

History of the Basketball Gymnasiums for Fort Jennings High School 1940 to Today

The first mention of a boys' basketball team at Fort Jennings High School was in a newspaper article in the Putnam County Sentinel on September 29, 1939. "Fort Jennings High School is making preparations to place a basketball team in the county high school league this season. It will be the first time that Fort Jennings will be represented by a high school basketball team. The team will start its practices with no former experience on the basketball court, but despite this handicap, the boys are exceedingly interested in the sport and hope to give their opponents a good run, even if they are just beginners."

GYMNASIUM #1 1940 - 1977

An article in the Putnam County Sentinel on November 4, 1938, stated that "Workmen were busy dismantling the old building in preparing for construction of a \$100,000 school building with an auditorium-gymnasium unit and other modern facilities at Fort Jennings." Another article in the Putnam County Sentinel on December 8, 1939 stated that "An important sports event took place at Fort Jennings last week when the Jennings high school basketball teams were hosts to the Ottoville quintets. The games marked the opening of the new Fort Jennings school gymnasium and it also marked the first home game ever played by the Jennings High." The first coach was Bob Drake.

This gym was used for 38 seasons, 1940-1977. The floor dimensions were 38 x 64. There were chair seats on one side and bleacher seats on a stage on the opposite side. The seating capacity was approximately 500.

GYMNASIUM #2 1978 - 2004

Fort Jennings second gym was christened on Friday, December 16, 1977. An article in the Putnam County Sentinel described the opening as follows – "Fort Jennings officially opened its new gymnasium Friday night but it took a half-hour delay and some anxious moments to get the ribbon cutting underway." Tom Sakemiller

stated that "they were still putting up the baskets at 6:30, the time we were supposed to start the game. We didn't know if we would have to send everybody over to the old gym and play there or wait till the workers finished putting up the baskets. Finally, we just decided to hold the game up a half-hour and play it on the new floor." "The move paid off as Fort Jennings blitzed a winless Ohio City squad 72-49 and opened the new gym in fitting style." The coach was Tom Sakemiller and Bill Warnecke was the leading scorer with 20 points.

This gym was used for 27 seasons 1978-2004 and is still used. The floor dimensions are 50 x 84. It has bleachers on both sides and a few rows on one end. The seating capacity is 1,771.

CURRENT GYMNASIUM #3 2005 to Today

The new school and current gym's first girls' game was on Friday, November 19, 2004 when Fort Jennings defeated Parkway 64-29. FJ was led in scoring by Brooke Norbeck and Rachel Landwehr with 15 points each. Dave Luersman was the girls' coach. The boys' first game was on November 26 when the Musketeers beat Arlington 69-61. Luke Swartz led the team with 19 points and John VonSossan was the coach.

The floor dimensions are 50 x 84. It has bleachers on both sides and a seating capacity of 1,663.

PRACTICE GYMS – In addition to the current gym, Fort Jennings has two available practice gyms.