

## Tournaments Under the I. H. S. A. A.

We come now to the period of close supervision of the high school basketball tournaments by the Iowa High School Athletic Association. It has already been shown that prior to 1923 considerable confusion had grown up in conducting the state basketball championship tournaments. Although the IHSAA had helped run previous meets, it was not until the winter of 1923 that direct control was assumed.

Methods of qualifying for the state meet have varied from time to time. Even today the Representative Council and the Board of Control annually consider the best method of conducting the popular tournament series. In 1923 four district winners met in round robin play at Boone. That method continued for four years. In 1925 and 1926 there were two state champions — one in Class A, the other in Class B.

From direct selection by the Board of Control to the present progression through sectional, district, sub-state, and state finals, many methods of qualifying have been tried. Teams have been held in classification until the final meet. Teams have played through to district titles in two classes and then met for the right to go to the state meet.

There was one year when no meet winners were declared, the semi-finalists advancing until the state title was settled.

Currently the schools are divided into three classes on the basis of average daily attendance. Class B covers those schools with less than 101 Average Daily Attendance; Class A from 101 ADA up to the top 40 schools; Class AA the 40 largest schools in Iowa.

Now let us briefly run down through the thirty-one meets which have preceded the 1954 meet scheduled for Iowa City, March 16-20.

#### *1923 Tournament*

Osage was the first state champion to win under the firm guidance of the IHSAA. Coach of that team was J. Randall Perry. "Buzz" Hogan was the first tournament "hero" as he led his team to three straight wins, stopping Spirit Lake, Oskaloosa, and Abraham Lincoln of Council Bluffs. Hogan scored a total of 30 points in the three games, an output today's shooters exceed many times in a single game. In fact, no less than four players have one-game totals better than that in tournament play. Scoring champion of that meet was Madsen of Spirit Lake with 36 points.

#### *1924 Tournament*

In 1924 R. H. (Pinkie) Green coached Sioux City Central to the title as Coan scored 33 points. That was tops for the meet, too. The champions

needed four games, since they were tied with Council Bluffs at the end of the three games. Green, as a player, had led Mount Pleasant to a pair of titles in 1917-1918.

*1925 and 1926 Tournaments*

West Waterloo won the Class A championship in 1925, defeating Spirit Lake, Oskaloosa, and Osceola. Ralph Saarf was the coach and his top scorer was Burton with 15 points! Madsen, who won the 1923 scoring title, did it again for Spirit Lake with 23.

Lawton was the Class B champion with wins over Dysart, Rippey, and Grandview. J. H. Denius was the winning coach. Ludwig scored 27 points for the champs, but Erbe of Dysart edged him by a single point for the scoring crown.

Newton won the last state title under the round robin system, defeating Webster City, Cedar Rapids (Washington), and Boone in 1926. John Wassenaar was the coach. His top scorers were O'Connor and Grant. Along with Cummings of Cedar Rapids they scored 22 points.

Irwin won the Class B title in 1926 with victories over Keystone, Lake View, and Grandview. E. G. Williams was the coach. Woods led the team and the meet in scoring with 33. Ken Wells, the Lake View center, was to make the complete cycle of tournament play — he coached Ames in the 1940 and 1948 meets and later was an official in the state finals.

*1927 Tournament*

In 1927 the state meet took the first of many trips to Iowa City in the modern era. It also returned to the eight-team meet of 1913-1918. Muscatine was the winner, stopping Oskaloosa, Vinton, and Burlington. Their coach was George (Zip) Kloos, the star of the Iowa City teams which were runners-up in the state meets in 1917 and 1918. Muscatine trailed 4-3 at the first quarter; 14-10 at the half; and 19-16 at the third quarter. The team rallied in the fourth quarter to outscore Burlington 8-2 and win the game, after stalling the last minute, by a score of 24-21. Muscatine used only five men.

Buck McIntyre was the top Muskie scorer with 21 points. But the memory of this writer is still stirred by the four long shots from center by Hooks Valett that let Muscatine defeat Vinton, 12-10. Koch of Burlington and Farris of Vinton were the top scorers with 26 each.

*1928 Tournament*

Ottumwa dominated the 1928 meet, but Dysart was just 30 seconds away from the same role. Dysart had a two-point lead but could not hold off the eventual champions. Dick Davis moved the scoring record to 43 points, getting 23 of them against Spirit Lake in the finals. Other victories for Coach Harry Wing's team were over Dysart and Cedar Falls Teachers.

*1929 and 1930 Tournaments*

A long shadow cast itself over the meet in 1929 — that of Paul Moon and his Davenport team. Moon, whose first team was an undefeated girls' combination in Illinois, brought the Blue Devils home a winner in 1929, the first of seven for the team of Moon and Davenport. Moon has had more teams in the meet, won more games, lost more games (as a natural consequence of multiple trips to the finals), in fact has done more of "everything" in the meet than any other coach.

Bertossa scored 23 points to lead Davenport, whose victims included the Ottumwa champions, East Sioux City, and Des Moines Roosevelt. Baskerville of Des Moines was the scoring king with 29 points.

Davenport duplicated its 1920-1921 feat of repeating, by winning again in 1930, as Des Moines became the tournament scene for the first time. The meet was enlarged to 16 teams in 1930, and Davenport beat Fort Dodge, Atlantic, Henderson, and Newton. Patterson of Henderson was the meet scoring king with 41 points.

*1931 Tournament*

Boone won the 1931 title as Coach Harold (Bud) Fisher directed the Toreadors to wins over Henderson, Alta, Des Moines, and Muscatine.

One of Iowa's all-time greats made his first tournament appearance in 1931. As a freshman,

Marcellus (Mike) McMichael led the meet in scoring with a record 58 points. McMichael played in four meets, was All-State four times. He scored a career total of 175 points in state meet games, a total that stood until Bill Logan moved it to 195 in the 1952 meet. McMichael played for Des Moines Roosevelt.

#### *1932 Tournament*

As a sophomore McMichael led the Roosevelt Roughriders to the state title, the only one ever won by a Des Moines school. Carl Harris was the coach. His team stopped Mount Ayr, Marshalltown, Boxholm, and Sioux City Central. Top scorer was Swanson of Boxholm with 45.

#### *1933 Tournament*

The first Class B champion (except in 1925-1926) came in 1933 when Wally Gaddis flamed across the basketball skies. Gaddis led little Dunkerton to victories over Granger, Cumberland, Burlington, and the defending champions from Roosevelt. Gaddis scored 43 points to dominate the meet.

This was the first tournament won by a Class B school. Dunkerton used only five men who played like champions from the start and had no fear of a "jinx." They won wearing red in their first two games, switched to white and won, and then returned to red and won the finals. Dunkerton wore

numerals in the 60's although there were less than fifty boys in the school, which had a total enrollment of ninety-one.

Roosevelt had a 9-4 lead which melted to a 12-12 tie at the half. Roosevelt went scoreless in the third quarter but tied the game at 20-20 with two minutes remaining. Gaddis made the winning shot with 17 seconds remaining and won the game 22-20. Gaddis scored 15 of his team's 22 points. Mike McMichael made a 28-point one-game splurge for a modern record and scored 56 points in the tournament. But for Iowa fans it was all Gaddis and Dunkerton. Harold Hartman coached Dunkerton.

#### *1934 Tournament*

In 1934 the scene shifted to Cedar Falls for a two-year period. East Sioux City won with Les Davis (now a Sioux City radio and television star) as the coach. Elmer Bratten of West Waterloo was the scoring leader with 57 points. Sioux City defeated Diagonal, Elma, Burlington, and Waterloo.

#### *1935 Tournament*

Mason City won its first title in 1935 with colorful and dapper Judge Grimsley as the coach. The Mohawks defeated Independence, Murray, Davenport, and Grinnell. Davenport's Sonny Gamber, now a highly rated cage official, was the top scorer for the meet with 40 points.

*1936 and 1937 Tournaments*

Ames counted its first title in 1936, beating Wellsburg, Creston, Ottumwa, and the defending champions on the way. Ray Donels was the coach. Shelton of Webster City was the top scorer with 45 points.

Walt O'Connor and "Thin Jim" Thynne made Melrose the second Class B team to win the state crown in 1937. The Gaels stopped Geneseo, Newton, Rolfe, and Marshalltown. Al Budolfson of Rolfe proved another great performer as he led scorers with 50 points. Thynne led Coach Ad Hlubek's team with 46 points.

*1938 and 1939 Tournaments*

Diagonal, the team that represented Class B in more meets than any other small school, won the 1938 meet to keep the little schools on top two years in a row. The last Class B champion, Diagonal, was always a sentimental favorite of the crowds. The boys from Ringgold County won over Dike, Cedar Rapids Franklin, Ames, and Rolfe in convincing fashion in 1938. The Diagonal coach was another popular figure, O. C. (Pop) Varner. Marshall Davenport led Diagonal with 43 points, but Budolfson set a record with 62 for Rolfe.

Diagonal tried to make it three in a row for the "B" teams, but Creston stopped that march in the finals by beating Diagonal 25-20. Coached by

Harold Hopkins, Creston defeated Cedar Rapids Roosevelt, Kalona, Marshalltown, and Diagonal. Ben Trickey scored 37 points for Marshalltown to top the meet. Trickey is now the Marshalltown coach.

#### *1940 Tournament*

Mason City was at its peak in 1940 and won the state meet as a climax to an undefeated campaign. Final victories were over McGregor, Keystone, Muscatine, and Ames. Grimsley was still coach. One All-State selector simply named the Mason City starters, they were so dominant in the field. Pickell led the Mohawks and the meet in scoring with 45 points.

#### *1941 and 1942 Tournaments*

Davenport won the 1941 crown as the field dropped to eight teams. The Blue Devils stopped Everly, Cromwell, and Holstein for the title. It was the third title for Coach Moon and his Davenport teams. Mullin of Cromwell was the top meet scorer with 36 points.

Davenport tried to make it two in a row again in 1942, but Ottumwa stopped the Blue Devils 37-30 in a torrid game at Des Moines. The Bulldog coach was Butch Kaltenbach. Al Farrington led the champions with 29 points, but Nevada's great Bill Evans was the high scorer with 45 points. Ottumwa also beat Chariton and Spirit Lake.

*1943 and 1944 Tournaments*

In 1941 the Day twins — Loran and Lawrence — helped Davenport win the state title. By 1943 they were residents of Mason City and helped give Judge Grimsley and the Mohawks another title. Victories were over Montour, Davenport, and Webster City. The latter was crushed in the finals — 39-21. John Holmes of Mason City led the scorers with 42 points.

The 1944 meet, coming as it did in the middle of World War II, was cut to four teams. Waverly, coached by Mart Brandes, defeated Harlan and Cedar Rapids Franklin for the championship. Frank Calsbeek of Hull, later a star at the University of Iowa, was the top scorer with 34 points.

*1945 and 1946 Tournaments*

Two clutch baskets featured the 1945 meet. Charley Mason hit the first one to sideline favored Ottumwa at the gun. But Charley and his Muscatine mates got the same treatment from Jim Buch as Ames won the title. Other Ames victims were the defending champions from Waverly and Sioux City Central. The Little Cyclone coach was Ole Tiller. Charley Mason led the scorers with 29 points.

None of the 16,000 witnesses will ever forget the finish of the 1946 tournament. Towering Le Mars led Iowa City, 40-35, with 55 seconds to play in the final game. Thirty seconds later Iowa

City had a 41-40 lead which it held to win the title. Bob Freeman had fired three times on three Little Hawk thefts — all from 30 feet out — and hit on all three. Gil Wilson, now coach at Cornell, was the Iowa City mentor. Other Iowa City wins were over Lansing, Harlan, and Danbury.

Mention of Danbury is to recall another "Little" team that drew and held the crowd's fancy. Without reserves, the Danbury team ran out of gas eventually but whipped big Clinton before losing to Iowa City in the semi-finals. The team was back again in 1947, winning the consolation from Ottumwa 28-27.

#### *1947 and 1948 Tournaments*

Davenport and Paul Moon — that efficient cage combination — came back again in 1947 for their fourth championship. Victims were Diagonal, Alton, Ottumwa, and Sioux City Central. Top scorer in the meet was Dick Riecks of Danbury with 51 points.

Another surprise team — the real fan essence of every meet — went all the way in 1948. Manning, coached by Bill Steneker, moved methodically through Livermore, Galva, Sioux Center, and Davenport for the title. Dan DeRuyter of Sioux Center led the scorers with 58 points.

In 1949 Ottumwa again won the title, defeating Fort Dodge, Davenport, Moorhead, and Forest City. Fred Maasdam was the Ottumwa coach,

and the team scoring leader was Jerry Davis with 45. Herb Thompson, a kangaroo-rebounder from Forest City, set the meet record with 69 points.

*1950, 1951, 1952 — Davenport*

The menacing shadow of Davenport was cast over the meet once more in 1950 — this time to stay for a record three-year run. What many writers called the greatest Iowa high school team of all time swept to lopsided wins over Newkirk, Shelby, Dinsdale, and Ankeny, piling up a total of 286 points to their opponents' 93. The 67 points against Ankeny were the fewest counted by Paul Moon's champions. Ray Fontana, Ankeny center, salvaged some of the wreckage with a 36-point game and an 81-point total, both records.

Davenport and the 1951 tournament brought a repeat, with Waverly, Sioux Center, Keokuk, and Roland the victims. This time, however, Roland stole the show and almost the tournament. Led by Gary Thompson and Ralph Johnson, the Roland Rockets took the meet by storm and almost ruined Moon's record of never losing to a Class B team. A tiny sophomore, Gary Thompson was to make both All-State and All-Tournament teams three years in a row, ranking only behind Mike McMichael of the 1930's in that respect. Bill Logan of Keokuk set a new scoring record of 86 points. Carl Widseth of Davenport was another fabulous performer in the meet.

Davenport beat Danville, Ames, Dinsdale, and Keokuk in the 1952 meet, and its run was complete. The next year Davenport was to bow to crosstown St. Ambrose in the district and failed to get to the state meet for the first time since 1946.

The top scorer again was Logan with a record of 104 points. His total was 195 for his three years. Widseth, now an outstanding star at Tennessee, trailed with 185 for his play.

The year 1953 saw another popular upset of pre-meet charts. St. Mary's of Clinton nearly did not field a team because of a lack of funds. The fans of Clinton campaigned to get enough money to play for the year. The state title was the prize for that effort. The Irish burned with a ruthless flame throughout the meet to stop East Waterloo, Sioux Center, Roland, and Ottumwa. Dick Lingle led his team with 75 points. Chuck Vogt, center on the Clinton public high school team, was the top tournament point getter with 80.

The 1953 meet was the first boys' state basketball finals to be televised in Iowa. Truly brilliant has been the history of the state tournament since the first meet in Iowa City in 1912. The future appears equally brilliant as other great crowds await with eager expectancy more of the thrills, upsets, favorites, great players — all on hand every year for the state basketball finals of the Iowa High School Athletic Association.

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