

PCL Foul Shooting Contests

1949 - 1976

There used to be a Putnam County Foul Shooting Contest for the high schools in Putnam County. The first year of this annual event was in 1949. It ran for 18 consecutive years from 1949 to 1966. There was no contest in 1967, but the foul shooting contest was continued from 1968 until 1976, the final year.

The Wise Clothing and Shoe Company of Ottawa sponsored the contest each year and provided trophies to the winning schools and individuals. The foul shooting contests were held at various schools throughout the county.

The basic premise of the contest was that two boys from each school would shoot 50 foul shots in sets of 15, 10, 10 and 15. The highest number of foul shots made by one school was the school winner and the boy that made the highest number of foul shots would be the individual winner. When there were ties, and there were many, a shoot off would determine the final winner.

An exception to these rules happened in the first year of the Putnam County Foul Shooting Contest. In 1949, two boys shot for each school, but the difference was that the boy that made the most foul shots was declared the individual winner and also his school was the school winner. George Hellman shot for Fort Jennings in 1949 and made 44/50 foul shots. Thus, he was the first individual winner and Fort Jennings was the first school winner.

In 1950 Harold Inbody from Blanchard won the contest while scoring 37/50. This was the lowest winning individual score in the contest's history. Miller City and Columbus Grove tied for the championship by both shooting 71/100. In the school shoot off, Columbus Grove made 20/30 and Miller City 25/30. Thus, Miller City won the first school title shot by this method. This was also the lowest winning school score in the contest's history.

The first individual shoot off was in 1953 when Bob Perkey from Ottawa Public, John Verhoff from Glandorf and Joe Stechschulte from Glandorf each made 45/50. They each shot 15 more foul shots with Perkey making 14 and Verhoff and Stechschulte each making 13. Thus Perkey won the contest by making 59/65 foul shots.

Glandorf became the first multiple school winner by winning the contest 4 consecutive years, 1952-1955. Karl Fuerst from Glandorf became the first multiple individual winner by winning the contest in 1954 and 1955.

In 1957, Leipsic and Ottawa Public tied with a score of 87/100. In the first shoot off, Gerald Gross and Tom Wyant from Leipsic shot 22/30. Don Stemen and Dennis McCrate from Ottawa Public shot 22/30 also. This necessitated a second shoot off. In the second round, Leipsic scored 25/30 and Ottawa Public 21/30. Thus after 320 foul shots, Leipsic won 134/160 to Ottawa Public's 130/160.

In 1958, the second individual shoot-off occurred. This was unique because two team mates tied with each other

and two other boys. Ken Kern and Ken Vennekotter from Miller City and Roger Schimmoeller from Ottoville and Bob Evans from Vaughnsville tied with a score of 43/50. In the shoot off, Kern made 15/15, Vennekotter 14/15, Schimmoeller and Evans 13/15. Thus, Kern won the contest with a score of 58/65. Kern also became the second multiple individual winner by winning the contest in 1959 for the second consecutive year.

In 1963, Columbus Grove and Ottawa tied in the school contest with 80/100 scores. However, Don Hamilton from Columbus Grove and Steve Shilling from Fort Jennings tied in the individual contest with a 43/50 score. Columbus Grove, for the second consecutive year, won the school shoot off 106/130 to Ottawa's 104/130. Hamilton won the individual shoot off by making 13/15 to Shilling's 10/15.

In 1964, Mike Allen from Columbus Grove and the legendary Tom Heckman from Glandorf tied with a score of 46/50. In the shoot off, Allen made 13/15 and Heckman 10/15. Heckman's score of 46/50 was the highest score that anyone had ever had in a shoot off and still lost.

In 1966, Columbus Grove and Continental tied in the school contest with a score of 89/100. In the shoot off, however, each boy shot 10 foul shots instead of the normal 15. Columbus Grove won the contest with a score of 107/120 to Continental's 103/120.

In 1970, Columbus Grove set the foul shooting contest's record by scoring 93/100. The two shooters were Greg Verhoff, 44/50, and Jon McKanna, 49/50. McKanna's score of 49/50 was the county record.

The last individual shoot-off occurred in 1972 between Rob Garmatter from Pandora Gilboa and Joe Wallenhorst from Fort Jennings. These boys both shot 44/50. In the shoot off, Garmatter made 9/10 and Wallenhorst made 5/10. Thus, Garmatter won the individual contest with a score of 53/60.

In 1973 the school's high score of 93/100 was tied by Leipsic when Mark Hartman shot 47/50 and Rod Mangas shot 46/50.

The final shoot off for the school winner happened in 1974 between Kalida and Ottoville. Both schools made 83/100. In the shoot off, Kalida made 101/120 and Ottoville 100/120. Kalida also won the school title in 1975 for their second consecutive title.

The final Putnam County Foul Shooting Contest was held in 1976. Ottoville was the school winner, 83/100, and Jeff Schimmoeller from Ottoville was the individual winner, 43/50.

The Putnam County Foul Shooting Contest was an extra feature of boys' basketball which will probably never be seen again. Even though this event started in the late 1940's and ended in the mid 1970's, the foul shooting contest and the great foul shooters of Putnam County will be remembered for all time!