

Leipsic Wins First Tournament Title in 15 Years

Vikings Show Outstanding Strength Over Ottoville
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Leipsic High School's Vikings won their first basketball championship since 1939 last Friday night defeating Ottoville in the finals by a score of 62-45, thereby halting a string of 19 straight victories by the Big Green after losing their season opener to the same Leipsic squad on the same floor on November 24.

The victory was an easy one for Leipsic as they built up a 7-0 lead at the opening of the game and held a wide margin the whole way. It is the fourth championship for Leipsic in the 31-year history of the playoffs.

For Coach Jerry Moenter of Ottoville, the Leipsic floor where he starred while in high school, continues to be a jinx as he now has lost three consecutive tournament championship games there, and this year his only two defeats so far have been on that floor.

In the consolation game, Kalida won a hard-fought victory over Miller City for third place, 68-56.

One of the biggest tournament crowds in recent years packed every corner and standing space in the Leipsic gym. The estimated 1,850 crowd brought total attendance for the tournament to 9,650 according to figures released by Tournament Manager Robert Streight.

This was the largest attendance at the tourney in three years, eclipsing last year's figure by 1,550.

THE FIRED-UP VIKINGS waltzed over Ottoville's league co-champs with surprising ease. Employing a fast-breaking offense and a hard-pressing defense, they never trailed after jumping off to a 7-0 lead in the opening minutes.

With junior Larry Johnson displaying one of the best individual performances of the tournament, the Vikings poured it on in every quarter and kept pulling away throughout the game.

Johnson scored Leipsic's first bucket on a fast break to give them a lead they never lost. Fred Russell, Johnson and Bill Warren sank consecutive free throws and then Johnson goaled again to make it 7-0 before Ottoville could score.

Jim Schneider and Bill Schlagbaum hit two quick goals for Ottoville and for a time it looked like a tough struggle might be on. Only Leipsic's pressing defense began to take its toll as Johnson continually broke through to steal the ball and set up a fast break as the winners gradually pulled away.

By the end of the first quarter, Leipsic was ahead 13-8.

IN THE SECOND PERIOD, Ottoville tightened up its zone defense and Leipsic couldn't work the ball under the basket. Ottoville also stopped the Leipsic fast break. The Vikings then employed another weapon which couldn't be stopped – the long shot.

The Vikings didn't get a single shot under the basket during the second period, but tall Bill Warren, who also played a magnificent game for the new county champs, started to connect from the corners. He got three goals from way out in that period.

The pace slowed down during that period as Leipsic played more control ball. Leipsic scored five goals and Ottoville three in those eight minutes and was leading 25-15 at the half.

Employing a change of pace during the third period, the Vikings broke up the Ottoville zone. Holding the ball out in front and pulling Ottoville defenders out of position, the Leipsic boys managed to break through to the bucket. Warren and Don Shaffer took over the scoring as the two scored 15 of Leipsic's 16 counters in the third round.

OTTOVILLE'S OFFENSE looked it best during that period also, as the pace opened up again. They were able to get good shots at the basket but their shooting percentage was low as their luck seemed to have deserted them. However, by sinking six out of seven free throws, they were able to keep up fairly well with the on surging Vikings.

That period ended 41-29.

Things really opened up during the final round, as both teams racked up heir highest quarterly totals of the evening. Leipsic, though, was still in command and outscored the Big Green by its widest margin of the night.

Schneider and Schlagbaum had their best nights of the tournament, as far as floor play was concerned. Schneider scored 17 points, his highest tourney output, and Schlagbaum's fast floor play kept Ottoville from being completely snowed under.

Ottoville

Byrne – 2/3/7. Hohlbein – 2/1/5. Schneider – 7/3/17. Schlagbaum – 4/5/13. John Miller – 1/0/2. Weber – 0/1/1. Jerry Miller – 0/0/0.
Totals – 16/13/45

Leipsic

Russell – 1/4/6. Johnson – 3/3/9. Warren – 9/5/23. Chamberlain – 3/4/10. Shaffer – 5/2/12. Kuhlman – 1/0/2.
Totals – 22/18/62

Ottoville	8	7	14	16	45
Leipsic	13	12	16	21	62