

Under-Rated Wausau Takes State Basketball Championship

Wausau High discarded its mediocre season record and exploded a bombshell at the State Basketball Tournament in Madison.

The Lumberjacks, overlooked and under-rated because of a 9-9 mark in the regular campaign, performed in magnificent manner to take the 1960 championship.

A well-executed 74-65 triumph over Menomonie in the title game sealed the victory although it was a rousing 65-61 upset of previously unbeaten and highly-favored Waukesha in the semi-finals that stood out as one of the outstanding games in all State Meet history.

Coach Marsh Taylor's cagers, not even mentioned in the final Big 16 ratings, thus brought about a second straight surprise finish in State Meet play. A year before a fighting Milwaukee Lincoln outfit edged past favored fives in the first two rounds, then went on to take the title.

While Wausau was beating Menomonie for the top honors Waukesha bounced back from its semi-final upset to down Rice Lake, 92-68, in the third-place playoff. Consolation honors went to Racine Park, a 52-51 conqueror of Gale-Etrick, the lone smaller school in the field.

The semi-finals produced Wausau's scorching win over Waukesha plus Menomonie's 75-71 conquest of Rice Lake. Consolations semis saw Gale-Etrick trim Green Bay West, 69-60, and Racine Park top Watertown, 60-55. The opening day activities found Wausau a close 64-59 winner over Gale-Etrick, Waukesha an easy winner over Green Bay West, 84-68, Menomonie a 66-49 winner over Watertown and Rice Lake a 55-54 winner over Racine Park.

Wausau, which entered the championship game with the poorest record ever carried into a title contest, used accurate shooting (its field goal

and free throw aim was the best in the tourney) and strong rebounding plus a balanced attack that featured an assortment of heroes to carve out its victory.

Gale-Etrick proved a stubborn opener for the Jacks and though the champs led most of the time they were behind by a point with five minutes to play. Then two fielders by aggressive Joel Ungrodt, who had two more in the final two minutes, put Wausau in front to stay.

Hard-working Mike Schmidkofer with 21 points and 19 rebounds and sparkplug reserve Jim Hickey stood out in the sizzling triumph over Waukesha. The Lumberjacks roared to a 43-31 first-half edge and were in front by 18 points at one stage in the second half before the valiant Blackshirts, overwhelming pre-tourney favorites and possessors of a perfect record of 26 victories, rallied to within two points before bowing by four.

And the entire starting five of Schmidkofer, Ungrodt, Tom Wendorf, Gary Kirk and Mancer Cyr contributed equal shares in the championship verdict over Menomonie. The Jacks had to erase a four-point halftime deficit to win this one and they did it with a 32-16 advantage in the first 11 minutes of post-intermission action. Kirk, the club's top scorer in the tournament, and Wendorf were unsung tourney heroes but were only slightly less outstanding than Ungrodt and Schmidkofer.

Menomonie also featured a balanced attack with three boys hitting in double figures in the Watertown opener in which a 40-25 second-half margin offset a slim 26-24 intermission lead. An 11-point lead with six

minutes to play almost melted away in the Rice Lake semi-finals but the gallant losers couldn't reach closer than two points. This time four boys hit in double figures. Four boys again hit in double figures in the Wausau finale but Menomonie couldn't keep up its pace in the second half and wound up as 1960 runnerup.

Waukesha had the tourney's leading scorer in Roy Birk but also was not a one-man team. The third-place finishers galloped to a big 49-26 halftime lead and easily suppressed Green Bay West. And they did a tremendous job even though unsuccessful in their comeback attempt against Waukesha. Winning third

place honors included a record-breaking offensive show of 92 points.

Rice Lake came from behind with a 31-32 second-half edge to win its opener from Racine Park, then went on to take fourth place. Park bounced back from that defeat to win close games from Watertown and Gale-Etrick for the consolation title. Gale-Etrick, whose Jack Brenegan was one of the meet's top performers, was never outclassed despite its classification as it lost only in the closing minutes to Wausau and was nipped by a point in the consolation finals.

Teams Post New State Marks

Two records, both team marks, were established in the State Basketball Tournament at Madison.

Wausau, the new champion, shot field goals at a .494 clip (80 of 162) for the three games to account for one of the records. The old standard was .463 by Shawano in the 1957 meet.

Waukesha hit a new record of 92 points in one game in its victory over Rice Lake in the third-place playoff for the other mark. Shawano held the old record of 90 points in its 1958 victory over Eau Claire.

Individual scoring was paced by Roy Birk of Waukesha, a .565 shooter for the meet, with 69 points, an average of 23.0 per game. He also had the best single game effort, 28. This compares with the record of 91 by Sam Antcliffe of West Allis Central in 1956. Dave Horton of La Crosse Logan was high a year ago with 65.

Only four others hit 50 or more points — Donn Poss of Gale-Etrick had 53, Gary Kirk of Wausau 52,

Harold Fletcher of Menomonie 51 and Jack Brenegan of Gale-Etrick 50. The well-balanced team play was shown by the fact that no fewer than 29 boys averaged 10 points or better per game.

Rebounding honors went to Dave Sjuggerud of Menomonie with 42, one more than the 41 of Mike Schmidkofer of Wausau. Tonis Mang of Racine Park had 37 and Tom Wendorf of Wausau 36.

Waukesha compiled the best team offense mark with 237 points (79.0 per game) with Menomonie second (206) and Wausau third (203). The best defense was Racine Park's 161 (53.7 per game) with Gale-Etrick next (176) and Wausau third (185).

Wausau led in both field goal and free throw accuracy on marks of .494 and .717, respectively, with Waukesha (.450) and Gale-Etrick (.705) runnersup, respectively. Gale-Etrick committed the fewest fouls (32). Wausau ranked first in rebounds with 132.