

## 1954 STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Stevens Point is the new state high school basketball champion. The well-balanced Panthers took home the title from Madison on Saturday night, March 20, as they defeated an excellent team from Superior-Central in the finals by a score of 70 to 65. The game was a hard fought contest and perhaps as well played a game as has been seen in the finals for many a year.

Stevens Point copped the honors by turning back Beloit in the quarter-finals, 74-53; Oshkosh in the semi-finals, 62-51, and then thwarting the try for the coveted crown by Superior Central in the finals.

Excellent balance plus the greatest shot-maker in state tournament history—Bob Litzow—brought the topnotch honors to Point. Stevens Point always had great poise in going through to the top. The team was perhaps the tallest by far in the meet and splendid rebounding helped their cause all the way. Furthermore, the new champions had a great leader and play maker in little James Marko.

Superior, after getting away to a close win in the first round over St. Croix Falls, turned in some of the finest play of the tournament. The Central team was not especially impressive in its first game but against Tomah, it was superb and it gave the new champions great competition in the title game.

Waukesha, a team that was generally rated as the pre-tournament favorite, settled for consolation honors, beating St. Croix Falls in the finals, 58-56.

### Quarter Finals—March 18, 1954

Stevens Point 74, Beloit 53  
Oshkosh 67, Waukesha 60  
Superior Central 58, St. Croix Falls 54  
Tomah 64, Monroe 52

### Championship Semi-Finals—March 19

Stevens Point 62, Oshkosh 51  
Superior 80, Tomah 61

### Consolation Semi-Finals

Waukesha 88, Beloit 84 (overtime)  
St. Croix Falls 51, Monroe 43

### Championship Finals—March 20

Stevens Point 70, Superior Central 65

### Consolation Finals

Waukesha 58, St. Croix Falls 56

Records were a dime a dozen in the 1954 State Meet. Six new team scoring marks were set while seven other individual marks went into the books.

In the championship game, an outburst of 22 points in the third quarter actually was the turning point of the game for Stevens Point. The two finalists played about even as Point led at the end of the first quarter, 19-18, but

trailed at half time, 32-31. However, the new titlists outscored Superior Central 22-15 in the third quarter and the six point margin that they had going into the final quarter was just too much for Superior-Central to overcome. As a matter of fact, Superior did outscore the champs by a single point in the last period of the final game.

It was Litzow in that period who knocked over the hopes of Central for he tossed in five baskets during the period, most of them coming when Superior was threatening to go into a good point margin.

Then in the closing minutes with Superior trying desperately to get the ball, Marko came through with some nifty free throwing that sewed up the win.

Bob Olson, Ken Richardson and Stan Ladich paced the fine try by Superior-Central for the title.

As far as records go—it is well to record the marks that were set.

In the team scoring there were the following:

- 1—Most points in three games—206 by Stevens Point and Waukesha. The old mark was 205 set by Wisconsin Rapids in 1951.
- 2—Most points title game—70 by Stevens Point. The old record was 64 set by Wisconsin Rapids in 1951.
- 3—Most points in title game for two teams—135 by Stevens Point and Superior Central (70-65). Old mark was 119 by Wisconsin Rapids 64, Madison West 55 in 1951.
- 4—Highest losing score in championship game—65 by Superior Central. The former mark was 57 by Sheboygan Central in 1953.
- 5—Most field goals in three games—76 by Superior-Central. The old total was 74 by Wisconsin Rapids in 1951.
- 6—Best field goal percentage for single game—.521 by Stevens Point with 25 baskets in 48 attempts. The old mark was held by Waukesha of .471 in defeating Beloit in the tournament consolation round on Mar. 19, 1954.

In the individual marks there were the following:

- 1—Most points for three tournament games—Bob Litzow, Stevens Point, 83. The former mark was 79 set by Paul Morrow, St. Croix Falls, in 1950.
- 2—Most points for single game—32 by Bob Litzow, Stevens Point. His total tied the record set by Warren Hoff, Eau Claire, in 1946.
- 3—Most field goals for single game—14 by Bob Litzow erasing the former record of 13 by Charles Gurtler, Wisconsin Rapids, in 1951.
- 4—Most field goals for three games—33 by Bob Litzow, Stevens Point, to replace the total of 31 by Paul Morrow in 1950.
- 5—Most field goals attempted in three games—84 by Bob Litzow, Stevens Point, which tied the record of Bob Badura, Kohler, in 1950.
- 6—Most free throws attempted for three games—39 by Bob Berquist, St. Croix Falls. The old mark was 34 by John Schreiber, Sheboygan-Central, in 1953.

Charles Schultz of Beloit and Roy Ward of St. Croix Falls shared another mark in the tourney when they set a new field goal shooting percentage in the meet.

Each made seven baskets on 11 attempts for the lofty mark of .636.

The tournament also produced some fine rebound play with the leader in that department being Jim Coutts, Waukesha center who grabbed 51 in the three games. Ward was second with 43 while Olson of Superior Central grabbed 40.

The tournament played before packed houses most of the time and a new attendance mark was set with 66,655 fans watching the five playing sessions. That figure bettered the mark of 64,387 that attended the playing in 1951.



**Stevens Point — Winner State Basketball Tournament**

Kneeling, left to right: Coach Bill Knapton, Mgr. Ed Haka, Asst. Coach Duane Donovan. Standing: Francis Roman, Al Bartkowiak, Jim Turzenski, Robert Litzow, Paul Schadewald, Mel Schneeberg, Greg Holthusen, Anthony Kielpinski, Ronald Sroda, Jim Marko.

**STEVENS POINT**—The new champions had plenty of class and poise through the hard going of tournament play and deserved their topnotch finishing position. The team never got into serious trouble and knew how to control the game at all times. They had fine scoring all down the line and excellent direction and play making from the back court. Height played a dominating part in their win while their superb marksmanship was the best in tournament history.

Tall Mel Schneeberg and Paul Schadewald did some excellent work off the boards and were constant scoring threats under the baskets. Bob Litzow was without a doubt the outstanding player of the tournament. Litzow not only was tops in garnering points but he helped start play, bring the ball down the court and got his share of rebounds. Litzow is a real game breaker and whenever Point appeared to be getting into trouble, it was he who tossed in vital baskets.

Steady play by the two guards, Jim Marko and Ron Sroda, could not be overlooked in the team going through for the title. Both could and did score. They were the smallest boys on the team but made up for their lack of height with other fine basketball talents.

The win ended a long famine of the state titles for Stevens Point. They last copped the top honors in 1926 when they defeated River Falls by a score of 9-7.

**SUPERIOR CENTRAL** — The runnerup club was a well balanced team that proved more or less of a surprise after the first game. The Vikings were anything but impressive as they just nosed by St. Croix Falls on the opening day. However, in the semi-finals against Tomah they lashed forth with a great attack and won handily by one of the biggest scores of the meet.

The Vikings had plenty of poise after the first day and with Bob Olson, Ron Schultz, Stan Ladich and Ken Richardson taking turns, they were definitely a title threat.

Central gave the new champions all they could handle in the title game. In fact, the championship game rated with some of the tourney history's best as the teams battled along on even terms most of the way.

Olson with a nifty fade-away shot was extremely dangerous at all times. Richardson popped in long one-handers and both Tierney and Ladich had their best night of the meet.

Schultz proved to be the big spark that ignited Central in their semi-final win as he poured in 22 points as did Olson.



**Superior-Central — Runner-up State Basketball Tournament**

Back row (left to right): Pat Tierney, forward; Howie Anderson, forward; John Lundgren, center; Stan Ladich; Don Wicklund, center; Bob Olson, center; Chuck Allen, forward; Charles Erickson, forward, and John Sanderson, manager. Front row: Ron Schultz, guard; Jerry Correll, guard; Ken Richardson, guard; Ron Sands, guard; Gene Evens, guard, and Jack Geegan, manager. Absent, guard Jack Stark. (Evening Telegram Photo)

**WAUKESHA** — The Blackshirts came to the tournament highly regarded and went home with the consolation title by nosing out St. Croix Falls in the final.

Waukesha was rated atop the Big 16 and naturally picked by many to win. However, they were surprised by a fine playing Oshkosh team and lost



**Waukesha — Consolation Winner State Basketball Tournament**

Standing: Henry Waschow, Mgr.; Paul Scholovich, Mgr.; Bill Roth, Les Davis, Jim Coutts, Larry Stevenson and Coach Bob Duckett. Seated: Hank Kraus, Bill Nelson, Doug Rasmussen, Bob Lombardi, Pete Mattiacci, Ron Reichert and Bob Harter. Cheerleaders (left to right): Shirley Kluth, Sally Martin, Judy Erdmann and Judy Adams.

in the first round. They came back to defeat Beloit in the highest scoring game of tournament history with an 88-84 in an overtime period.

Forward Pete Mattiacci was one of the highest scorers of the tournament as he finished second with 63 for the three games. It was Mattiacci who sparked the drive in the final two minutes that netted the consolation title for the Blackshirts.

Jim Coutts, center, was also brilliant throughout the tourney and was fifth high point maker with 48. He also was the top rebounder of the tourney with 51 in three games.

Other members of the squad were Bob Harter and Bill Nelson who tossed in the final three points in the title game, Doug Rasmussen, Bob Lombardi and Ronnie Reichert who saw most of the action for the team.

**ST. CROIX FALLS** — St. Croix Falls grabbed the runnerup honors in the consolation. The Falls club appeared likely to reach the semi-finals as they had Superior Central down most of the way in the first round of play. However, a letup, some misplaced passes and some mediocre shooting in the final minutes allowed Superior to rally and nose them out by four points.

The team had outstanding performers in the meet. The Berquist twins played great ball and Bob was fourth high scorer of the tourney with 48 points. He also set a record for the tournament with the most free throws attempted in three games with 39.