

25 Years Ago

For the fourth straight year, the Capitol City and its Civic Center would play host to the North Dakota Class B High School Basketball Tournament. The 1977 tournament's title clash between little Epping, with just 24 students in high school, and Hillsboro, with 210 students and a very successful history in Class B basketball, makes this tournament one of the most remembered in Class B history.

Frank Smith continued as the NDHSAA's Executive Secretary. Dick Schindler and Mary Anderson were the Assistant Secretaries and Larimore superintendent, Jerry Muckenhim, served as the NDHSAA's Board President. Bismarck Schools' Athletic Director, Dick Karlgaard was the tournament manager and the game officials were: Larry Houser, Bob King, Henry Milkey, Ted Uecker, Larry Ukestad, Larry Grooters and Maynard Loibl.

The season's number one ranked team, Hillsboro, opened the tournament with a 68-48 win over coach Jack DeMaine's Munich Magicians. The Burros, in an effort that Coach Ed Beyers said was their best of the year, shot 64% from the field. Dave Nelson, with 9 for 10 from the field, led the scoring with 21 points. Paul Eisenbeis was 8 for 9 from the field, on the way to a 16 point night, while Joe Henn counted 14 and Randy Waters 10. For Munich, Nathan Bock had 15 points, Don Schommer 12 and Lynn Schuler 10.

Minnewaukan, the only repeater from the 1976 Class B, rallied from a two point third quarter deficit and used 51% field goal shooting for a 65-56 win over the Jerry Bartholomay's Enderlin Eagles in the second quarter final game. Ron Carlson's Midgets, who were 24 and 2 coming into the state tourney, were led in scoring by Kraig Ankenbauer's 24 points, Kevin Ankenbauer's 16 and Mark Griffin's 15. The Eagles scoring leaders were Joel Stangler with 17, Rich Gillune with 16, and Greg Utke with 10.

In the closest game of the first round, little Epping held on for a 58-55 overtime win over Coach Dale Thompson's Turtle Lake-Mercer Trojans. Larry Overbo's Eagles were just 12 of 24 from the free throw line but hit on 23 of 41 attempts from the field (55%). Their scoring leaders were Don Allard with 23, Clyde Vinger with 16, Mike Vinger with 10, and Bob Allard with 9. For the Trojans, Paul Singer had 14 points, Durnell Klain 12, and Perry Bloom 10.

The final game of the first round was also a close one as South Heart leading through much of the second half - 60 to 58 with 1:04 remaining - watched Wing score the last four points of the game for a 62-60 victory. A basket by the Royals' Perry Smith and two free throws by teammate Tim Michelson, clinched the Wing victory. Smith led Coach Otto Uhde's Royals with 26 points while Michelson, Terry Miller, and Mike Heidt had 8 points each. Jerry Perdaems' Eagles were led by Dennis Keller with 20 points, Scott Sailer with 16, and Perry Bloom with 10.

Munich ran their season's record to 25 and 4 with a 57-52 win over the Enderlin Eagles in first round consolation play. The Magicians scoring leaders were Stan Dick with 16 points, Don Schommer with 13, and Gary Bock with 12. The Eagles were led by Rick Gillund's 15 points, Joel Stangler's 11 and Greg Utke's 10 points. In the other consolation game, Mike Swanson led Turtle Lake-Mercer to a 68-54 win over South Heart by counting 21 points. Paul Singer added 18 points to the Trojan's total and Durnell Klain had 16, South Heart's scoring leaders were Dennis Keller with 17 points and Darrel Kudrna with 12.

Minnewaukan roared out to an early lead on Hillsboro

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in the tournament's first semi-final as the Midgets scored on their first 10 field goal attempts. The Burros were able to stay within a point at halftime, however, as they hit on 18 of their first 29 tries from the field. Coach Ron Carlson's team slipped from 91.6% shooting in the first quarter to just 24.7% the rest of the way, while the Burros finished with a 'blistering' 65% on 33 of 51 - on their way to a 71-63 victory. Dave Nelson counted on 11 of 14 field goal attempts and had a 25 point game for Hillsboro. (Over two days of tournament play, Nelson was 20 of 24 from the field.) Joe Henn added 16 points, Randy Waters 11, Scott Kelly 10, and Paul Eisenbeis 9 as those five played the entire game for the Burros. Minnewaukan's scoring leaders were Kraig Ankenbauer with 22, Kevin Ankenbauer with 16, and Neil Johnson with 15.

Epping's Bob Allard missed his first 7 shots but made 7 of the next 11 in pacing the Eagles to a 61-56 win over Wing in the second semi-final. The Royals were tied with Epping at the 1:50 mark in the final quarter but were out pointed by 5 down the stretch. Bob Allard with 25 and Clyde Vinger with 14 points were the Eagles' scoring leaders; while Terry Miller had 15, Mike Heidt 14, and Tim Michelson 10 for Wing.

Munich ran off 11 straight points in the fourth quarter on their way to a 62-54 win over Turtle Lake-Mercer in the consolation championship game. Gary Bock counted 17 points for the Magicians while Don Schommer had 16 and Stanley Dick 15. The Trojans were led by Mike Swanson's 16 points, Paul Singer's 14, and Dave Becker's 12. Wing and Minnewaukan put up a combined 147 field goal attempts in the contest for third place. The Royals hit on 53% of their shots from the field and prevailed in the shoot-out, 90 to 78. Perry Smith's 28 points, Terry Ennen's 18, and Tim Michelson's 12 led Wing in scoring. For the Midgets who hit on 44% of their 72 field goal attempts, Kevin Ankenbauer had 23, Mark Griffin 18, Neil Johnson 17, and Max Cook 11.

A large majority of the Civic Center's 7,400 fans were rooting for tiny Epping in the 1977 State Championship game. Larry Overbo's Eagles were ranked sixth in the last poll of the regular season and came into the tournament with a 25-1 record. The Burros, state champions in 1973 and 1974, had three regular season losses coming into the tourney; but had acquired the top spot in the season's last rankings. Hillsboro led 26 to 18 at the half and were up by 11 at 48-37 with 3:28 to play and 54-45 with 1:04 remaining. The Eagles outscored the Burros by a 7 to 2 margin from that point, but fell short, 57-52, in their upset bid. Joe Henn was the Hillsboro scoring leader with 20 points while Randy Waters and Dave Nelson each had 10 (Nelson finished the tournament with 23 field goals in 29 attempts). The Allard brothers, Bob with 24 and Don with 19, led Epping.

Ed Beyer would lead the Burros to seven more appearances in the state tourney and another state title in 1980. Epping would close its school doors within a few years, but for three days in March of 1977, they made a lasting impression on the state's Class B basketball fans.

The six leading scorers in the 1977 tournament were as follows:

Perry Smith (61).....Wing	Kevin Ankenbauer (55).....Minnewaukan
Bob Allard (58).....Epping	Kraig Ankenbauer (50).....Minnewaukan
Dave Nelson (56)..Hillsboro	Joe Henn (50).....Hillsboro

Dick Karlgaard
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