

Leipsic High School Girls' Basketball Began in 1917

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Girls' sports have been a part of Leipsic High School's extracurricular activities for more years than most of us realize.

Information about the school's first girls' basketball team was furnished to us by Helen Preble.

During the 1917-1918 school year, Mr. Earl Edwards, Superintendent, called a meeting for every high school student who was interested in playing basketball. Nine girls expressed sufficient interest to form a girls' team that year, but of course there was a catch.

It was projected that monies in the amount of \$200 would be needed to be raised to fund the team – no small amount in that period of time – and it was up to the girls to raise the funds.

Playing space would be provided by putting the season on runners so that they could be moved out of the assembly room for each game.

The girls were determined and divided into teams of two to canvas the streets of Leipsic assigned to them to seek donations

Mrs. Preble reminisces that she and Ruth Parker were partners in the fundraising effort and were assigned the south side of Main Street from the bank to the west end.

"The president of the School Board was Dr. Fogle," she recalls. "His office was

upstairs over Stech's Clothing Store. We decided we would ask him first. He signed his name and gave us \$20 toward the cause.

"We let everyone see that. We collected a few fives and many ones. When we came to Sol Smith, he looked over the list and said if Doc Fogle could give \$20, so could he. That was our last stop."

The group collected the money - \$200 - and they played ball.

Mrs. Preble recalls that she was the only freshman to play on that first girls' team of 1917-1918 and played all four years of high school.

Others on Leipsic High School's first girls' team were Ruth Parker, Hazel Farnsworth, Opal Alder, Hazel Pfister, Edna George, Dorothy Kuntz, Eliza Casteel and Cecil Hickerson. They were coached by Miss Lila Bird.

Players and subs forming the teams of the 1918-1919, 1919-1920 and 1920-1921 school years were Cecil Hickerson, Helen Straley, Helen Slaybaugh, Helen Starling, Eliza Casteel, Dorothy Cruikshank, Charlotte, Zahrend and Helen Preble.

During the 1916-1917 school year, there are newspaper reports in the Leipsic Free Press with accounts for five basketball games for the girls with Earl Harmon as the Coach.