

Ottoville Reaches 1,000-Victory Level

The Lima News - Ken Gordon - December 22, 1993

BASKETBALL: The Putnam County League school is one of only eight boys basketball programs in Ohio to break the 1,000-win mark. If it had been up to the parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church, Ottoville High School might have fallen about 900 wins short of its 1,000th boys basketball victory.

"Back in the first few years of basketball here, the team used to use the local parish hall," Ottoville Atheltirc Director Jim Maley said. "It seems the leading ladies of the church felt it was inappropriate for these boys to be running and jumping around in shorts in church, so they banned basketball for three or four years."

Luckily for town residents, the program was reinstated sometime in the 1920s, because the Big Green went on to rack up 1,000 wins in its storied 75-year history. The 1000th win was accomplished last Saturday in a 68-52 win over Perry. It's a tribute to longevity as well as talent. According to unofficial figures, Ottoville ranks eighth in Ohio in total basketball victories.

"The basketball program is something the community takes very seriously and over the years, they've enjoyed a great deal of success," said Maley, who began poring over old yearbooks and newspapers last year in a quest to determine Ottoville's win total.

The school's first coach was Louis Heckman, who headed the Big Green from 1919-1951 (minus those banned years), retiring with 434 wins. Ottoville's first ever-hoops win came over a "Kalida Town Team" in 1918.

Ten years later, one of Heckman's former players took over the reins, Richard Kortokrax ran up 200 victories from 1962-74. "It was a privilege to have played for Louis Heckman," Kortokrax continued. "I was on his last team in 1951 and there was a certain amount of mystique and respect that went along with it. He was the instiution that created Ottoville basketball."

And what an instiution it is.

The Road to 1,000 Wins				
Coach	Years Coached	Years	Wins	*Adjustments
Louis Heckman	1919-1951	30	434	448
Jerome Moenter	1952-1959	8	105	106
Norbert Gertz	1960-1961	2	16	15
Richard Kortokrax	1962-1974	13	200	199
Phil Muehlfeld	1975-1979	5	82	82
Steve Penhorwood	1980-1984	5	89	90
Mark Knott	1985-1988	4	40	41
Joe Horstman	1989-1991	3	19	19
Bill Stoner	1992-1993	2	13	13
Jeff McMillan	1993-		2	2
Total			1,000	1,015

***There have been several adjustments to this total since December 22, 1993, when this article was published in the Lima News. The biggest adjustment was with Coach Heckman. There was a fire at Ottoville High School which destroyed many of the scorebooks for him. Thus, his win totals in the earlier years was based on estimates. A few of the other discrepancies was also adjusted.**