

History of the Basketball Gymnasiums for Ottoville High School 1919 to Today

The first newspaper accounts of Ottoville basketball were in 1919 when the Big Green, coached by Louis W. Heckman, played three games with Delphos St. Johns. From 1919-1922, games were played on the top floor of a local tavern, the North Side Inn and later in the Parish Hall.

The team was disbanded from 1923-1925 because they were no longer permitted to play in the Parish Hall. In an interview, Coach Heckman once commented that “some women were afraid that ten boys were going to break down the floor, although 200 persons were allowed to square dance on it at a time.”

GYMNASIUM #2 1926 - 1956

This was a very small gym that was later converted into a cafeteria. It had a running track around it which made it VERY difficult to shoot from the corners. Mary Catherine Heckman and Agnes Archdeacon, daughters of Coach Heckman, stated that “the floor was made from a macadam type material that was very porous. During one game with Delphos there was so much moisture on the floor that they started the game in Ottoville, but had to take the remainder of the game to finish play in Delphos.”

This gym was used for 31 years from 1926-1956. The floor dimensions were 42 x 64. It had bleacher seating and standing room for those on the running track. The gym’s capacity was 500.

GYMNASIUM #3 1957 - 2003

This gym was dedicated in November of 1956 and the first home game was on November 21 when Ottoville defeated Kalida 55-47. The Big Green, coached by Jerome Moenter, was led by Jerry Pohlman’s 18 points.

This gym was used for 47 years, 1957-2003 and is still in use. It was purchased and is maintained by the Catholic church. The floor dimensions are 50 x 82. It has bleacher seats on one side and a stage with bleachers on the opposite side. The seating capacity is 1,161.

CURRENT GYM #4 2004 to Today

The current gym was dedicated on November 16, 2003 and named after the legendary Coach Louis W. Heckman. The first girls’ game was on November 29 when the Big Green, coached by Dave Kleman, lost to Van Wert 49-38. The first boys’ game was on December 3 when Ottoville, coached by Tom VonSossan, beat Cory Rawson 53-35.

The floor dimensions for this gym are 50 x 84. It has bleacher seats on both sides with a seating capacity of 1,506.

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