight. Each of these factors aided in some way to the steady decline in popularity of high school basketball. Coupled with a rapid growth in technology, including computers, CDs, and DVDs in the 1980s and '90s, they have led to a change in focus among the citizens of Indiana. Hoosiers, once so ardently focused on high school basketball, were now looking elsewhere to get their kicks. Societal growth in general has been the largest contributor to the deterioration of "Hoosier Hysteria." Television programs, the World Wide Web, movies, video games, and other advancements have given Indiana citizens more and more reasons to stay out of the gym.

The single greatest change to the sport since its beginning in 1911, of course, was the inception of class basketball. Beginning in the 1997-1998 season, the change to class basketball caused great debate among Hoosiers, nearly splitting Indiana's citizens down the middle. In 1996, the IHSAA surveyed 332 member schools and found that "167 reported that their fans supported a multiple-class format in girls' and boys' basketball and 159 schools reported that their fans prefer a one-class system." When brought to a vote in that same year, the board voted 12 to 5 to adopt a multi-class tournament format. The debate over class basketball was extremely heated from the beginning. Those against class basketball wanted to

preserve the tradition of the past, while those in favor of class basketball wanted a fair playing field for all participating teams. Many around the state are still upset at the changes made in the late '90s, while others feel it was a necessary maneuver considering the society we live in.

Those against class basketball (myself included) argue that a multiple class tournament goes against everything high school sports stand for. *Sports Illustrated* remarked about the loss of the Hoosier tradition by saying, "high school sports are supposed to be about dreams, and that's why tradition should not be discarded for the sake of handing out a few more trophies." Many Indiana high school basketball legends have also remarked about the loss of tradition. John Wooden and Bobby Plump are two such legends. When discussing class basketball, Wooden displays his dislike by saying he is "disappointed that Indiana has abandoned its historic and virtually unique tradition of single-class basketball. 'Certainly, our young people need goals that they can realistically reach. 'But what are the goals?' Plump's reaction is a bit more pointed, as he has been a strong opponent of class basketball ever since it was first introduced. Plump forecasts the future of the game by saying, "The interest is going to decline. 'We've heard from most of the other states around ... that when you go to a class system there isn't interest. 'The attendance doesn't follow it." Plump's statement is backed up adequately by statistics. When comparing the attendance for the state tournament during its final year, (1996-1997) with the first year of class basketball (1997-1998), one finds striking differences in the data. Though the sectionals and semi-states were somewhat similar in the

number of attendees--491,259 in 1997 sectionals compared to 430,303 in 1998 sectionals--the regionals and state finals in 1998 yielded drastically lower attendance numbers than the previous season (under the single-class format). The regionals brought in 71,384 fans in 1998, less than half of the 168,715 from the previous year. The state finals figures were even more glaring, as the state gathered for the first time to crown four separate state champions. Only 27,295 made it to Indianapolis that year, a far cry from the 55,125 that made it the year before. The state finals attracted fewer fans than usual in 1998, the inaugural year of the multi-class state finals. As a result, the cavernous RCA Dome lasted only two years as the host of the class basketball state finals (until 2000 when the finals moved to Consecro Fieldhouse, the home of the NBA's Indiana Pacers). The dome (previously the Hoosier Dome) had been the site of the state finals since 1990, when Hoosier legend Damon Bailey led Bedford North-Lawrence to the state championship in front of a single session, world high school basketball record crowd, of 41,046 fans. At that time, high school basketball appeared healthy and strong, but with more and more changes to society, and with the advent of class basketball, the game seemed weaker than ever.

As a result of declining attendance numbers, the IHSAA moved the finals to a much smaller venue in 2000 to make up for the money it was losing by holding the finals in the dome. Despite Bailey's best efforts, high school basketball began decaying in front of every Hoosier's eyes. For various reasons the sport is not as popular as it once was. Class basketball can surely stake some claim to this phenomenon, because, without it, Indiana high school basketball would still be unique and

chock full of tradition. Attendance numbers continue to be down at the state finals, as well as throughout the state tournament. But we cannot place all the blame on class basketball. There are simply too many other things to do these days, pulling the collective attention of Hoosiers away from the game they once loved so much. The people of Indiana are moving at a faster pace today, not stopping long enough to witness their collective past. High school basketball is now taking a back seat to everyday life. Just a few decades ago, it *was* life. Unfortunately, Indiana basketball will never go back to the way it was in its heyday. Really, we can only hope that it doesn't get any worse.

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PRESS RELEASE

Boone County Basketball Hall of Fame

For Immediate Release

RE: **2022 Inductees Announcement**

February 9, 2022

Contact: D. L. White – President
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Boone County Basketball Hall of Fame

The Boone County Basketball Hall of Fame is proud to announce our Basketball Inductees for the 2022 Class. A special "Thanks" goes out to all those who took the time to make these deserving nominations.

Our Induction Ceremony will take place at Ulen Country Club in Lebanon, IN on Saturday, July 16, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Our new inductees are:

Dick Bramblett	Lebanon	1946
Mike Caldwell	Lebanon	1967
Bennie Devol	Lebanon	1923
George Johnson	Zionsville	1965
Byron Linton	Thorntown	1960
Frank "Doc" Little	Lebanon	1917
Kent Poole	Western Boone	1982
Max Price	Thorntown	1953
Mick Pyle	Zionsville	1972
Jami Sloan	Lebanon	1990
Tom Wethington	Granville Wells	1964

We would like to "Thank" our members and the general public for input in the selection process. If you would like to nominate someone for the Inductee Class of 2023 please go to our website www.BooneCountyHoops.com and download the Nomination Form or request form from our Secretary Martha Randel at SiSRandel@gmail.com. The deadline for 2023 nominations is December 31, 2022.

For updates feel free to check our Boone County Basketball Hall of Fame Facebook page or our website at www.BooneCountyHoops.com

Website: www.BooneCountyHoops.com
 or Boone County Basketball Hall of Fame



FACEBOOK BooneCountyHoops

IHS/BHS CONJOINT MEETING AT TERRE HAUTE MUSEUM

1:30-3:30 Presentations By:

Banquet at 5 pm

Harley Sheets Curtis Tomak

Bill Boone Marshall Goss

Roger Robison

JUNE 25th

Saturday



2022 Indiana Track and Field Hall of Fame Induction

Reception at the Indiana Track and Field Museum

1:00pm – FREE

Induction at the Idle Creek Golf Course Banquet Facilities

5:00pm – \$30.00 each attendee

In Terre Haute, Indiana



JUNE 25th __ Saturday __ 1 pm __ Terre Haute

BECOME AN IHSBHS MEMBER

(Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society)

Join a statewide group of sports-minded individuals who have a common interest in the history of high school basketball, Indiana's favorite sport. Membership dues are currently just \$10 per year. Established in 1994, and loosely associated with the Hall of Fame in New Castle, IHSBHS (pronounced "ish-bish") publishes four seasonal newsletters for its members, each issue usually 12 to 16 pages in content, known as Boxscore. This newsletter contains diverse items, including short stories that recount tales of former Hoosier ballplayers and their schools' teams. Members are invited, but not required, to submit their own personal stories for inclusion in Boxscore.

Membership Application

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-Mail (optional for receiving Boxscore) _____

Telephone No. (optional) _____

High School and graduation year _____

Check or money order to IHSBHS for \$10 enclosed? _____

Mail to: IHSBHS Treasurer Rocky Kenworthy, 710 E. 800 S., Clayton, IN 46118

Board of Directors: Roger Robison (Frankfort '54), Harley Sheets (Lebanon '54), Cliff Johnson (Western '54), Rocky Kenworthy (Cascade '74), Tim Puet (Valley, PA '69), Leigh Evans (Castle '86), John Ockomon (Pendleton '60), Jeff Luzadder (Dunkirk '74), Curtis Tomak (Linton '59), Kermit Paddack (Sheridan '02), Hugh Schaefer (Freelandville '61), Bill Boone (Ladoga '56).

IHSBHS MEMBER PROFILE FORM
(Tell us about yourself)

Complete this form and mail to: Rocky Kenworthy, IHSBHS, 710 E, 800 S, Clayton, IN 46118. Profiles may appear in Boxscore from time to time.

Today's Date _____

Member's Name _____ **Phone No.** _____

Email _____ **Address** _____

Occupation/Profession _____ **Retired?** _____

Major Interests/Hobbies _____

Past Sports Activities _____

Where Born? _____ **Year Born** _____

High School _____ **H.S. graduation year** _____

College or Univ. _____

Area of Study _____ **Degree(s)/Year** _____

Additional Comments You'd Like To Share: _____



Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Annual Membership Program

The Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame is committed to recognizing Indiana's Basketball Legends and inspiring Indiana's basketball future.

The Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. The operation of the Hall of Fame is dependent upon attendance, gift shop sales, funds generated through activities and events, gifts and donations. The Annual Membership Program was established to allow all basketball enthusiasts to participate in the support of preserving and sharing Indiana's basketball history.

As an Annual Member of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame you will receive the following recognition and benefits during the next year.

- name recognition on the Annual Membership display in the lobby of the museum
- name recognition in the Indiana Basketball History Magazine, & Induction Banquet Programs
- free museum admission for the member and 3 guests, 20% discount in the gift shop
- Hall of Fame complimentary gift
- subscription to Indiana Basketball History Magazine
- invitations to annual receptions for inductees and honorees along with other special events

Please complete the membership form, and keep the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in the GAME!

2022 Membership Form

Membership Categories

<input type="checkbox"/> Active H.S. Coach	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Active H.S. Referee	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Member	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	\$3,000 (Cumulative)

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email: _____

Please make check payable to Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, One Hall of Fame Court, New Castle, IN 47362. The Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Check method of payment:

Check or Money Order enclosed Credit Card (VISA, MC, Discover)

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ Vcode _____

Signature _____