

BOXSCORE

A Publication of the Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society

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Our IHSBHS website address is Indianabasketballhistory.com. You can also enter IHSBHS on your favorite search engine.

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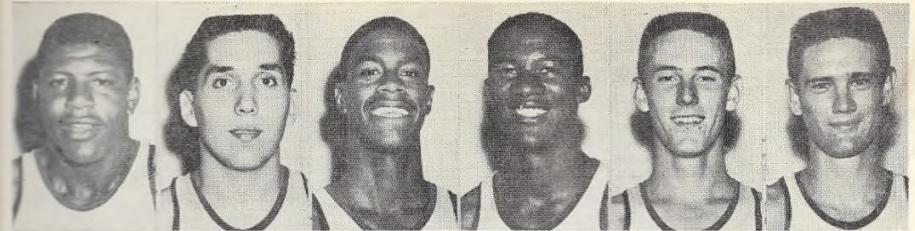
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THE 1957 INDIANA ALL-STARS

By

Cliff Johnson, Editor

The 1956 two-game blowout of the Kentucky All-Stars by Indiana seemed to punctuate many sportswriters' opinion that if the annual series continued, it would always constitute a mismatch. That point of view still lingers on today,



INDIANA COACH



ANGUS NICONSON
Indiana Central
College

Trainer: Jim Morris

1957 INDIANA ALL-STARS

No.	Player	Pos.	Field Goals	Free Throws	Personal Fouls
1	JOHN COALMON South Bend	6'4" 195 lbs.	C		
2	HOWARD DARDEEN Terre Haute	6'4" 200 lbs.	F		
3	ALBERT MAXEY Indianapolis	6'3" 170 lbs.	G		
4	HERB LEE South Bend	6'0" 181 lbs.	G		
5	BOB PERIGO Lafayette	6'5" 180 lbs.	C		
6	PHIL WILLS Grass Creek	6'5" 180 lbs.	C		
7	ROGER KAISER Dale	6'2" 185 lbs.	F		
8	TED LUCKENBILL Elkhart	6'6" 195 lbs.	C		
9	JESSE BLACKWELL Southport	6'3" 180 lbs.	F		
10	BOB ORRILL Madison	6'1" 160 lbs.	G		
11	RONNIE HORN Mississinewa	6'6 1/2" 200 lbs.	C		
12	DAVID GIESLER Jasper	5'11 1/2" 163 lbs.	G		

Team Alternates: LeRoy Johnson, Mishawaka; Dick Mitchell, Elwood



Roger Kaiser

Ted Luckenbill

Jesse Blackwell

Bob Orrill

Ronnie Horn

David Giesler

76 years after the series was first initiated. Its rationale is strengthened largely because of the ever-widening margin of victories the Hoosiers hold over the Bluegrassers, particularly during the more recent years. But so far, the strength of "tradition" seems to have held fast, and prevented the games from just becoming historical notes from another age.

By the time the 1957 games and teams were announced, it was a matter of record that Indiana had won 15 of the 17 games played against its inter-state rival. True, a few of its wins had come via close scores, with two of those in overtime, but most had been captured by decisive margins. There seemed no reason this year for that trend to change. The Indiana team was once again imbued with unquestionable scoring talent, speed, and rebounding strength.

Phil Wills, a 6-5 scoring machine from the small high school of Grass Creek, had just set a state scoring record his senior year by averaging 42.2 points per game. Later, after enrolling at Purdue, Wills sustained a broken ankle that continued to hamper a promising basketball career. 6-5 John Coalman of South Bend Central who, together with his brother Sylvester, led Central to the state title, was a high scorer and top rebounder. He was named Mr. Basketball of Indiana that year. His teammate, 6-0 Herb Lee, played guard and was super fast on his feet. Herbie also was a formidable shooter, could handle the ball well, and was adept at setting up assists. Other outstanding players on Indiana's team, to name just a few, included 6-3 Albert Maxey from state tournament runners-up Indianapolis Crispus Attucks, 6-1 Bob Orrill from Madison's always powerful Cubs, and 6-4 Howard Dardeen from Terre Haute

Gerstmeyer.

The Kentucky team was not short on talent either, though. 6-2 Bob Carpenter from Louisville Central, 6-3 Billy Lickert from Lexington Lafayette, 6-3 Bobby Jones from Maysville, and 6-5 Charles Osborne from Flat Gap were all definite scoring threats on the court. There were several others on the team having plenty of height and muscle, such as 6-7 Joe Stark from Dixie Heights, 6-5 Bob Craig from Lexington, and 6-5 Bobby Lee Slusher from Lone Jack.

The first game was scheduled for play at the Louisville Armory on Saturday, June 22. Kentucky came out fast and built a 24-15 lead at the first quarter's end, and then never looked back. It was 43-30 at halftime, and eventually became a 91-71 rout over the vaunted Hoosiers as the gun sounded to end the game. Lickert and Carpenter scored 60 points between them in the resounding home state victory. Kentucky fans were ecstatic.

The second game was played a week later at Butler Fieldhouse. Revenge was on the Indiana players' minds, undoubtedly. Coach Angus Nicoson had spent the intervening weekdays working out a strategy to contain the free-wheeling offensive attack of Carpenter, Lickert, and Jones, as orchestrated by Kentucky's newly appointed All-Star coach Ralph Carlisle. The strategy worked to some degree and the scoring slowed for Kentucky during the first half. Coach Carlisle's cagers held only a 34-31 lead at halftime. Things looked even better for Indiana as the Nicoson boys took a 39-34 lead briefly after the first few minutes of the second half. Both teams then battled for the lead throughout each of the 3rd and 4th quarters, with the score being tied four different times. With roughly two minutes remaining, Kentucky

took a lead at 73-70 when Charley Osborne punched in a rebound. As the clock ran down, Kentucky traded fast field goals with Indiana, then began playing keep-away with the ball. Lickert was fouled with 47 seconds left, and sank his two free throws which became sufficient to withstand two more late Indiana field goals. The Bluegrassers' unrelenting attack matched that of Indiana's during the game, and they prevailed, 77-76. Carpenter and Maxey shared the honors for the Star of Stars award, while Lickert dazzled spectators with a 50-point barrage during the two games.

This series was a sweep for Kentucky, and it set the stage for two-game splits between the All-Star teams in six of the next seven years. Kentucky, at least in the late 50s and early 60s, had ostensibly determined to no longer serve as a patsy for these games.

IHSBHS plans to print articles on the 1958 and 1959 All-Star games in the next two issues. That will complete a full run of 13 years (1947-59) in Boxscore. After that, we plan to go all the way back to the beginning and recount the earlier games spanning the years 1939 to 1946, which we hope will be of continuing interest to readers. Comments are welcomed.

JOHN WOODEN BICENTENNIAL LEGACY PROGRAM May 16, 2016

Indiana is celebrating its 200th year of statehood in 2016. During the year, many state-recognized "Indiana Bicentennial Legacy" projects, events, and programs are occurring throughout the State. One of those programs was presented on May 16, 2016, in Martinsville, to pay tribute to John Wooden and to remember his life.

John Wooden (1910-2010) was

born in Martinsville and was an All-State basketball player at Martinsville High School, graduating in 1928. He was an All-American basketball player at Purdue University, graduating in 1932, and went on to legendary status as a basketball coach at UCLA where his teams won 10 NCAA national championships in a 12-year period. He is a member of various halls of fame, widely regarded as the greatest basketball coach of all time, and has received many honors and awards.

The presenter for the John Wooden Bicentennial Legacy program was Curtis Tomak who has done a great amount of research on Wooden's life in Indiana. Tomak discussed his research and presented an overview of Wooden's life with the emphasis being upon Wooden's Morgan County years. Much new information was provided including examples of discoveries that show that a number of the long-held standard stories about Wooden's life in Indiana are incorrect.

Following Tomak's presentation, Dr. Michele Moore, Superintendent of the Metropolitan School District of Martinsville, discussed various topics including the recent renaming of a middle school in Martinsville for John Wooden and the planned renovation of the old Martinsville High School gymnasium where Wooden played and which is named for his coach, Glenn Curtis.

Professor Jon Kay, folklorist at Indiana University, moderated the program and guided the final portion which consisted of an interactive discussion among the program participants and the audience.

CLASS CHAMPIONS BY COUNTY by Tim Puet

When the IHSAA instituted class basketball in 1997, one of the arguments of the proposal's

supporters was that it would allow more schools to be champions and that more counties, especially the smaller ones, could celebrate a state title. Loogootee and Martin County often were mentioned as examples. But it doesn't seem to have worked out that way. Of course, more schools have won state crowns, but most of them, at least in boys basketball, are located in counties where there already had been champions during the one-class era.

In fact, the county that has benefited most from boys class basketball has been Marion, the state's largest. In the 19 seasons in which there have been four classes in basketball, Marion County teams have won 18 of the 76 available boys titles, far more than the total for any other county. That compares with nine Marion County champions in 87 years of the one-class tournament – actually nine in 43 years, since the county didn't have a title winner until Attucks in 1955. (I'm not including girls basketball because the girls tournament, which started in 1976, has been a four-class event almost as long as it existed under the previous format, so there's not the same basis for historical comparison. Besides, I didn't want to make things any more complicated for this little article than they already may be.)

Daviess County ranks second with five championships in boys class basketball – four of them by Zeller-led Washington teams. Then come four additional urban counties – Allen, Hamilton, Lake, and Madison, with four apiece, including two by Madison County teams Lapel and Liberty Christian this year. Loogootee and Martin County did win a championship in 2012. But among the state's 92 counties, only 10 others – Bartholomew, Decatur, Elkhart, Fountain, Gibson, Hendricks, Lagrange, Porter, Starke, and Warrick – have joined the list of

"championship counties" since the class system started. Forty-eight counties still are without a championship after 105 years of the boys tournament.

Marion County is the overall leader with 27, followed by Lake and Delaware (thanks mostly to Muncie Central's eight in the one-class system) with 10 each. Next are Allen, Daviess, and Grant (all by Marion) with eight, Madison with seven, Tippecanoe with six, and Clinton, Hamilton, and Vanderburgh with five apiece. In the old system, during which 32 counties produced champions, the leaders were Marion with nine, Delaware with Muncie Central's eight. Grant and Lake with six each, and Allen, Boone (all in the tournament's first eight years), Clinton (all by Frankfort), and Vanderburgh with four apiece.

Public schools won all 87 one-class boys titles. Catholic schools won two of the four championships in 1998, the first year of the class system, and 10 since then, for a total of 12. Private or charter schools have won seven, all since 2010, led by Park Tudor with four and Bowman Academy with two. Liberty Christian's championship this year was the first by a non-Catholic religiously affiliated school.

The overall list of winning boys basketball championships by county is as follows:

Allen, 8 championships (4 in class basketball); Bartholomew, 1 (1); Boone, 4; Cass, 2 (1); Clark, 2 (1); Clinton, 5 (1); Daviess, 8 (5); Decatur, 2 (2); Delaware, 10 (2); Dubois, 3 (2); Elkhart, 1 (1); Fayette, 2; Floyd, 2 (1); Fountain, 1 (1); Gibson, 1 (1); Grant, 8 (2); Hamilton, 5 (4); Hendricks, 2 (2); Henry, 2 (1); Howard, 2 (1); Jefferson, 1; Johnson, 3; Knox, 2; Kosciusko, 1; LaPorte, 2 (1);

Lagrange, 2 (2); Lake, 10 (4); Lawrence, 1; Madison, 7 (4); Marion, 27 (18); Marshall, 3 (2); Martin, 1 (1); Monroe, 4 (2); Montgomery, 3; Morgan, 3; Porter, 1 (1); Ripley, 2 (1); St. Joseph, 3; Shelby, 2 (1); Starke, 1 (1); Tippecanoe, 6 (3); Vanderburgh, 5 (1); Warrick, 1 (1); Wayne, 1.

What's this all mean? Beats me. I don't recall having ever seen these numbers and just thought they'd be interesting for the Boxscore audience.

HOW SWEET IT IS The 1966 Elston (Michigan City) Red Devils

by

Matthew A. Werner

(Editor's note: Matthew Werner is the author of a newly released book with the above title. The book is available through Amazon.com, the Indiana Basketball HOF at New Castle, or anywhere else where new books are available. It retails for about \$14.)

Chapter 1: Four Guys Walk Into a Room

Four men, ages sixty-six to sixty-eight, recently gathered in a meeting room. Thinning hair, graying hair. They greeted each other with a "Hey," or a "How's it going." Not as a question, but a statement. Nobody shook hands. They were comfortable. At ease. Smiling. Three of them anyway. "Wouldn't you know Rob would get in trouble as soon as he walked into the building?" "Who tries to take coffee into a library?" "How was I supposed to know?" "It's always you, Rob. You're always the one to get into trouble." Jim laughed hard. They all laughed. They couldn't help it. That joke is fifty years old.

Rob rolled his head, "My god, I'm just the one who always gets caught." "Can't take you anywhere." There is good-natured

ribbing. "You don't look too bad." Talk of people they knew. "You heard Barb passed away recently." "No, really? Man, when did that happen?" Most of all, there was laughter. Real laughter. Deep, meaningful laughter. My God, there was a lot of laughter.

Terry Morse, O'Neil Simmons, Jim Cadwell, and Rob McFarland. Four seniors on the 1966 Indiana state basketball championship team. We talked about basketball, Elston High School, Red Devil pride, and Coach Doug Adams. I'd already talked to their assistant coach, Al Whitlow, and their principal, Warren Jones, I said. Morse volunteered to get the guys together. A Saturday. "We'd probably like to meet in the late morning," he said, "then we'll go somewhere to eat afterward. Preferably a place that serves beer."

I knew then I was going to like

these guys. Basketball has long been king in Indiana and in 1966 Michigan City Elston was the potentate of the Hoosier state. Bill Redfield, long-time Michigan City sports editor, once summarized that season in two sentences: "This may have been the year of the horse in China, but it was the year of the Red Devils in Indiana." The Red Devils—the Michigan City High variety—went from crippling early season injuries to glory before nearly 15,000 fans and untold radio and television audiences Saturday night, March 19, in Indianapolis.

That was it in a nutshell. Everyone who has lived in Michigan City over the last fifty years has heard of the 1966 team. I grew up years later on a farm in Union Mills, Indiana, and I'd heard of them. Mythologized over the years. They were legends, I was told.



1965-66 Elston Red Devils. Kneeling (L-R): Sam Garrett, Mike Adams, O'Neil Simmons, Bob Hampton (mgr.), Larry Gipson, Fred LaBorn. Standing (L-R): Coach Doug Adams, Harold Kennedy, Dennis Krueger, Jim Cadwell, Terry Morse, Rob McFarland, Stanley Farmer, Calvin George, Asst. Coach Al Whitlow.

Photo by Bob Wilke

The team won twenty-six games and lost three. Its average margin of victory was twenty-one points. More than 12,000 people turned out for the victory rally at Ames Field after the team won the State. Life-sized cutouts of each player hang on a wall inside Michigan City High School. Decades before that, they clung to a wall high above the basketball court in Elston's Red Devil Gym. But those are trivial facts and leftover mementos. There is more to the story. Much more. Parts of the story nobody has told. And it all started with an unlikely coach who took an unwanted job.

Chapter 2: An Unlikely Basketball Coach

A 1943 graduate of Hammond High School, Doug Adams served two years in the Army during World War II and then attended Ball State University where he played football. Upon graduation, he took his first teaching job at Riley grade school in Michigan City in 1949.

Adams wanted to coach football, but there were no open positions when he arrived. However, the assistant basketball and Junior Varsity (JV) coaching position was open. Adams later said, "nobody else wanted the job," so he took it. And why not? If for no other reason, it got his foot in the door of the high school athletic department and brought in a little extra income for Doug, his wife, Betty, their two-year-old daughter, Michele, and one-year-old son, Mike.

In his second year, an assistant football coach position opened and Adams jumped at the chance. Every fall he assisted the football team and every winter he assisted the basketball team.

For eight years, Adams coached the Pink Imps, as the JV basketball team was known then, and worked under head coaches Dee Kohlmeier, Ick Osborne, and Ralph Hooker.

When Adams got the chance to take over as head coach in 1957, the job provided a nice pay raise and Elston's basketball team was synonymous with winning. It had strung together five straight winning seasons—including three twenty-win seasons—and seven straight sectional championships. Principal Warren Jones was glad to see Adams get promoted. "Doug Adams was a good coach and a good man," he said. "He was a good leader of young men. He set a good example."

But Adams' first season got off to a rocky start. "We had four losses by Christmas and I'm sure that everyone began wondering if they had hired the right man for the job," Adams once said in an interview with Dennis Edgington, author of the book, *Hey, We're Red Devils*. The team also lost the first game in its own holiday tournament that season. Things looked grim. If Adams wanted to keep his job, he would need to win more games.

Warren Jones and I sat at his kitchen table talking about basketball, Elston High School, and Coach Doug Adams. "Doug was a good football player at Ball State. He never played a game of basketball in his life. Never. Not in high school or college," said Jones. Wait. What? He told you that? "Yeah." I'm guessing he didn't tell many people that. Jones grinned. "No, probably not, but I knew it. And I didn't publish it." Not only did Doug Adams never play a game of basketball, "He never dribbled a basketball in his whole *life*," said his son, Mike.

Make no mistake about it, Adams wanted to coach football and he continued to do so after taking charge of the basketball program. In the fall of 1957, '58, '59, '60, and '61, he continued to work with the football team and teach the boys the

finer points of the game. In the autumn of 1962, he focused his energy on basketball and left football for good. But he did coach the cross country team and pushed his basketball players to join, in order to get in shape for the upcoming season.

Looking back, if townspeople had known that Adams never played a lick of basketball, they might have run him out of town before New Year's Day 1958 when his first team didn't look so great. Good thing for the boys who played for Coach Adams, his secret was safe. Good thing for Michigan City, Indiana, too.

After that disappointing 4-4 start, Adams managed to turn his team around in a big way. The Red Devils won the next sixteen games in a row before losing by two points to East Chicago Washington in the first round of the Regional. Ah, yes—East Chicago Washington and the dreaded regional jinx! Despite the team's success, one obstacle seemed insurmountable: a regional championship. For decades, the winner of the LaPorte County sectional advanced to the "meat grinder" Calumet Regional held in Hammond and later, East Chicago. Year in and year out, the state's top-ranked teams fought to win that regional and advance onto the semi-state tournament. Since 1924, Elston had won just two regionals and its last championship occurred in 1935.

East Chicago Washington foiled Michigan City's efforts to take home the regional crown again in 1959, 1962, and 1963. Gary Roosevelt spurned the Red Devils in 1960 and 1961. In 1964, Gary Tolleston defeated Michigan City in the regional. Fans wanted their team to win, but they had grown to believe the regional was beyond their grasp. It wasn't meant to be. Their school had been hexed. But Adams had a

different feeling about it as he explained to Dennis Edgington years later. "It wasn't driving me as crazy as it was the townspeople, because they were seeing a jinx. What I saw were superior ball clubs. They were great basketball teams. Looking back, there isn't one time I could say we didn't give it our all. 'During that time, Washington was riding the crest of its greatest teams, and it didn't matter who came out of Gary, one of them was going to be outstanding. If it wasn't Roosevelt, then Froebel or Tolleston would slip in there. 'It's sad that most people only remember that you lost. We were involved in some of the greatest games and come-backs that regional ever saw. I can't remember going in there as the favorite too many times."

Chapter 3: Maybe Next Year

By the mid-Sixties, schools up and down Indiana were consolidating at a rapid pace. The LaPorte County sectional tournament had sixteen teams in the 1950s, but had dropped to twelve teams by 1964 and then ten teams in 1965. The Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) allowed the number of schools participating in individual sectional tournaments to vary, but it maintained sixty-four sectional sites and sixteen regionals with four teams per regional. Scrambling to keep up with the rapid decrease in the number of high schools, tournaments were constantly being reorganized, and teams shifted to different sectional and regional sites to keep things balanced.

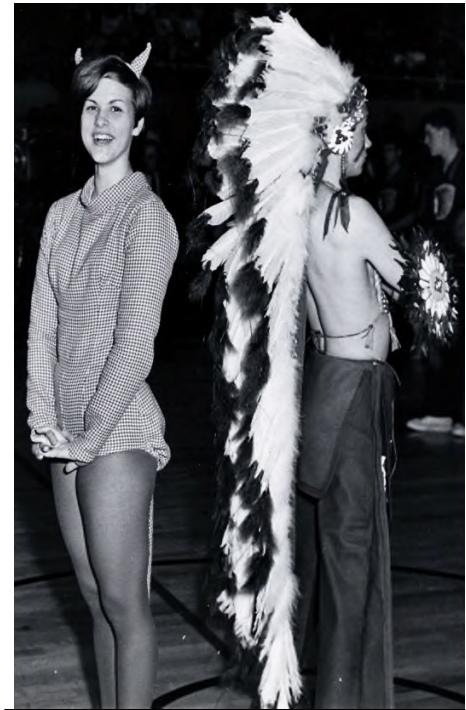
In 1965, the Elston Red Devils won the sectional for the fourteenth straight time, but that year the team didn't travel to the meat grinder in East Chicago. Instead, the IHSAA sent the winner east to the Elkhart Regional. Elston went 15-5 in the regular season and was co-champions of the Northern Indiana

Conference. Many fans were optimistic about the change of venue and thought maybe this was the year. The newspaper headline read, "Red Devils Ready to Break Net Hex," and Bill Redfield observed that the attitude from head coach Doug Adams all the way down to the student managers believed that was the year the team would "break their regional high school basketball tournament hex." Many believed, or hoped, that going east would change Michigan City's fortunes.



Elston's first-round opponent, South Bend Washington, was the only Northern Indiana Conference team to beat them. But fans remained optimistic as everyone—including South Bend Washington coach Subby Nowicki—believed Washington had played its finest game of the season against the Red Devils on its home court a few weeks earlier. Also, several Red Devil players had been wracked with the flu at the time. Furthermore, South Bend Washington was playing in its first regional since 1938, whereas it had become a familiar routine for Michigan City. After tying the game, 51 – 51, one Red Devil player missed the front end of a one-and-one free throw. No problem. Then another player did the same thing. Hmm. The next thing fans knew, the team couldn't

seem to buy a basket. After the game, LaPorte assistant superintendent Bob Miller commented that, "The ball just wouldn't go in." With eleven seconds to go, the scoreboard read, 65 – 55, in favor of South Bend Washington. Doug Adams turned and faced his boys on the bench. Blank faces stared across the court, while the senior boys buried their faces in towels. Bill Redfield wrote these sobering words in his "Following Thru" column: "The Red Devils have failed 14 times in a row in the regional but on the trip home they were not disheartened. Just having played for the Red Devils satisfied a number of them."



Red Devil cheerleader, Barbara Smith, minutes before the championship game at the Fort Wayne Semi-state.

The following Monday, a brief editorial appeared in the *News-Dispatch*: "The Elkhart regional tournament on Saturday was no more productive for the Red Devils than all those meets they attended through the years in the Calumet area, so they join other defeated Indiana high school basketball teams in hanging up their suits for the season. 'Some

fans had built high hopes this year of cracking what has come to be known for the Red Devils as 'the regional jinx. 'For them, Saturday's loss to South Bend Washington was a particularly bitter pill to swallow. 'There's one compensation about athletics: Seasons come and go, and there's always another one ahead to enliven hopes. 'Maybe next year will be the one for the Red Devils..."

The story continues in Werner's book.

HERO'S JOURNEY

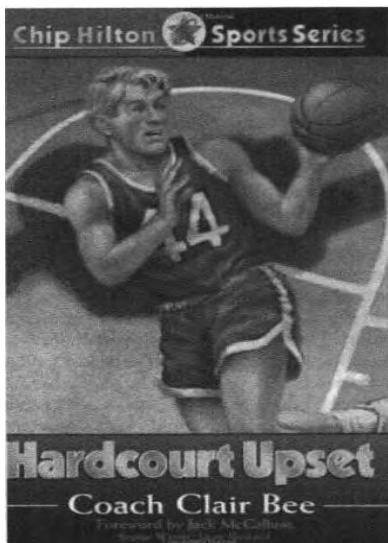
By

Jeff Rasley

Editor's Note: The article below presents the main elements of chapter two from Author Rasley's book, "Hero's Journey." The entire book can be purchased through Amazon.com or from most bookstores throughout Indiana. The standard price in paperback is \$12.95, or in Ebook form \$4.99.

Chapter Two Creation of a Childhood Hero, John Ritter

John Ritter was a real-live Chip Hilton (*a fictional basketball hero in literary lore*) in my home town of Goshen, Indiana. I also met him when I was nine-years old. And, the memory of what John Ritter was like as a high school sports star still haunts me.



I've spoken with many people who knew John Ritter when he was the golden boy of our hometown. When we talk about him now, so many decades after his heroics on our playing fields, John Ritter still stirs up our emotions. A door is opened to memories locked away in the attic and ghosts come flitting out. As one old friend of John's said to me, "It brings tears to my eyes, when I think of what's happened to him."

I'd over-heard snatches of adult conversations at the Rexall Drug Store in downtown Goshen about this older kid named John Ritter. He was supposed to be a sports phenomenon like we'd never had before in a boy from Goshen. Before he finished junior high school he could beat high school players one-on-one in basketball. He could throw a football or baseball with pinpoint accuracy.

My first experience of organized athletics was summer-league baseball sponsored by the Fraternal Order of Police for eight and nine year-old boys. John Ritter had a summer job helping Mr. Phend run the FOP baseball program. John was the home-plate umpire when I played the best game of my young life. I pitched a winning game for our normally pretty-miserable Pirates team. I got a hit every time I came up to bat, including a home run and a couple doubles. After the game John slapped me on the back and said, "Great game, Rasley!" And then something about keep working on my pitching and he expected "great things" from me.

I was in Seventh Heaven. I'd been praised by John Ritter! This was the kid the grown-ups talked about over coffee and Cokes. John Ritter was our hope for the future, the athlete who would put our town on the map for what we most cherished -- a basketball championship for the Goshen High School Redskins. He

had praised me!

When I got home after that game I drew a strike zone on a wall in our basement. I threw a rubber baseball against that wall until my arm was worn out.

It happened. John Ritter fulfilled our expectations. He became a record-breaking high school basketball player and star pitcher on the baseball team. He probably would have been the star of the football team too, just like my fictional hero, Chip Hilton. But, by the late 1960s basketball coaches had begun to discourage their best players from playing football out of concern for injuries and missed playing time.

Ritter's talent and grit on the high school basketball team so far exceeded that of his teammates that he could play every position. He could jump the highest, so he jumped center for tip offs. He could dribble and pass better than the other guards on the team, so he sometimes played the point to bring the ball down court. He was the best rebounder and excellent defender, so John was usually assigned the best player on the opposing team to guard. The Redskins' offense ran through John and was designed to give him open shots, because he was a dead-eye shooter, or for him to pass to an open teammate when the opponents double-teamed him.

John Ritter graduated from high school in 1969, but his name is still at the top of the Goshen High School Basketball record book in every scoring category. Even though John played before the 3-point shot rule, he still has the record for most points scored in a career at 1,523, over 200 points higher than second place, most points in a season at 769, almost 200 points higher than second. John's name is also in third place for his junior year at 509 points, which is the record for most

points scored by a junior. He scored the most points in a single game with 49; nine points higher than second place. John shares the record for most rebounds in a game. He won the Northern Conference scoring title with a 29.6 point average and set a new record for points scored in a career for Elkhart County high school players. He was the first, and is still one of only two, Goshen Redskins ever chosen to be an Indiana High School All-Star. The only Goshen boys' basketball team in the history of the school to win the regional tournament and reach the "Semi-State" was the 1968-69 team captained by John Ritter.

injury he sustained playing baseball.

Although the photo was taken in 1969, John is the picture of a conservative youthful-athlete from the 1950s and early 60s before the Beatles were big. His could be the image chosen by Clair Bee for a *Chip Hilton Sports Series* book.

According to the accompanying *Goshen News* article, John Ritter was considered such a valuable addition to a college basketball program he was recruited by over 200 schools. But the talk of the town, when sports guys gathered, was whether Ritter should choose IU or UCLA.

Coach Wooden failed in his

eyes. He was always clean-shaven. John was a couple inches taller than Chip, but star basketball players were generally taller in the 1960s-70s than in the 40s and 50s.

John was also a good guy like Chip Hilton. He walked through the halls of Goshen High School with an easy confidence, but he was not thought of as stuck up by the other kids. He was actually a little shy, especially around girls, but had a ready smile and handshake or pat on the back for anyone who needed it. John was intensely focused when playing ball, but off the court he was mild tempered. John was a good Joe and a straight shooter.

John Ritter was our chosen one. The whole town of Goshen took pride in our favorite son. In the winter of 1969, when the basketball team came back after winning the high school regional tournament but losing the semi-state game, a crowd of cheering supporters waited at the high school parking lot to greet John and his teammates. They hadn't won the championship, but they drew statewide attention to our town. Our boys had played well, and John Ritter was selected for the Indiana All-Stars Team; the first Goshen player to be so honored. Not bad for a small-town team going up against big schools from Gary, South Bend, Ft. Wayne, and Indianapolis.

John and I grew up in a time when families left town for winter vacations in Florida or a summer weekend at Lake Wawasee without feeling the need to lock their doors. Neighbors knew each other, perhaps too well, and adults did not hesitate to comment or intervene when children misbehaved. The town was proud of its schools, especially Goshen High. The sports teams, as well as band, orchestra, and choir, were well-funded and the focus of much attention and concern within the community.



The legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden came to our little town to recruit Ritter. A photograph of a smiling Wooden leaning toward the photographer was published in the *Goshen News*.

Art Cosgrove, John's high school coach, is slouched in between Wooden and John smiling slyly. John's right hand is wrapped from an

attempt to lure John out to Los Angeles to play for the Bruins. A loyal Hoosier, Ritter accepted a scholarship to his home-state university (just like Chip Hilton). John became a star forward/guard at Indiana University.

Like Chip, John Ritter was tall, six foot five, and rangy with neatly trimmed light-brown hair and blue

For middle-class kids in Goshen, life in the 1950s and early 60s was pretty much like the postcard picture of small-town America. There were many white picket fences around town. Dads went to work and brought home the bacon. Most of the moms stayed home and took care of the kids. Girls played with their Barbie Dolls. Boys and tomboys played sports, fished, and caught crawdads along the banks of the Elkhart River. Boys wore Converse All-Stars, because that's what you wore to play ball, not because it was an iconic hipster pose.

We saw ourselves and our way of life portrayed in TV shows, like *Leave it to Beaver*, *Father Knows Best*, and *My Three Sons*. We were, as yet, undisturbed by the mounting discontent over the war in Viet Nam and charged racial issues impacting urban life in the US.

John Ritter had Chip Hilton-like good looks. He was the best athlete in town. He was very bright; an A-student. John was placed into the two "advanced classes" offered in our school system, Math and English. (Advanced classes were the 1960s version of Advanced Placement courses.) He made National Honor Society junior year and reportedly earned the highest score of his class on the SAT. John was popular with his peers. He was elected vice-president of Student Government and chosen to be co-captain of the high school baseball and basketball teams.

John Ritter was a straight shooter on and off the court. He was the kind of kid who'd politely answer grown-ups with, "Yes, ma'am" and "No, sir". He was deferential to adults, shy around girls, and a "hail fellow well met" around guys. His baseball coach from freshman through senior year said of John, "He didn't have any vices. He just seemed to be as pure as he could be."

In the 1960s, after President Kennedy declared that we would beat the Soviets to the Moon by the end of the decade, US astronauts became the coolest guys on the planet to patriotic Americans. The race was won the summer John Ritter graduated from high school in 1969, when Neil Armstrong took his giant step and planted the Stars and Stripes on the Moon. The "can do" optimistic attitude, conservative All-American look, and understated competence of our astronaut heroes (portrayed really well in the 1983 movie based on the Tom Wolfe novel, *The Right Stuff*, as well as the 1995 movie *Apollo 13*, and more recently the book and movie, *The Martian*) -- if any kid growing up in Goshen, Indiana, during that era had the right stuff, it was John Ritter. In this younger boy's eyes, he was about as perfect as a boy could be.

Before he narrowed his choices down to IU and UCLA, John made campus visits to several other schools that tried to woo him with scholarship offers. John told a teammate on the high school baseball team that two different schools offered him bribes and favors. John sensed that another program wanted him on the team specifically because he was white. He concluded that the school had unwritten racist recruiting practices.

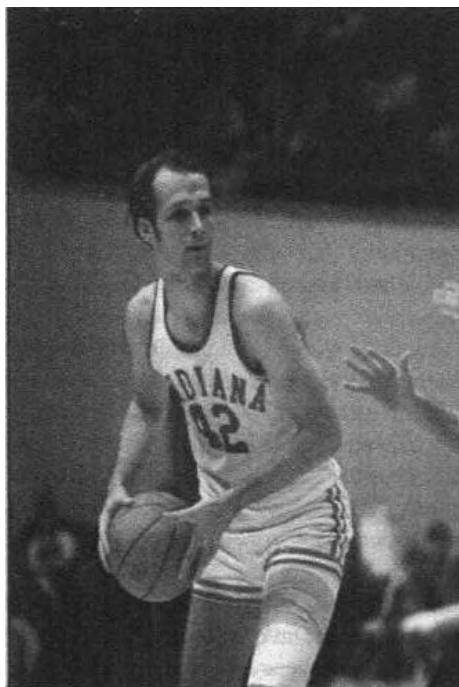
John removed each of these programs from his list of possible choices for college, because he wanted nothing to do with an athletic program that was morally tainted. John told his teammate that what he was promised by the coaching staff at IU was "the opportunity to play if you work your butt off." That was the ethic John was looking for, his buddy told me.

Future NBA legend Larry Bird followed in John Ritter's footsteps to IU. He was five years younger and four inches taller, but also from a

small Hoosier town and played ball with a style very similar to Ritter's (John actually scouted Bird unofficially and recommended him to Coach Bob Knight after John's graduation from IU.). When Bird entered IU he was a ballyhooed white kid from a small town that could do it all on the court. But Bird quit school before he played a game for the Hoosiers. Larry recognized that he needed more time to mature as a person and to deal with issues at home before he was ready for college. His success at the much smaller and closer-to-home Indiana State University in Terre Haute set the table for Bird to become Larry Legend.

John's life might have taken a different route if he too had stayed closer to home and chosen a smaller school with a less challenging culture than IU. Perhaps John could have done for Ball State, for instance, what Bird did for Indiana State. Alternatively, had he accepted Coach Wooden's offer, John would have been on NCAA championship teams every year, and he would have been mentored by the finest gentleman in college basketball. Playing on teams that won consecutive national championships under John Wooden would surely have altered John's life from the course it took playing at IU under the volatile Bobby Knight. But the die was cast.

I didn't know much about what John's life was actually like at IU, while I was still in high school. No rumors of problems or friction with the coaching staff surfaced in Goshen that I was aware of. John Ritter put our town on the map and made us proud that one of our own was living the dream of every small town boy who shot baskets at a hoop nailed to the garage or barn. That's my recollection of what I thought at the time, anyway.



John Ritter

From talking with John's freshman college roommate, Tad (I've changed his name), I learned that John was popular in the "jocks' dorm" in McNutt Quad. But John wasn't really intimately friendly with any of the guys. As in high school, he was popular as a role model, who did everything "the right way". John worked very hard at academics, and was particularly serious about courses in his Business-Finance major. Tad said, "John was disappointed if he got a 3.8, that's how serious he was about school." But Tad quickly added, "John wasn't a drudge. He had a great sense of humor."

A couple other teammates of John's in high school, who met up with him a few times at IU passed on a "story" they'd heard about John being rushed by a fraternity. John supposedly asked whether there was any drinking at the House. The response was something like, "Uh, it's a college fraternity, what do you think?" John chose not to join.

In Ritter's senior year IU made it to the NCAA Final Four. As fickle fate would have it, the Hoosiers

faced John Wooden's UCLA Bruins led by Bill Walton. "Good Luck" signs supporting Ritter and the Hoosiers were taped to windows on houses and stores all over Goshen. John is quoted in a story by sports reporter Stu Swartz for the *Goshen News*: "I received a telegram from Goshen ..." There were so many names on it they had to use two envelopes."

Until Goshen High was knocked out of the tournament John's senior year, he hadn't had much experience with failure. But Goshen didn't win the IHSAA Tournament John's senior year in high school. And IU didn't win the NCAA Tournament John's senior year in college. In high school and college John's teams fell just short of the ultimate prize, a championship trophy. In Chip Hilton's idealized-fictional world, Valley Falls High School and State University, led by Chip, always managed to pull off the final big win needed to capture a league title or championship by the end of the book.

After IU's loss to UCLA in the 1973 NCAA semifinals, the Hoosiers whipped Providence in the consolation match 97-79. In his final game as a college player, Ritter scored 21 points and grabbed seven rebounds -- a triumphant finish, if not a championship -- to end his basketball career at Indiana University. But there was a nuance, a crack in the exterior of Chipper-like perfection, evidenced in a post-game interview John gave which was quoted in that *Goshen News* article by Stu Swartz: "It's kind of a feeling of relief ... There was a lot of pressure I won't have to worry about anymore ..."

John was an Academic All-American, so his interviews were likely more articulate than the string of sports clichés we're used to hearing muttered or bellowed into a

microphone by college athletes. But that last interview was remarkably introspective; "... a feeling of relief ... a lot of pressure ... I won't have to worry about anymore ..."

There may have been earlier hints that John did not feel perfect or perfectly at peace with himself. But John's statement about his need for relief from the pressure he felt made it pretty clear that he was not completely happy with how things had worked out for him at IU under Coach Knight. It took about twenty-seven years before John found the release he needed.

Chip Hilton's post-game commentaries were always marked with humility and credit given to other players and the coaches. But Chip always has the next season to look forward to. His life as a sports hero never ends. His fans can reread the series after they finish the last book. Even after the last book about Chip is closed for the last time, he lives on in our collective memory. Chip can replay his triumphant moments on the court, diamond, and field forever without end.

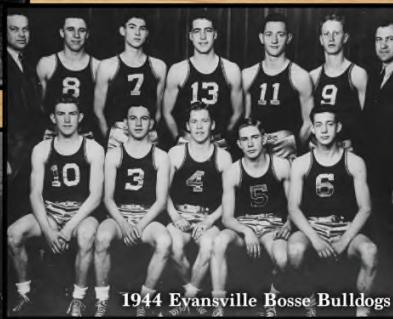
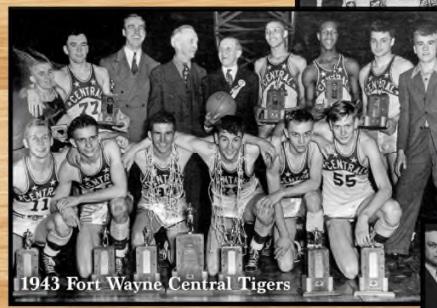
Not so for John Ritter. He might have lived on in the collective memory of his Goshen and IU fans as our Chip Hilton-like hero, if his life had gone the way his fans expected it would. But John is not a fictional character. Real life does not necessarily go the way we want it to for ourselves or for our heroes. His went down an unexpected path that radically changes John Ritter's image as an archetypal hero from his alter-ego, Chip Hilton.

MEMBERSHIP DUES ALERT

The IHSBHS membership list is attached to this issue of Boxscore. If your member name shows a date that is no later than 2016, kindly remit your annual \$10 dues to Rocky Kenworthy (address on page 1) before the end of this year.

INDIANA HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL HISTORY

TEAM ROSTERS AND SEASON RECAPS FOR THE
WORLD WAR II YEARS (1941-42 THROUGH 1944-45)



WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY
CLIFF JOHNSON

The ISBN for this book is 978-0-692-53602-5.

"This Indiana High School Basketball Team Rosters and Season Recaps for the period 1941-45 has been developed and organized to offer readers an inside look at historical Indiana basketball records related to a specific era, the WW II years. This period was the precursor to what is now popularly referred to as Indiana's golden age of basketball."

"The content of this 852-page book consists of (1) an alphabetized listing of all schools entering the state tournament during WW II, (2) an alphabetically organized data block and team roster for each school participating in the state tournament for each of the four seasons during WW II (the bulk of the work); (3) the periodic AP poll rankings of teams; and (4) an independent tabulation of all state tournament results for each WW II season, from the sectionals through the finals."

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The content of this 852-page book consists of (1) an alphabetized listing of all schools entering the state tournament during WW II; (2) an alphabetically organized data block and team roster (the main work) for each of those schools; (3) a running account of all AP poll rankings during each season; and (4) an independent tabulation of all state tournament results for each WW II season, from the sectionals through the finals.

The book price is \$48 plus shipping and handling, and can be ordered from Rowland Press at 199 N. 9th St., Noblesville, IN 46060, phone (317) 773-1829, or the Indiana Basketball Hall Of Fame, One HOF Court, New Castle, IN 47362, phone (765) 529-1891. It may also be available at various bookstores, at moderate mark-ups.

The ISBN identification, if needed, is 978-0-692-57602-5.

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), Bill Ervin (Terre Haute Wiley '57), Leigh Evans (Castle '86), John Ockomon (Pendleton '66), Doug Bradley (Columbus East '77), Jeff Luzadder (Dunkirk '74), Curtis Tomak (Linton '59), Kermit Paddock (Sheridan ('02).



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.

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