

Legends of Columbus Grove

Max Hartman 1935 - 1938

Max played in an era when players were only recognized by the local newspapers and the Putnam County coaches. It was very common for these entities to put together All-Star teams following the Putnam County Tournament.

He was named to the All-Putnam County Tournament Teams for four years, 1935, 1936, 1937 and 1938.

In 1935, Columbus Grove, 14-9, placed 3rd in the PC Tournament.

In 1936, the Bulldogs, 9-9, finished 3rd in the PC Tournament.

In 1937, CG, 8-12, finished 2nd in the PC Tournament.

In 1938, Columbus Grove, 12-9, finished 4th in the PC Tournament.

Ben Baxter 1952 - 1954 1,165 Points

First C. Grove Player to Score 1,000 Points

Ben played in an era when players were only recognized by the local newspapers and the Putnam County coaches. It was very common for these entities to put together All-Star teams following the Putnam County Tournament.

Since there were no All-PCL Teams selected in 1952 or 1953 and CG lost its first PCT game in 1954, he did not receive any All-League awards in high school.

In 1952, Ben scored 293 points.

Columbus Grove, 22-4, won the PCL and placed 3rd in the Putnam County Tournament. The Bulldogs then won a Sectional and District Championship, but lost to Minster in the Regionals 52-40.

In 1953, he scored 527 points.

The Bulldogs, 23-3, won the Putnam County Tournament, but lost in the Sectionals to Archbold 76-57.

In 1954, Ben scored 345 points.

Columbus Grove, 15-4, lost the first Putnam County Tournament game to Ottawa Saints Peter and Paul 62-59.

For his career, Ben scored 1,165 points and the Bulldogs were 60-11.

Jerry Stechschulte 1959 - 1961 719 Points

Jerry played in an era when there were very few individual or local awards.

He began his varsity career at Columbus Grove in 1959 when he scored 84 points.

In 1960, he scored 211 points.

In 1961, Jerry scored 424 points. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, PCL Player of the Year and Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

For his career, Jerry scored 719 points. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 39-31.

Greg Verhoff 1970 - 1972 917 Points

Greg started his varsity career at Columbus Grove in 1970 when he scored 8 points.

In 1971 Greg scored 444 points. He was named 2nd Team All-PCL.

Columbus Grove, 12-9, won a Sectional Championship, but lost in the Districts to Crestview, 78-69.

In 1972, he scored 465 points. Greg was named 1st Team All-PCL, PCL Player of the Year and 3rd Team All-Ohio.

For his career, Greg scored 917 points. During his tenure, CG was 25-14.

Rich Kleman 1979 - 1981 1,084 Points

In 1979, Rich started playing varsity basketball at Columbus Grove when he scored 250 points with 159 rebounds.

In 1980, he scored 481 points with 322 rebounds. Rich was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC and 1st Team District 8.

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In 1981, Rich scored 353 points with 272 rebounds. He was named 2nd Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC, 1st Team District 8 and Special Mention Northwestern Ohio.

For his career, Rich scored 1,084 points with 753 rebounds.

Eric Fortman **1984 – 1986 1,079 Points**

Eric started his varsity basketball career at Columbus Grove in 1984 when he scored 263 points with 85 rebounds, 40 steals and 17 assists.

Columbus Grove, 20-3, won a PCL, NWC and Sectional Championship, but lost to Ottoville in the Districts, 60-49. Earlier in the season, CG had defeated Ottoville 74-71 in an epic EIGHT OVERTIME GAME!

In 1985, Eric had his best season when he scored 443 points with 147 rebounds, 83 steals and 20 assists. He was name 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC, 2nd Team District 8 and 3rd Team Northwestern Ohio.

In 1986, he scored 373 points with 127 rebounds, 44 steals and 25 assists. Eric was named 1st All-PCL, PCL Player of the Year, 1st Team NWC, 1st Team District 8 and 2nd Team Northwestern Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 19-4, won a NWC and Sectional Championship, but lost to Wayne Trace in the Districts 54-51.

For his career, Eric scored 1,079 points with 359 rebounds, 157 steals and 62 assists. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 54-13.

Blaine Maag **2002 – 2005 1,051 Points**

Blaine started his varsity career at Columbus Grove in 2002 when he scored 158 points with 60 rebounds, 13 steals and 25 assists.

In 2003, Blaine scored 341 points with 122 rebounds, 26 steals and 49 assists. He was named 1st Team All-NWC.

Columbus Grove, 6-17, won a Sectional Championship, but lost in the Districts to Delphos St. Johns, 56-31.

In 2004, he scored 323 points with 88 rebounds, 32 steals and 77 assists. Blaine was named 2nd Team All-PCL and 1st Team All-NWC.

The Bulldogs, 12-10, won a Sectional Championship, but lost in the Districts to Fort Jennings, 62-52.

In 2005, he scored 229 points with 68 rebounds, 23 steals and 97 assists. Blaine was named 2nd Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC and 2nd Team Northwestern Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 17-5, won a NWC and Sectional Championship, but lost in the Districts to Fort Jennings, 69-62.

For his career, Blaine scored 1,051 points with 338 rebounds, 94 steals and 248 assists.

Kyle Meyer **2004 – 2006 955 Points**

In 2004, Kyle started playing varsity basketball at Columbus Grove and scored 73 points with 73 rebounds.

Columbus Grove, 12-10, won a Sectional Championship, but lost in the Districts to Fort Jennings, 62-52.

In 2005, Kyle scored 335 points and pulled in 264 rebounds. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC, NWC Player of the Year, 1st Team District 8, Honorable Mention Northwestern Ohio and Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

The Bulldogs, 17-5, won a NWC and Sectional Championship, but lost to Fort Jennings in the Districts, 69-62.

In 2006, he scored 547 points and pulled in another 270 rebounds. Kyle was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC, NWC Player of the Year, 1st Team District 8, 1st Team Northwestern Ohio and 2nd Team All-Ohio.

He led the Bulldogs to a 21-6 record while winning a Sectional, District and Regional Championship. Columbus Grove lost to South Webster 83-65 in the State Finals.

For his career, Kyle scored 955 points with 607 rebounds. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 50-21.

After high school, Kyle attended Ohio Northern for four years 2007 – 2010. In 2010, Meyer was named to the 1st Team All-OAC for the second consecutive year, making him a three-time All-Conference selection. Kyle was named the Ohio Athletic-Conference Men's Basketball Player of the Year for 2009-2010.

He scored 1,216 points in his 90-game career.

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Following college, Kyle played semi-professional and professional basketball for five years. In 2012 and 2013, he played for the Lima Explosion averaging 17 and 34 points per game respectively. In 2014, Meyer played in the Professional Basketball League and was voted to the All-Premier Basketball League 2nd Team. In 2015 and 2016, he made the All-Midwest Premier Basketball League All-Star 1st Team while averaging 20 points per game. In 2016, he also was drafted by the Niagara River Lions, a member of the National Basketball League, one of the top professional basketball leagues in Canada.

Eric Maag **2004 – 2007 1,184 Points**

In 2004, Eric started playing varsity basketball at Columbus Grove when he scored 19 points.

In 2005, Eric scored 183 points.

The Bulldogs, 17-5, won a NWC and Sectional Championship, but lost to Fort Jennings in the District, 69-62.

In 2006, Eric scored 539 points with 84 rebounds, 61 steals and 78 assists. He was named 2nd Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC and 2nd Team District 8.

Columbus Grove, 21-6, won a Sectional, District and Regional Championship, but lost to South Webster in the State Finals 83-65.

In 2007, Eric scored 443 points with 88 rebounds, 44 steals and 66 assists. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, PCL Player of the Year, 1st Team All-NWC, 1st Team District 8 and Honorable Mention Northwestern Ohio. The Bulldogs, 13-9, won a Sectional Championship but lost to Fort Jennings in the Districts, 55-51.

For his career, Eric scored 1,184 points with over 200 rebounds, 125 steals and 175 assists. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 63-30.

Luke Kohls **2008 – 2011 1,006 Points**

Luke Kohls started his freshman year at Columbus Grove in 2008 when he scored 78 points.

In 2009, Luke scored 248 points with 48 rebounds, 40 steals and 27 assists.

In 2010, He scored 297 points with 186 rebounds, 54 steals and 36 assists. Luke was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team NWC, NWC Player of the Year and Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

In 2011, Luke scored 383 points with 202 rebounds, 58 steals and 60 assists. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, PCL Player of the Year, 1st Team All-NWC, NWC Player of the Year, 1st Team District 8 and Player of the Year, 1st Team Northwestern Ohio and Player of the Year and 1st Team All-Ohio and Player of the Year. What a fantastic season!

Columbus Grove, 21-2, won a PCL, NWC and Sectional Championship, but lost to Continental in the District Tournament, 49-40.

For his career, Luke scored 1,006 points with 450 rebounds, 152 steals and 123 assists. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 53-35.

After high school graduation, Luke took his basketball talents to Findlay University for four years, 2012-2015.

Connor Kohls **2010 – 2012 415 Points**

Connor started his varsity basketball career at Columbus Grove in 2010 when he scored 44 points.

In 2011, he scored 92 points with 13 rebounds, 10 steals and 9 assists.

Columbus Grove, 21-2, won a PCL, NWC and Sectional Championship, but lost to Continental in the Districts, 49-40.

In 2012, Connor scored 279 points with 84 rebounds, 49 steals and 117 assists. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, PCL Player of the Year, 2nd Team All-NWC, 1st Team District 8, 2nd Team Northwestern Ohio and Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 19-5, won a PCL and Sectional Championship, but lost in the Districts to Arlington, 51-44.

For his career, Connor scored 415 point. During his tenure, CG was 55-14.

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Will Vorhees

2012 – 2014 903 Points

Will Vorhees started playing varsity basketball for Columbus Grove in 2012 when he scored 98 points and pulled in 62 rebounds.

Columbus Grove, 19-5, won a PCL and a Sectional Championship, but lost to Arlington in the District Finals 51-44.

In 2013, Will scored 400 points with 193 rebounds. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC, 1st Team District 8, 2nd Team Northwestern Ohio and Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 17-8, won a Sectional Championship, but lost to Leipsic in the Districts, 66-59.

In 2014, he scored 405 points with 197 rebounds. Will was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC, 1st Team District 8, 2nd Team Northwestern Ohio and Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 14-10, won a Sectional Championship, but lost to Crestview in the Districts, 55-33.

For his career, Will scored 903 points with 452 rebounds. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 50-23.

After graduation, Will took his skills to Notre Dame College where he had one of the most extraordinary careers of any player from Putnam County.

He was named to the All-Atlantic Region Team three times. In 2016, he was 2nd Team and in 2017 and 2019 he was 1st Team.

Will was named 1st Team All-Mountain East Conference three times – 2016, 2017 and 2019.

He was named the Player of the Year in the Atlantic Region and Mountain East Conference in 2019.

He was a 2nd Team All-American in 2017 and 1st Team All-American in 2019.

Will scored 2,761 points and pulled down over 1,000 rebounds for his career. In 2019, he scored 30 points or more 14 times and 40 or more four times.

His number - #41 - was retired in 2019.

Jace Darbyshire

2012 – 2015 1,038 Points

Jace started his varsity basketball career at Columbus Grove in 2012 when he scored 6 points with 2 rebounds, 5 steals and 2 assists.

Columbus Grove, 19-5, won a PCL and Sectional Championship, but lost to Arlington in the District Finals, 51-44.

In 2013, he scored 180 points with 43 rebounds, 26 steals and 70 assists.

Columbus Grove, 17-8, won a Sectional Championship, but lost in the Districts to Leipsic 66-59.

In 2014, Jace scored 321 points with 60 rebounds, 44 steals and 69 assists. He was named 2nd Team All-PCL and Honorable Mention Northwestern Ohio.

The Bulldogs, 14-10, won a Sectional Championship, but lost to Crestview in the Districts, 65-34.

In 2015, he had his best season when he scored 531 points with 74 rebounds, 46 steals and 85 assists. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, PCL Player of the Year, 1st Team All-NWC, NWC Player of the Year, 1st Team District 8, 1st Team Northwestern Ohio and Special Mention All-Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 17-8, won a Sectional Championship, but lost to Delphos St. Johns in the Districts, 49-42.

For his varsity career, Jace scored 1,038 points with 179 rebounds, 121 steals and 226 assists. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 48-26.

Blake Reynolds

2018 – 2021 1,585 Points

Columbus Grove's #1 Scorer

Blake Reynolds started playing varsity basketball for Columbus Grove in 2018 when he scored 371 points with 159 rebounds, 23 steals and 50 assists. He was named 2nd Team All-PCL and 2nd Team District 8.

In 2019, Blake scored 330 points with 252 rebounds, 45 steals and 90 assists. He was named 1st All-PCL, 1st Team District 8 and Honorable Mention Northwestern Ohio.

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Columbus Grove, 19-6, won a Sectional and District Championship, but lost to Maumee VCD in the Regionals 58-48.

In 2020, he scored 433 points with 232 rebounds, 56 steals and 135 assists. Blake was named 1st Team All-PCL and Player of the Year, 1st Team District 8 and Player of the Year, 1st Team Northwestern Ohio and Player of the Year and 1st Team All-Ohio.

The Bulldogs, 26-0, won a PCL, Sectional and District Championship. CG also won its Regional Semi-Final game against Antwerp 55-50. Columbus Grove was scheduled to face Parkway in the Regional Championship game. However, the season was ended by the OHSAA due to the Corona Virus.

In 2021, Blake scored 451 points with 245 rebounds, 46 steals and 135 assists. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC and Player of the Year, 1st Team District 8, 1st Team Northwestern Ohio and 1st Team All-Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 25-3, won a Northwest Conference, Sectional, District and Regional Championship. The Bulldogs defeated Glenwood in the State Semi-Finals 58-53, but fell to Botkins in the State Championship game, 60-44.

For his career, Blake scored 1,585 points with 888 rebounds, 170 steals and 410 assists. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 81-23.

Tayt Birnesser **2018 – 2021 1,382 Points**

Tayt Birnesser started playing varsity basketball for Columbus Grove in 2018 when he scored 237 points with 89 rebounds, 18 steals and 21 assists.

In 2019, Tayt scored 368 points with 111 rebounds, 22 steals and 35 assists. He was named 2nd Team All-PCL, 2nd Team District 8 and Honorable Mention Northwestern Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 19-6, won a Sectional and District Championship, but lost to Maumee VCD in the Regionals 58-48.

In 2020, he scored 411 points with 138 rebounds, 48 steals and 48 assists. Tayt was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team District 8 and 3rd Team Northwestern Ohio.

The Bulldogs, 26-0, won a PCL, Sectional and District Championship. CG also won its Regional-Semi Final

game against Antwerp 55-50. Columbus Grove was scheduled to face Parkway in the Regional Championship game. However, the season was ended by the OHSAA due to the Corona Virus.

In 2021, Tayt scored 366 points with 97 rebounds, 29 steals and 39 assists. He was named 1st Team All-PCL, 1st Team All-NWC, 1st Team District 8, 2nd Team Northwestern Ohio and Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

Columbus Grove, 25-3, won a Northwest Conference, Sectional, District and Regional Championship. The Bulldogs defeated Glenwood in the State Semi-Finals 58-53, but fell to Botkins in the State Championship game, 60-44.

For his career, Tayt scored 1,382 points with 435 rebounds, 117 steals and 143 assists. During his tenure, Columbus Grove was 81-23.