

Dragons Leave No Doubt Who's Putnam County's Best in '61

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Glandorf's Dragons left no doubt that they are the undisputed kings of basketball in Putnam County for 1961 when they waltzed through three games in the county tournament almost effortlessly winding up with a 55-43 conquest of Ft. Jennings in the championship game last Saturday night.

Playing before a crowd of nearly 1,800 at Delphos St. John's gymnasium, the Dragons stopped a team which had been beaten only by Ayersville, the top-ranked Class A team in the state, since Christmas. Ft. Jennings' loss was its second in its last 11 starts and only its sixth in 22 games this season.

It has been a long wait for the people of Glandorf to put their imprint into the annals of basketball in Putnam County. Before this year, the Dragons had never won a championship in either the league or the tournament.

Only once before, in 1939, did Glandorf make it into the championship game. They had one of the best teams in the county that year, but lost the tournament title when three starters came down with the flu.

THIS YEAR there was little doubt that the veteran crew was it. It looked dark for a while after they were upset by Columbus Grove in their opening league game. They never made it to the top of the league until they defeated co-champion Miller City on January 27.

When they avenged their Columbus Grove loss with a 76-50 victory in the second round of the tournament, the Dragons had beaten every other team in the county.

Glandorf, which put down Kalida, 61-51, in last Friday's semi-finals at Ottoville, finished the tournament with a record of only three losses and 20 victories. They go into the Cory-Rawson Sectional with a nine-game winning streak.

AS IT HAS been all season, it was a well-rounded team effort for the charges of Coach Tom Weber in the championship game. Although Jennings had the Dragons down a little on size, it was a scrappy fight when the going got tough that meant the difference in favor of Glandorf.

If there was any individual hero on the club, it would have to be a sub, junior Bill Fischer, who came into the game during the third period and in the fourth round. He scored nine of Glandorf's last 10 points to keep them out in front

when Jennings threatened to rally. Fischer teamed with his brother, Dick, to keep possession of the ball and eat up valuable time to put down any last ditch, determined effort by the fighting Musketeers.

Bernard Nienberg, with 12 points, was Glandorf's high scorer. It was his three-point play in the last minute of the first quarter which put Glandorf ahead to stay and he added eight points in the second to give them a wide margin which they never relinquished.

Glandorf's three big boys, Jack Nienberg, Bill Goecke and Mel Verhoff, did a good night's work under the boards. Nienberg scored three buckets in the first quarter to keep Glandorf in the game when Jennings had its best effort of the game. Verhoff hit five crucial points in the third quarter while Goecke was a thorn in the Jennings side all night as he contributed a total of 11 points.

It was a sub who stood out for Jennings also. Junior Ken Klima came off the bench in the second quarter and he finished the game with 13 points. Ken Schroeder came through with 12.

IT MIGHT HAVE been a different game had Jennings' Ed Michel been able to hit. Michel dunked three buckets in the first quarter but then he had a run of bad luck. He missed 12 shots in a row after that. All of them were good shots that just rolled off the rim.

The Musketeers led most of the first quarter. Dick Fischer opened the scoring with a bucket for Glandorf, but Michel hit immediately for the Jennings five to tie it up. Fischer followed with a free throw and Jack Nienberg goaled. Another free throw by Verhoff gave the Dragons a 6-2 edge.

Then Jennings scored seven straight points on a free toss by Ken Miehls and goals by Michel, Miehls and Schroeder to put them ahead 9-6. Nienberg scored from underneath for the champs and with 3:50 left in the quarter, Goecke got his first bucket to put Glandorf back on top 10-9.

The lead was short-lived, however, as Harold Schimmoeller, Don Meyer and Schroeder goaled in rapid order for the Muskies. Goecke scored again for Glandorf and, with 1:16 on the clock, Nienberg hit another to tie the score at 14-14.

Miehls converted a free throw to make it 15-14 for Jennings, but this was the last time they were ever in the lead.

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The clock showed 31 seconds left in the opening period when Bernard Nienberg picked up his first goal to put the Dragons out in front for good. He was fouled on the shot and converted his free toss. The score stood at 17-15 when the quarter ended.

A MINUTE AND a half went by in the second quarter without a score. Then Verhoff hit a free toss for Glandorf. Schroeder goaled to cut the lead to one point, but Bernard Nienberg was quick to get that one back for the Dragons. The margin was cut to one once more as Schimmoeller hit two charity tosses, but then Glandorf hit six in a row and they were fairly safe the rest of the way.

Verhoff and Bernie Nienberg each goaled and the latter came through with a pair of free tosses to make it 26-19 before Jennings scored again on two free throws by Klima. Another goal by Nienberg plus Dick Fischer's two free tosses made it 30-21 for Glandorf. Just before the first half ended, Klima goaled again to make it 30-23 at intermission.

Bernard Nienberg got his last points of the game on a free throw just after the second half got under way. After Klima retaliated with a goal, the Dragons opened the gap to 10 points on a goal by Verhoff and free tosses by Verhoff and Jack Nienberg.

Schroeder goaled for Ft. Jennings and then Glandorf got two buckets by Goecke and Verhoff to give them a 39-27 lead, their widest until the end of the game.

AT THIS POINT the tide turned for a while in favor of the Musketeers as they cut the lead to four points by the end of the quarter.

Schroeder goaled and Klima and Michel each hit free tosses. Goecke hit for Glandorf, but Miehl's got it back for the Musketeers. Klima, hit two buckets a minute apart to cut the Glandorf lead to 41-37 with 50 seconds left in the third round and that's where the period ended.

Klima hit again just as the final stanza got under way and the Dragons led only 41-39, but they put the clamps on the big Jennings sub and held him scoreless from there on as the breaks started going their way once more.

Sub John Schroeder and Goecke each scored to give Glandorf a 45-39 lead. Miehl's goaled for the Musketeers, but this was where Jim Fischer went to work.

He goaled and was fouled on the shot, converting his free toss to make it 48-41. Goecke hit another free toss a minute later and with two minutes left in the game, Fischer was dribbling to kill the clock and was fouled as Jennings attempted to break it. This cost them another two points and the score was 51-41. A few seconds later, Fischer was fouled once more and the Dragons had their 12-point lead back.

IN THE LAST minute, Schroeder goaled for Jennings, but Fischer made up for this with another one-and-one conversion and the game ended 55-43.

Ten points of Glandorf's margin came at the free-throw line when they converted 19 of 28 tries, while Jennings made good on nine of 17. Both teams took 55 shots from the floor. Glandorf hitting 18 and Jennings 17. This gave the Dragons a 32.7% and the Musketeers 30.9%.

Jennings was in foul trouble entering the second half, but did not lose a player. Coach Dick Kortokrax pulled both Schroeder and Schimmoeller for a while after they picked up their fourth personals. Miehl's and Klima each finished with three.

Glandorf's Jack Nienberg was the only player to go out with five fouls, but this was not until there was only 39 seconds left to be played and the victory was assured. Verhoff sat out for a while with four. No other Dragons were in trouble.

There were 14 fouls called on the champs and 18 on Ft. Jennings.

Ft. Jennings

Schroeder – 6/14 0/0 12 4. Michel – 3/16 1/5 7 2. Schimmoeller – 0/3 3/4 3 4. Miehl's – 3/7 2/3 8 3. Meyer – 0/2 0/1 0 2. VonSossan 0/2 0/0 0 0. Klima – 5/11 3/4 13 3. Shilling – 0/0 0/0 0 0.

Total – 17/55 9/17 43 18.

Glandorf

Verhoff – 3/15 3/5 9 4. Goecke – 5/13 1/5 11 2. J. Nienberg – 3/7 1/2 7 5. D. Fischer – 1/8 3/3 5 1. B. Nienberg – 4/9 4/5 12 1. Duling – 0/0 0/0 0 1. B. Fischer – 1/2 7/8 9 0. Schroeder – 1/1 0/0 2 0.

Totals – 18/55 19/28 55 14.

Fort Jennings	15	8	14	6	43
Glandorf	17	13	11	14	55