

# Pandora's 1<sup>st</sup> Basketball Season

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Basketball has come a long way since 1915 when the winter sport was first introduced to Pandora High School. According to Charles Reese, a member of that early squad, the sport had been played outside for some years, but the first regular team to schedule games indoors was the famous squad of 1915-1916.

The home games were played in Schutz Hall, now apartments above Meinke Pharmacy. Reese recalls that the room was equipped with a radiator at one end to heat the room. He also remembers that a basket could be made from most any spot on the floor.

The first Pandora High School team was decked out in baseball pants in the photo accompanying the story. The first high school coach was Lester Harness, an employee of the local bank and at that time a recent high school graduate himself.

There were many unique things about the team of 1915-1916. First off, the squad managed to be crowned the Putnam County champions that year. Not bad for a first year sport.

Reese recalls the schedule consisted of all teams in the county who played indoor basketball. These schools were Vaughnsville, Leipsic and Columbus Grove. Putnam County teams were each played twice. Other opponents were Crawfis College, Harrod, Gomer and who else but Bluffton.

The team of 1915-1916 played 11 games winning all but two. Reese recalls the game against Crawfis College where the score got to be pretty one sided.

“Pandora beat Crawfis 75 to 8,” recalls Reese. “That was the first year for an indoor game for them.”

The Pandora-Bluffton basketball rivalry dates to this early season. The first match between the two neighbors was played in Bluffton.

According to Hiram Huser, the game was played in the old skating rink on Cherry Street. The building was dismantled a few years ago and the space provides the town with a parking lot. The building stood to the east of Modern Cleaners in Bluffton.

Reese said Bluffton won the game and it was against Bluffton where Reese first played against anyone as tall as himself.

The photo shows the writing on the board in back of the players which reads “1915-1916 Putnam County Champions – Played 11, Lost 2.”

The team played in no tournaments that year, but Reese recalls the next year Pandora completed in a tournament.

The uniforms of this early squad were scarlet and grey. The school had no mascot or nickname.