



In this photo from the March 27, 1972, issue of the Baker Democrat-Herald, Baker's Daryl Ross, second from right, accepts the sportsmanship award for Baker High School. At far left is Dick Sheehy, and in the center, Mike Davis.

Bulldogs

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But despite shooting just 34%, Jefferson had four more field goals.

Missed free throws also hurt Baker, especially in the fourth quarter.

The Bulldogs were 10 of 22 overall, shooting at a lower percentage from the line than they did from the field.

Jefferson was 9 for 14 from the line.

Davis had 17 points to lead Baker. Scrivner had 15 points, Ross 13, Sheehy 4 and Erickson 3 points.

The aftermath

Heriza went on to coach the Baker varsity for the next two seasons, then moved to Pendleton in 1977, where he coached for many years, before returning to Baker City in 2004.

Heriza said the loss to Jefferson in the 1972 championship game was of course disappointing.

"But it wasn't a calamity by any means," he said.

Sheehy said his initial reaction was that he wasn't happy with the second-place trophy.

"It's kind of like kissing your sister," he said with a laugh. "We were so close, but it was not very satisfying."

Over the years, though, he came to appreciate the accomplishment.

"It sure was fun," Sheehy said. "Coach Hammond got the most out of his players. For a bunch of kids it was a pretty good deal."

Greg Hammond, who later coached for 17 years, said his dad was sad to come so close to an epic upset victory, but he also recognized what he and his players had done.

"I think that was a huge accomplishment at the time for a small school like Baker," Greg Hammond said. "I think (his dad) was very pleased with the kids and the community support. I'm sure he was disappointed that they didn't quite pull it off."

Because he was on break from college, Greg was able to return to Baker after the tournament and see how the community greeted the team.

"It was incredible," he said.

He believes that the level of support contributed to the Oregon School Activities Association's decision to move the state basketball tournaments to Baker High School just three years later.

Scrivner also remembers the crowds that greeted the team members when they returned.

"I really didn't understand how excited everyone was in Baker until I got back," he said. "It was unbelievable how people would travel back then just to watch a ballgame. Everybody got on board."

Sheehy said he occasionally sees one of his rivals from the 1972 game, Jefferson graduate Tony Hopson, who scored 14 points in the championship game.

Sheehy said he also runs into people every now and again who, after hearing that he grew up in Baker, mention the 1972 game, talk about how exciting it was, and ask him if he too remembers.

Baker Bulldog Basics: 1972 state tournament team

- Seniors: Daryl Ross, Mike Davis, Dick Sheehy, Craig Erickson, Mark Johnson, Fred Warner Jr.

- Juniors: Randy Daugherty, Greg Sackos, Tim Wood, Wes Morgan

- Sophomore: Rick Scrivner

- Team record: 19-7 (16-6 regular season, 3-1 in state tournament)

State tournament records and accolades

- Ross, first-team all tournament, second in total points with 80, fourth in rebounds with 46

- Davis, third in total rebounds with 49

- Tournament record for fewest fouls in a game — 4 against Sunset

- Single-game record for highest field goal percentage — 65% against Newberg

- Tournament record for four-game field goal percentage — 53.1%

- Team won sportsmanship award for second straight year

Invariably, he said, they're shocked to learn that not only does he remember, but he was on the court for the entire 32 minutes.

"I was lucky enough to be on the team," he said.

Sheehy plans to attend Friday's ceremony accompanied by his father, Dick Sheehy Sr. of Baker City, who will turn 100 on May 3.

The younger Sheehy said his dad kept the shot chart for Gary Hammond for many years, including during the 1971-72 season. Sheehy figures his father must have attended around 1,000 basketball games.

Tim Wood

Wood, who lives in Baker City and was a junior in 1972, remembers how the combination of Ross, at 6-foot-7, and Davis, 6-foot-4, made for an "enormous presence" in the key.

He also remembers the crowd at the championship game.

"More than three-quarters was from Portland," Wood said.

Although the Baker players were of course ensconced in a Portland motel throughout the tournament, Wood said he remembered how the contingent of Baker fans grew with each of the four successive games.

By the night of the championship game, Wood said, "I can imagine Baker was a ghost town."

"It was a very historic moment," he said. "It was quite an experience."

Fred Warner Jr.

Warner, a senior on the team, described the atmosphere of the championship game as "pretty amazing, kind of surreal. I enjoyed every bit of it."

He remembers how many Baker residents were in the crowd, and the celebratory parade and banquet in town after the team returned from Portland.

Mark Johnson

Johnson was a senior who had never gone out for basketball before.

And he had never been to a basketball arena filled with more than 13,000 people.

"I had never been in an environment like that," said Johnson, who lives in Baker City. "It was pretty exciting. I thought, 'wow, this place is full. This is what a championship game should be.'"

He thinks many of the people who made up that record crowd on March 25, 1972,

were intrigued by the "contrast of basketball styles" that Baker and Jefferson presented.

Johnson also thinks many fans — at least among those who weren't rooting for either the Bulldogs or the Democrats — were just plain curious about whether the underdog could upset the Jefferson juggernaut.

"I think that appealed to people," Johnson said. "We weren't supposed to beat Sunset. Could Baker pull it off?"

In the end, he said, the fans "got their money's worth."

Johnson said that although he naturally has thought at

Cheerleaders' memories

Baker High School's five cheerleaders, in addition to rooting on the Bulldogs at the 1972 state tournament, watched each of Baker's four thrilling games, culminating in the championship game on Saturday, March 25, in a filled-beyond-capacity Portland Memorial Coliseum.

Be (Gutridge) Tiedemann

The crowd, even 50 years later, still stands out in Tiedemann's memories.

"It was the most people we'd ever been in front of — it just echoed," she said.

She was one of two juniors on the cheerleading squad. One cheer, she said, drew boos from the opposing crowd.

"Teri (Guymon, now Swanson, the head cheerleader) said 'just keep smiling,'" Tiedemann said. And she focused on familiar faces from home.

"People actually got in their cars, drove and stayed," she said. "The community support was amazing."

But mostly she remembers the team's path to the state championship.

"It was surreal — this is what hard work does. They had to keep winning to get there," she said. "We were such the underdog."

Debbie (Colton) Hampton

Hampton also remembers the vast sea of faces filling the arena.

"I remember feeling so small in this huge place," she said. "But I think the whole city of Baker was in the same hotel. It gave us a sense of camaraderie — we were so proud of our school, and our town."

And she still has solid reminders of that game.

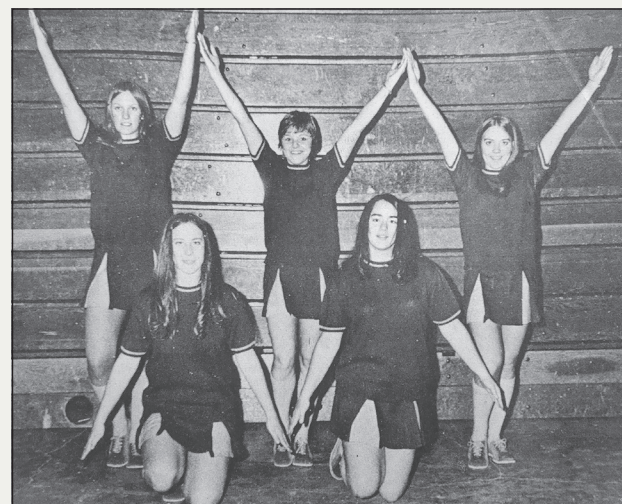


Photo from the March 10, 1972, issue of the Baker Democrat-Herald. Front row, Toni Justus, left, and Cindy Curtis. Back row, left to right, Belinda Gutridge, Teri Guymon and Debbie Colton.

"I actually still have my pom-poms," she said with a laugh.

Cindy Curtis

Curtis was a senior. Although the experience was "surreal," she said Baker stayed humble throughout the experience.

"The team, in my opinion, was very humble," she said. "Everyone worked so hard — Daryl (Ross) had such an incredible work ethic and was one of the kindest people on the planet."

Humble — but happy about the path to the state championship.

"It was an incredible time," she said. "It was such an ego boost for the entire school."

Toni (Justus) Goss

Goss still has a folder full of clippings from that year of basketball — newspaper stories and photos detailing the experience.

"I have a whole scrapbook," she said. "It was amazing."

She remembers the crowd too — and feeling a bit out of place.

"It was huge, and they talked about our team being the country boys because they had short hair."

Teri (Guymon) Swanson

Swanson, a senior, was the head cheerleader, or Song Queen.

She still has her pom-poms from that 1972 season.

"It was just a wonderful time in our life," she said. "It was one of the best things in my life to be a part of. It gives me the chills just thinking about it."

The cheerleaders, she said, traveled to the boys' away games throughout the season, and to the state playoffs — along with most of the town, it seemed.

"Everybody had the Bulldog spirit," she said. "The support of the town and the school was something else."

— Lisa Britton

"I really didn't understand how excited everyone was in Baker until I got back. It was unbelievable how people would travel back then just to watch a ballgame. Everybody got on board."

— Rick Scrivner, sophomore on Baker's 1972 boys basketball team

2007 state title was Baker's first in basketball since 1938, when the Bulldogs, coached by George "Stub" Allison beat Amity 27-18 in Salem.

Wes Morgan

"It was a quite a ride for us," said Morgan, a junior member of the 1972 team who lives near Sumpter. "To end up where we ended up was pretty amazing."

He noted that Jefferson, in common with many teams from west of the Cascades, had by the early 1970s adopted a fast-paced, "run and gun" style of place.

"We were just absolutely the opposite," Morgan said. "We didn't allow those teams to get the momentum going. That was Hammond's thing — make at least three passes before any shot."

Morgan said the support from Baker fans was "amazing" both in Portland and when the team returned.

He recalls seeing banners backing the Bulldogs flying from Portland motel room windows.

Greg Sackos

Sackos, a junior in 1972, recalls hearing the joke going around at the time, one that reflected the size of the Baker contingent in the Coliseum for the championship game.

"Will the last person leaving town turn out the lights?"

And while like most jokes that one indulges in exaggeration, Sackos said the number of Baker fans was amazing.

"We had a lot of support from home," he said.

His most vivid recollection, though, is of the team's camaraderie.

"We just had such a good group of guys," Sackos said. "It was really a fun thing."

Verl Cote

Cote was a senior at BHS and the team's manager in 1972.

He remembers how team members "just kind of froze" when they walked out of the tunnel into the Coliseum on the night of the championship game and saw the crowd.

"Holy moly — where did all these people come from?" he said.

Cote said that although Jefferson had "great athletes," he felt that Baker, with its disciplined approach, could compete.

"They just liked to run and gun, but we did frustrate them for the most part," Cote said. "We just had a couple of crucial turnovers in the final four minutes and the momentum just kind of shifted a little bit. It's a disappointment when you lose the championship, but it was a great season."

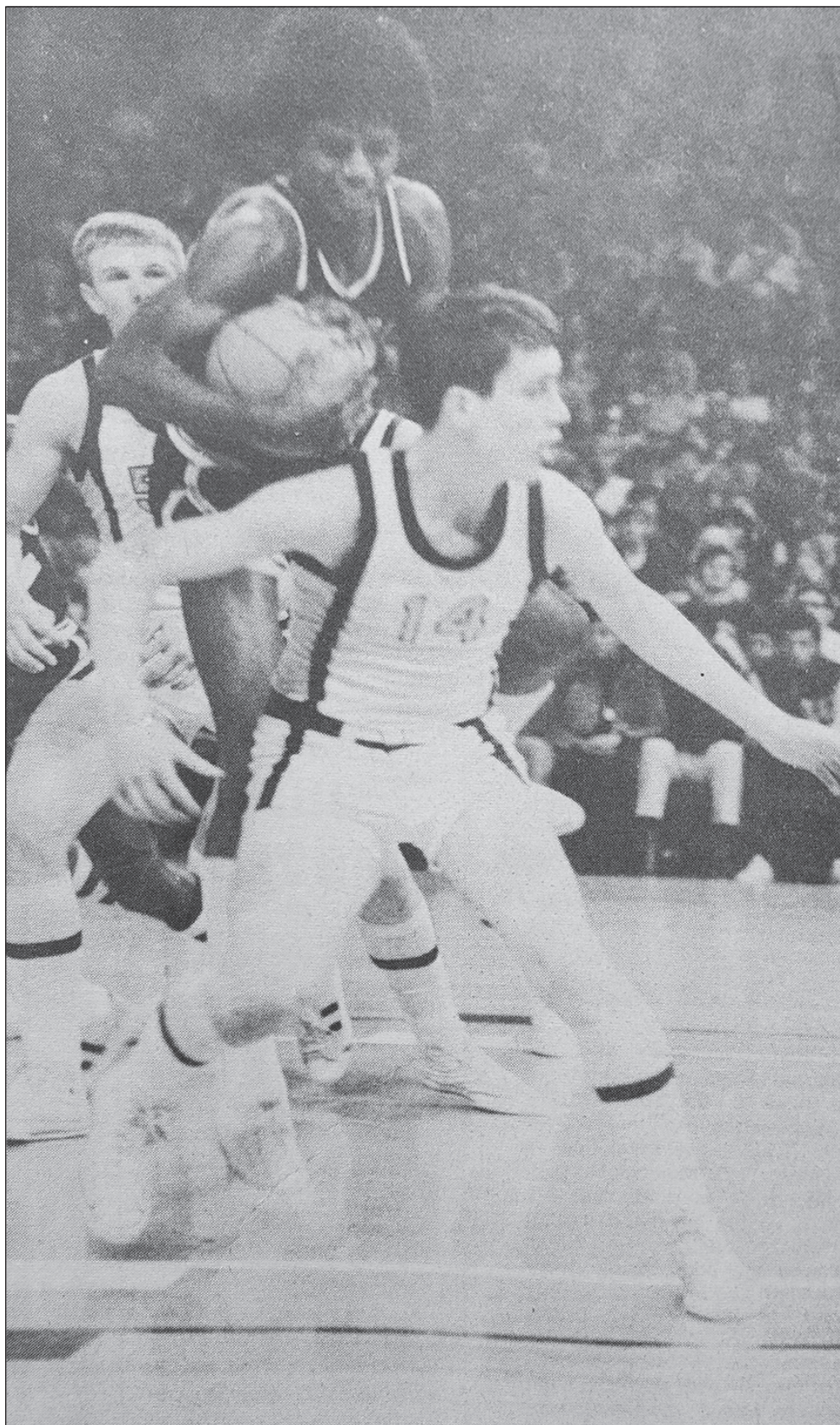
Cote said one of his favorite memories from the 1972 tournament involved a bunch of kids at a Portland grade school.

Baker stayed at the Knickerbocker Motel, and before each game they walked a few blocks to the school — Cote doesn't recall its name — for a brief practice.

Each time, he said, a group of kids showed up to watch.

They didn't know anything about Baker, Cote said.

"But they knew who Jefferson was."



In this photo from the March 27, 1972, issue of the Baker Democrat-Herald, Baker's Craig Erickson, front, and Daryl Ross surround a Jefferson player.