

**GIRLS BASKETBALL AT PHS**  
**As presented by Dr. Christy Hicks**  
**At PHS Alumni Assn. meeting on 6/14/08**

This is a collaborative effort of several people. We researched issues of the Herald Democrat starting in 1898, had interviews with former players, teachers, our historian Mr. Culp, and developed this overview of girls basketball at PHS. In the beginning. . .

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and God saw that it was good. In Springfield, Massachusetts in 1891, Dr. James Naismith invented a game. It involved a round ball that was tossed into a peach basket in a barn, and God saw that it was good. In community schoolyards, girl children wearing curls and skirts shot baskets, defended, and dribbled up-court, and God saw that it was very good.

In 1913 our Gibson County Commission voted down the property tax to fund free public high schools. Finally someone with vision impressed the tight-fisted group to relent, and by 1920 six high schools were joined by the consolidation of smaller schools, thus Spring Hill and Yorkville were established.

We know that girls played basketball at PHS in 1917-1918, and there may have been teams prior to this; however we were unable to document any earlier teams than 1917. In 1921 the Gibson County Athletic Association was established, having four groups of four teams. Peabody was in group 3, along with Dyer, Milan and Humboldt, which was under the direction of Professor Johnson. It was noted that the rules and regulations would be read at the next county teachers meeting. The first season tipped off December 2, 1921, and culminated in a county tournament championship in March 1922.

Our source of information, the Herald Democrat, did not have a sports editor or sports section as do newspapers of today. However, the "local community reporters" articles contained and reflected the interest in the games of the week. Creative writing lent to the spirit, pride and competitiveness which developed early on with phrases like "the bitter enemy, Humboldt", "fighting in a melee with Dyersburg ending in a bloody tie", "fighting in bitter conflict with Brazil". It was said of a game between Nebo and Mason Hall, that the Nebo girls bruised the Mason Hall girls' feet "because they were wearing shoes".

A Gibson reporter wrote of a game with Bradford at Gibson in which the skill of play and intense competition achieved high marks "until the Bradford girls' tempers flared." This resulted in Bradford forfeiting the game to Gibson. Two issues later, the Bradford reporter wrote that the Gibson

reporter was in error concerning the December 4 game. Actually, it was Gibson who forfeited to Bradford. Bradford attempted to reschedule the game the Friday night past, but for some unforeseen reason, the Gibson girls failed to show. We are waiting for them TO NAME THE DAY!

Mr. Culp states that during these early years, the girls' games were the marquee events of the communities. It was in the late twenties that football became "prime time" in Trenton. The boys' games were sometimes noted.

Our girls' team was referred to by different monikers: the local girls, the sextets, the lassies, the basketeers, the Black and Gold. After the Peabody Bulls was changed in the 1940's by student vote to the Golden Tide, the girls team became the Tidettes.

In Gibson County Past & Present it states that during 1917-31 Peabody school was outstanding in scholastic and athletic activities; however football was played before spectators who stood, and basketball was had in an inadequate gymnasium which was located too far from the school plant. The gym was located on Lombardy Street at the old Fitzgerald Clark University School, which became the home site of Imy and Rabbit Montgomery.

Basketball was played on outdoor courts throughout the county at the numerous elementary schools. The student body of PHS began a gymnasium fund in 1924 by selling subscriptions to Ladies Home Journal. The school was divided into two groups—the Mutts, led by Miss Virginia Taylor, and the Jeffs, led by Ernest Lewis. The new gym was completed and dedicated in December, 1930. It was built at a cost of \$15,000, and Mr. J.O. Long was the contractor.

This gymnasium/auditorium was an asset to the entire community and other schools even played their games there (Dyer vs. Gibson, etc). This structure was located at the cafeteria site of our Peabody memories, but it was destroyed by fire in 1944. It was rebuilt in 1947 at the north end of the campus. Students eagerly anticipated once again fielding teams in 1947. The auditorium was not rebuilt until 1951, and was relocated at the south end of the campus.

In the early years girls played on a court divided into 3 zones—each team having 2 players per zone, for 6 team players: Two guards who played defense baseline to hash mark, two running centers who patrolled hash mark across center court to hash mark, and two forwards who shot and were the only ones who could score. Contests began with the "jumping" center tipping the ball, and the "side" scrambling for possession. Both positions required players to possess exceptional ball-handling and defensive skills.

After made baskets, guards would inbound the ball at the baseline, dribble and transfer possession to the running centers at the hash mark. The

running centers had the responsibility of bringing the ball to the forwards, who played offense 2 on 2.

Regional tournament play was the highest level of competition available at that time. The county tournament was held at schools that had gymnasiums. For several years, Brazil and Atwood hosted the tourneys and the local townspeople opened their homes to house the visiting teams. The host families would load the teams in wagons and trucks and carry them to play their games.

In 1931 the county tourney was played at the new gym at Peabody. It was reported that the trophy cups were on display at the Herald Democrat office. The local cafes and tearooms were preparing special dishes for the visitors as well as the homes which have been thrown open making special arrangements so the city's guests will be well entertained during their stay. The hospitality of Trenton and its people will be exemplified when the youngsters representing the leading schools of the county spend three days here. All plans are working beautifully and if all ends well the tournament will be a gala event in the history of scholastic sports.

Found in the February 1, 1934 issue of the Herald Democrat:

Friends, classmates, and citizens  
You who are in for healthy sports,  
Don't miss this double header  
With Brazil on our local court.

See the biggest game of the year  
And two good, well matched teams  
Clash for a certain victory  
For one must lose it seems.

Perchance you've heard of our team  
With not a blot beside our name.  
And we hope by Saturday midnight  
That we can say the same.

Brazil is coming hundreds strong  
To take away the game.  
We hate to disappoint them,  
But we'll do it just the same.

The date is set for Saturday night,  
Seven thirty is the hour.  
So come and see us win the game  
For it's surely in our power.

If the night is dark and cloudy  
Or if the rain doth pour  
Let not these trivals hinder you  
For we have a treat in store.

The admission fee is very small,  
Small enough for one and all.  
A quarter for an adult, ten cents for a child  
So come along and bring our team a smile.

Jean Koffman has the measles  
We are very sorry to say.  
But then we'll try the harder  
To win the game that day.

I have often heard  
That it pays to advertise  
So if you've not heard the news  
I hope to put you wise.

Helen Saine

It would've been illegal to teach evolution in schools at that time; certainly education has changed, and so has girls' basketball. In the 1941-42 season the style of play was changed to half-court 3 on 3. A state tournament was held from 1922-29, but these were invitation-only tournaments, and not a true state tournament test. Perhaps the varying styles of play across the state with no set uniform regulation of play, and finances contributed to the suspension of girls' state tournament play until 1958.

Other differences were that quarters were 7 minutes, all goals counted 2 points, and the number of officials increased from 1 to 3. Tie ball games are now completed with overtime periods. In the 1979-80 season the style changed to full court 5 on 5. In 1984 the smaller, lighter ball was introduced, and in 1985 the three point arc was added. I don't know when the enactment of the post-game sportsmanship line occurred—I'm just glad I didn't have to

do that with Milan. And do you remember having to raise our hand when fouls were called?

Stated in a 1930 issue of the Herald Democrat: “For the Woman Reader—Basketball for Girls”— Medical authorities agree that girls under the high school age should not play basketball. Girls should only play with “girls” rules and not as boys play the game. It is better for girls to hold interclass games, where there is not much at stake as to the results. If girls compete with other towns, and if the schools’ as well as the towns’ reputation depends on their success in gaining the highest score, they are likely to play too hard and injure their health.

In 1955 TSSAA conducted 3 regional meetings across the state. Topics for voting included a regulation concerning spring football practice, time of lunch for the annual meeting during the boys’ state tournament, and whether or not to discontinue interscholastic girls basketball. The biggest one-sided margin of voting during the evening occurred when hands were shown for or against continuing girls basketball. Only four hands were counted against. The opinion of the group seemed to be that if a member school wanted to play girls’ basketball, that it should have the privilege of doing so.

Distinct changes are reflected in the forms of play and attitudes concerning the physical limitations of girls in competitive settings. We have come a long way, baby—and God sees that it is GOOD!

## NOTABLES

### TOP TEN POINTS LEADERS:

<i>2002-2005</i>	<i>Jessica Bobbitt</i>	<i>1030</i>
<i>2002-2005</i>	<i>Jennifer Simpson</i>	<i>1061</i>
<i>2002-2005</i>	<i>Danielle Barnett</i>	<i>1104</i>
<i>1999-2002</i>	<i>Dani Howard</i>	<i>1236</i>
<i>2005-2008</i>	<i>Rakeisha Perry</i>	<i>1262</i>
<i>1991-1994</i>	<i>Tessa Fields</i>	<i>1721</i>
<i>1973-1975</i>	<i>Charlotte Doaks</i>	<i>1781</i>
<i>1975-1978</i>	<i>Barbara McConnell</i>	<i>2030</i>
<i>1995-1998</i>	<i>Jaquilla Pigue</i>	<i>2048</i>
<i>1956-1959</i>	<i>Mamie Freeman</i>	<i>2063 (inducted Gibson Co. Hall of Fame)</i>

**1931 West TN Regional Co-Champions** (tied Woodland Mills)

*Highest level of competition at that time*

*Coach C.T. Turner*

*Roster: Sally Haynes, Annie Haynes, Margaret Parkinson, Eileen Paschall, Estelle Culp, Marguerite King, Corrine Summar, Nell Davis, Mary Williams, Mollie Thorne*

**1974 State Tournament** (lost to Jackson Co. in quarterfinals)

*Coach Steve Speed*

*Roster: Lynn Cates, Shirley Lewis, April Garner, Debbie Milligan, Marie Johnson, Debbie Steele, Ceil Holman, Charlotte Doaks, Vickie Cox, LuJan Simpson, Melinda Poteet, Jenny Jetton, Carol Blackburn*

**2002 State Tournament** (lost to Celina in semifinals)

*Coach Steve Patterson*

*Roster: Jessica Wells, Jessica Bobbitt, Paige Wallsmith, Celeste Cox, Brandy Sturdivant, Erika Howell, Felicia Anderson, Jeri Jones, Danielle Barnett, LaToya Jordan, Dani Howard, Jennifer Simpson, Adrienne Taylor, Jana Ingram, Tanika Long, Jessica Ford*

**2003 State Tournament Champions Class A** (defeated Ezell-Harding)

*Coach Steve Patterson*

*Roster: Megan Meece, Brandy Sturdivant, Felicia Anderson, Celeste Cox, Danielle Barnett, Paige Wallsmith, Chelle Yancy, Jennifer Simpson, Adrienne Taylor, Jessica Bobbitt, Tanika Long, Jessica Ford, Ebony Cook*  
*Jessica Bobbitt, Tournament MVP*

**2004 State Tournament Runner-up Class A** (lost to Clarkrange)

*Coach Tommy Colvin*

*Roster: Megan Hooker, Janet Orgain, Megan Meece, Brandy Sturdivant, Felicia Anderson, Quisha Yancy, RaRecca Peterson, Danielle Barnett, Celeste Cox, Tanisha Mayberry, Jennifer Simpson, Jessica Bobbitt, Tanika Long, Jessica Ford, Ebony Cook*

**2005 State Tournament Champions Class A** (defeated USJ)

*Coach Tere Lumley*

*Roster: Megan Hooker, Megan Meece, JenniLynn Rodamaker, Anthonique Barnett, Janet Orgain, Quisha Yancy, RaRecca Peterson, Danielle Barnett,*

*Celeste Cox, Tanisha Mayberry, Jennifer Simpson, Lexi Hamm, Jessica Bobbitt, Chelle Yancy, Rakeisha Perry*

**COACHES:**

*1917-20 Unknown*  
*1921-32 C..T. Turner*  
*1932-34 Joe Norvelle*  
*1934-35 T.T. McLean*  
*1936-37 Ed Martin*  
*1938 Minnie Leeper*  
*1939-42 M.C. Joyner*  
*1942-45 Lyle Putnam*  
*1946 No games due to gym destroyed by fire*  
*1946-52 Evelyn Lowery*  
*1952 Walter Kilzer*  
*1953-62 Sam Goodman*  
*1962-65 Mac Buckley*  
*1965-67 Sam Goodman*  
*1967-68 Dorace Brasfield*  
*1969-72 Danny Truett*  
*1972-74 Steve Speed*  
*1974-75 Paul Brown*  
*1975-76 Don McDonald*  
*1976-79 Randy Horn*  
*1979-84 Danny Crossnoe*  
*1984-95 Darlene Fairless*  
*1995-97 Rickey Hooker*  
*1997-2001 Spencer Hoffman*  
*2002-03 Steve Patterson*  
*2004 Tommy Colvin*  
*2005-present Tere Lumley*