

# Sentinel Scribe Finally Closing Scorebook

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There have been very few, if any, sports enthusiasts that have seen more Ottawa-Glandorf High School football and basketball games than Richard Laudick, publisher and editor of the Sentinel who is retiring Saturday.

In fact, since he started covering Putnam County League sports in 1948, he has seen hundreds of games, thousands of players and an unaccountable number of memorable events that would take days to put in ink.

Before finally marking that last out and closing the scorebook that stayed open some 37 years, the ol' sports scribe is leaving us with a few of his greatest remembrances.

When Richard Laudick began writing sports the PCL was a 13-member league. There were the current nine county high schools including Glandorf, Sts. Peter and Paul, Vaughnsville and Blanchard.

But it was not until two years later that he covered his first big event: Miller City winning the 1950 state basketball title.

Though it was 35 years ago, he still remembers. "Miller City was playing Eaton in the finals and Eaton stalled the entire game," he recalled. "And Miller city stayed in a zone. It was a slow game."

He concedes that the Wildcat club was a great team but felt that the Miller City teams of 1945 and 1946 had better personnel though did not advance to state.

As to the best team he ever saw come out of the county he says that's tough to answer. "There were so many good teams. The Leipsic teams of 1954, 1955 and 1956 when Bill Warren played had great teams. And the 1967 class at Ottawa-Glandorf that won three straight league championships was maybe the greatest."

"They lost only two games their senior year, both to Lima Senior," Laudick said. That second Lima loss came in the sectional tournament when the state had only two classes. "Butch Ruhe and Dan Ruhe, Larry Cox, Bill Croy and Dan Sager were on that team," he said. "And they were good in all sports."

He does not have to reflect long on what was his most memorable event - last year when Miller City won the state baseball title. "When Jeff Hermiller scored that winning run," he said, "he fell down rounding third base, got up and scored to win the game. For sheer drama that had to be it."

"And the two years Ottawa-Glandorf won the regionals at Bowling Green in 1977 and 1979. They really weren't expected win but they did."

He also recalls the lean years of OG basketball when in 1972 the team was carrying something like a 24-game losing streak and finally snapped it at Coldwater. "You'd thought we won the state championship," he said with a laugh.

It's tough for him to pick one great football team but he remembers the Columbus Grove teams of the 1950's. Under Coach Collin Stackhouse from 1948-1955 those teams went 42-12-2 including an undefeated string of 19 games from 1950-1952.

And track? "Pandora had great track teams in the 40's and then Columbus Grove took over in the 50's and 60's," he said. "Ottoville had some great teams after that. And Ottawa-Glandorf had some great teams in the 70's with Jeff Huggins and Harold Denhart. They were state runners-up in 1971 and state champs in 1972.

And great coaches? "There have a lot of great coaches and especially now since things have become so specialized," he said. "Dick Kortokrax, now at Kalida, is one and a coach who played for Lewis Heckman, a great coach at Ottoville."

And the greatest player? "That's impossible to say," he admitted. "There have been so many. I was in grade school but remember watching Stretch Goedde in Vaughnsville. Back then scoring ten points a game was high and he averaged around 29."

Does that Vaughnsville team compare to recent clubs? Laudick says may be not. "Vaughnsville had a fantastic team when Stretch played but it was a different style game then. It's so specialized now. The coaches and kids are better trained. That Vaughnsville team, if put on a court today, might get run off."

My boss is putting his pen down soon. His style was unique compared to other writers. He was straight forward and honest. He never wrote a story to make it cute or show favoritism that so many other sportswriters are guilty of. His style maybe did not win the hearts of many local coaches either, but again that's not the job of a good writer. It's to write facts and write it well. My boss did both.