

FIRST GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT HELD MARCH 1926 IN HUNTINGBURG

By Ken Morgan

The old building that was once Huntingburg's new gymnasium in 1926 still stands on Highway 231 and heavy traffic passes by it everyday. But few, if any, realize that something historic in the history of Indiana High School basketball took place there one March weekend in 1926. It is recorded that the first girls' basketball tournament in the state of Indiana took place there and it was no small event. Twelve schools sent teams to Huntingburg for the two-day tournament. Considering the means of transportation and highway conditions of the day this was no simple feat. Some teams, no doubt, traveled by train.

Here's The Story

Reprinted from the 1926 March edition of Huntingburg High School paper
"The Optimist". Note - Huntingburg is referred to as the "Bear Cats"

GIRLS' BASKET BALL TOURNEY

On March 12 and 13 basket ball history was made in Huntingburg when local authorities, working in co-operation with the citizens of the town, successfully staged the first girls' basket ball tourney ever held within the state.

Four the past few seasons girls' basket ball has been growing in popularity and each season some school has proceeded to claim the "Pocket" title by virtue of the season's record. This procedure was far from satisfactory to a majority of the schools and to the fans supporting a good team.

This spring Mr. Harry Apostle, coach of the boys' team, presented a well constructed plan for holding a girls' tournament in Huntingburg to settle definitely the disputed championship claims.

Questionnaires were prepared and submitted to all schools in the district. As a result twelve teams entered the contest, which began Friday, March 12 at 10 o'clock, when Reitz of Evansville met the Mt. Olympus team.

Reitz was favored to win and did not disappoint the dopers as they emerged the victors after a hard fight 18-12. At eleven o'clock Central of Evansville defeated Lynnville 24-4.

At two o'clock Petersburg and Chandler met in what proved to be one of the best played games of the tourney. At the close of the regular playing

time the score was tied 20-20. At the end of the first overtime period the score was again tied 22-22. In the second overtime period neither team scored and in the third period Petersburg caged two field goals, giving them a well earned victory 26-22.

At three o'clock local fans were ont (sic) to a person as the "Bear Cats" were to meet the "dark horse" team of the tourney, Oaktown. The Oaktown team came here hoping to take the tourney "like Grant took Richmond" but after a few minutes of play it was evident they were not accustomed to playing the brand of basket ball that teams in this section of the state play, and the Bear Cats won 23-11.

As Oakland City was forced out of the tourney, due to illness of players, Mt. Vernon drew a bye and a consolation game between Mt. Olympus and Lynnville was substituted. Mt. Olympus won 26-16. At eight o'clock Boonville eliminated Rockport with a score of 26-16.

Saturday morning Reitz and Central met and the Reitz lassies sent the "dopers" home with a battered bucket, when they erased Central 16-8. In the other morning game the Bear Cats defeated Petersburg 30-11.

In the afternoon game Boonville lost to Mt. Vernon 19 to 10 and the Bear Cats were put out of the race after a desperate fight, by the Reitz girls with a score of 19-16.

The final game of the tourney was played at

eight o'clock Saturday evening between the Reitz and Mt. Vernon girls and proved to be one of the best games ever witnessed in the local gym. The first half ended with Mt. Vernon leading 5-3, but at three-quarters time the score was tied at seven all. With two minutes to play in the final quarter Gill, of Mt. Vernon, sank two field goals and won the game for her team eleven to seven.

Summary

Mt. Vernon 11.

Player:	C	F	TP
McGregor, f	2	3	7
Weisinger, f	0	0	0
Gill, c	2	0	4
Watkins, c	0	0	0
Coulter, g	0	0	0
Barter, g	0	0	0
Totals	4	3	11

Reitz 7.

Player:	C	F	TP
Pirtle, f	1	0	2
Schreiber, f	2	0	5
Droll, c	0	0	0
Nickens, c	0	0	0
Burton, g	0	0	0
Thomas, g	0	0	0

Totals 3 1 7

Referee, Puckett, and Umpire, Filmy

After the game the players of the Mt. Vernon team and Miss Eleanor Thomas of Reitz were called to the stage and presented the trophies of the tourney. The Mt. Vernon team received a cup emblematic of the district championship, and gifts of flowers presented by Mr. Peter Morgen, the local florist. Miss Thomas was awarded the "best mental attitude" medal.

Here are some tourney high lights:

- Best looking team - Mt. Olympus
- Best sportsmanship team - Lynnville
- Best shooting team - Chandler
- Best all round team - Reitz
- Best guard - Seiffers, Mt. Olympus
- Best passing team - Huntingburg
- Luckiest team - Mt. Vernon
- Best looking chaperone - Chandler
- Prettiest uniforms - Mt. Olympus
- Tallest team - Central
- Best looking player - Mt. Olympus
- Tallest player - Myer, Boonville
- Shortest player - Hibbs, Rockport

All Star Team

- F - Hermann, Huntingburg
- F - MacGregor, Mt. Vernon
- F - Schreiber, Reitz
- C - Schneider, Central
- C - Heitman, Huntingburg
- C - Gill, Mt. Vernon
- G - Seiffer, Mt. Olympus
- G - Thomas, Reitz
- G - Watkins, Mt. Vernon

Tourney Scores

- Mt. Olympus 12-Reitz 18
- Lynnville 4-Central 24
- Petersburg 26-Chandler 22
- Huntingburg 28-Oaktown 11
- Reitz 16-Central 8
- Rockport 6-Boonville 26
- Huntingburg 30-Petersburg 11
- Mt. Vernon 19-Boonville 10
- Reitz 16-Huntingburg 13
- Reitz 7-Mt. Vernon 11

Note: Ruth Heitman of Huntingburg was one of the players selected to the all tournament team. Almost 80 years later she would be inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame.



*Huntingburg's Main Street Gym - Dedicated November 1925.
Site of Indiana's first girls' basketball tournament.*

GIRLS' BASKETBALL IN HUNTINGBURG: 1920-1930

By Ken Morgan

Girls' basketball was played in Huntingburg from 1920 until 1930. The early years saw games played outside and then in 1921 games were played in the St. George Hotel Horse and Buggy stable. It was known at the time as Greeners Livery Stable.

The games were played upstairs and the fans stood around the small court. The size of the stable upstairs was 61 feet by 31 feet with a 13 1/2 feet ceiling. Now imagine you had the smell of horses downstairs, the smell of coal burning stoves, as well as the smell of fans and players' sweat. That was early Indiana basketball devotion.

The school year of 1925-1926 saw Huntingburg with a new gymnasium. It seated approximately 1200 fans and had wooden chair back



1920 Huntingburg High School Girls' Basket ball Team - First Half: Harriet Gabriel, sub, f; Marian Gabriel, f; Kathleen Kilian, c; Oda House, c; Fayola Murray, sub, g; Frances Gabriel, g; Anna Katterjohn, coach; Mary Woerter, f; Dorothy Gose, g.

seats. It is recorded that as the gym was being planned that it was very important to have a larger seating capacity than the gym of arch rival Jasper. It wound up with two more seats. The gymnasium was dedicated November 1925 with the girls team hosting Evansville Bosse and the boys playing Orleans. Then in March 1926 the gym hosted the first girls' basketball tournament in the State of Indiana.

Girls' basketball, at this time, had their own rules, much different than boys basketball. There were six players per team - three guards and three forwards. They would jump ball after each basket, same as the boys. Guards could not go past the center line after bringing the ball up court. Forwards stayed on the other end of the court to score after the guards passed the ball to them from their half of the court.

In the very early 1920's, some students would graduate after the first semester in late December. Therefore they had a first semester team and a second semester team with some new players replacing those who had graduated after the first semester.

It was a different time with different rules but one thing remains the same - high school basketball is important to the Hoosier state.

INDIANA GIRLS' BASKETBALL DISCONTINUED FOR 45 YEARS

The school year 1929-1930 was the last year of inter-scholastic girls' basketball at Huntingburg as well as most other schools in Indiana. The school years 1930-1931 was the beginning of the Girls' Athletic Association which promoted athletic activities for all girls in junior and senior high school. It would not be until the mid 1970s before girls' high school basketball would return to Indiana.