

Basketball at IU had its humble beginnings

"The few sad memories which Wabash College may have had of last fall's defeat at the hands of the Indiana University football team were wiped out last night when the Presbyterians in a fast game of basketball defeated the State lads by a score of 29 to 21." *Bloomington Evening World*, Feb. 6, 1906.

Today's basketball fans wouldn't have recognized the game if they had had video tape technology in those days. To begin with, the reporter who covered the game wrote, "Wabash opened the scoring *four minutes* after the start of the game."

Obviously, the term "fast" was a relative one in those days, for the reporter continued, "Indiana's team work looked fast during the entire half."

During most of the game the score was about even, with Wabash playing what was considered a "perfect game." In fact, the score was tied at 18 with five minutes left to go in the second half.

Actually, IU had defeated Wabash earlier in the year — Jan. 19, to be exact. In that game the score was IU, 20; Wabash, 12. The



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

IU *Arbutus* had an explanation for the IU loss in the return game in February. "The foreign and peculiar floor at Crawfordsville play havoc with our team play . . ."

All in all, IU didn't have a very good basketball season in 1906. The yearbook reported that the total number of games played was 16, and IU won only seven of them.

The *Arbutus* provided a more-than-adequate explanation about why the IU team was having a hard time. "The season opened auspiciously with five Varsity men in the line-up: Harmeson, Hiatt, Ritterskamp, Maxwell and Hubbell."

Then disaster struck. Hubbell dropped out of school, and Maxwell had to stop play-

ing because of an injured knee. There was another problem for the team: It had no coach.

Things went from bad to worse. Toward the end of the season the team went on a four-game road trip. Absent from play were Ritterskamp, who had a broken nose, and Quinn, who stayed in Bloomington.

Originally, there had been eight on the team. The *Arbutus* photograph indicates that the basketball squad had a couple of adults, who were either managers or faculty advisers. In the yearbook, the record of the basketball team for the year ranked at the end of the men's athletic section and just before the women's sports.

"Double fouls" were called in the second Wabash game. As the *Evening World* put it, "Harmon started Indiana's scoring with a pretty field goal after making his only foul as a victim of a double-foul."

While Indiana was still within hailing distance of Wabash in the second half, both teams were burning up a lot of energy. In fact, related the *Evening World*, "Although

the State (IU) lads tried repeatedly for field goals, they were unable to score until Wabash had scored from the field."

The IU players must have suffered from frustration, for the *Evening World* reporter included a rather damning detail in the article: "Referee McCormick awarded Wabash two more points on account of the alleged rough playing by Indiana."

Considering the low scores, it is hard to imagine why the referee had to make another call that would be unheard of today. "Both teams were finally completely exhausted, and five minutes rest was given in the middle of the half," explained the *Evening World*.

Who were the other opponents that year? IU played Butler, Rose Polytechnic Institute, Illinois, the New Albany Y.M.C.A., Indiana State Normal School, Purdue, Cincinnati, Earlham, Hartford City. In spite of a 7-16 record, IU outscored its opponents 412 to 350.

Despite a losing season, IU made up for it in the last game. The basketball team beat Purdue's by a score of 30 to 27.

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