

Greatest Players in Putnam County

Who was the best girls' basketball player ever in Putnam County? Could the best players of the 1970's compete with today's best? How would Carol Lammers of Miller City or Char Smith of Continental compete against Karla Wenzlick of Ottoville or Kadie Hempfling of Ottawa-Glandorf?

Girls' basketball can be separated into two distinct periods. The girls' game from 1914-1940 was very different from today's game. Each team consisted of six players, three on offense and three on defense. Each set of girls would play on their end of the court. Basically, the girls were playing a three on three, half-court game with a jump ball after every basket.

From 1965-1975, girls' basketball was played as it is today. It was run under an organization called GAA which stood for Girls' Athletic Association. This was mainly for intramural games of different sports such as badminton, basketball, track, softball, etc. Later, when the schools started playing each other, it was changed to GIA which stood for Girls' Interscholastic Association.

The girls started playing under the complete authority of the OHSAA in the school year of 1975-1976 and has continued in this fashion to this day.

The modern girls' game has changed just like the boys for many of the same reasons, bigger, stronger and quicker. In the beginning, many of the girls' teams played only zones and a half court game. It was a slower and not a very aggressive game. Not today. Watching a girls' game today mirrors the boys' game much more than it did in the 1970's.

Another change in girls' basketball is the gender of the coaches. An article in the Bulletin on Athletics in High School in 1930 stated that "Girls' teams should be coached by women only because men do not realize the limitation of girls and cannot discuss health problems frankly with girls".

In 1930 in Putnam County, only three of the girls' teams were coached by women versus five were by men.

In 1976, eight of the nine Putnam County coaches were women. Harlan Basinger of Pandora-Gilboa was the only male coach.

In 2023, ALL of the girl's coaches were men.

I have selected the legendary players from the schools of Putnam County based on the following.

Any player who was named as the PCL Player of the Year or scored 1,000 or more points was automatically selected.

Another important factor was if a player was honored by such groups as the PCL, BVC, NWC, District 8 Coach's Association, Newspapers of Northwestern Ohio and the All-Ohio selections.

Some players were good high school players, but really developed at the college level and a few at the professional level. These athletes were also recognized.

From 1925-1940, the county newspapers would list the all-county players at the end of the season for most of the years. Sometimes these would be called All-PCL players and sometimes All-PCT players. These would be selected by the coaches, the newspaper sport's editors and in earlier years, by "knowledgeable basketball fans".

From 1977 to the present, the selection process for All-League Players, Player of the Year and Coach of the Year has been the same – coaches do the voting.

If you feel any players have been omitted from this list, please contact me and I will take a look at their qualifications.