

# Kalida Prances to 1<sup>st</sup> Tourney Championship without Effort

**Wildcats Roll Over Rockets 62 - 48**

**Putnam County Sentinel – February 26, 1963**

Armed with the knowledge that they might possibly never have another chance, the Kalida Wildcats waltzed through four easy victories in the Putnam County basketball tournament to pick up the first championship for their school in the 40-year history of the event.

The tall and talented Wildcat crew did it with little effort and they beat an upstart Pandora-Gilboa team in the finals Saturday night in one of the most lopsided championship games in recent years by a score of 62-48. It could have been by 30-points if Coach Tom Kurry would have elected to keep his regulars in the game all the way.

The P-G Rockets were a team which everyone thought would never win a tournament game. They finished in seventh place in the 10-team league, but came off with a surprising 33-30 victory over co-champions Miller City in their first game and then squeezed out a 36-35 win over Columbus Grove in the semi-finals on Friday night.

Meanwhile, Kalida's closest game was against Glandorf, who they beat by 11 points in the tournament opener, 55-46. They then went on to wallop last-place Continental 78-57 in the second round and took Leipsic by a 62-50 score in the semi-finals.

KALIDA HAS been in the thick of the tournament race almost annually since 1953. This marked the eighth time in the last 11 tournaments that the Wildcats reached the semi-finals. Usually having to settle for third place, they were able to play in the finals in 1957 and 1958, but were downed by Ft. Jennings and Miller City in those years.

Their only other threat came in 1945 when they also met Pandora for the title and Pandora won it that year.

This is the first time since the Pandora-Gilboa consolidation that the Rockets were in the title go. Pandora never got that far again since 1945, but the Blanchard (Gilboa) school was runner-up in 1949. Blanchard never won the championship while Pandora had only the one to its name.

With Kalida's victory on Saturday night, every school in the county now has earned at least one title.

The championship game matched two entirely different styles of basketball and Kalida's run and shoot tactics were clearly much more effective than Pandora-Gilboa's defensive, deliberate style of ball. The Wildcats were the

county's highest scoring team during the season, while the Rockets were the lowest scoring. Pandora-Gilboa, however, had by far the best defensive record while Kalida's defense was third best in the county.

BUT IT WAS Kalida's offense which dominated play on Saturday, as the smaller Rockets were unable to contain them. P-G held half of their previous 20 opponents to 40 points or less this year. When the two met during the season, Kalida beat them only 24-21.

That was just about the score at halftime in Saturday's final. The Rockets were able to stay in contention until the last minute of the first half, but then during the next four minutes of play, the Wildcats poured through 15 straight points and it was no contest from there on.

The game was a good warm-up for Monday's foul shooting contest as a total of 59 free throws were shot during the game and most of Kalida's winning margin came at the foul stripe. The Wildcats took 37 free tosses and made 28, while Pandora-Gilboa made a near-perfect 18 of 22. They made their first 10 without a miss. Kalida outscored them from the floor by just two baskets.

Neither team was exceptionally hot from the field. In fact, they were pretty cold during the first half. In the first two periods, the Wildcats made only five buckets out of 25 tries for 20 per cent. P-G also made five of 23 for 21.7 percent. Both did better after intermission. For the game, Kalida shot 52 times, making 17 for 32.7 percent while the Rockets made 15 of 55 tries for 27.3 percent.

The scrappy P-G squad gave it all they had during the first half. In those first two periods, the score was tied seven times and the lead was exchanged nine times.

PANDORA DREW first blood when Neil Esmonde sank a free throw, but Denny Potts produced the first tie by converting one for Kalida. Two minutes were gone before big Jim Burgei got the game's first field goal and put Kalida ahead for the first time.

Dave Basinger goaled for the Rockets, but once more Potts put Kalida ahead with another bucket. Esmonde converted twice from the line to make it 5-5, but then Kalida sank three straight free tosses, two by Jim Williams and another

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by Jim Gerdeman to give Kalida the biggest lead of the first quarter, 8-5.

Doug Reichenbach, the game's highest scorer with 20 points, got the first goal and, with 18 seconds left in the period, Basinger scored again from out in front to put P-G on top 9-8 at the quarter rest.

The first eight points of the second quarter were all scored at the foul line. First Williams sank a pair for Kalida and then Basinger made two for P-G. Potts dunked two more for Kalida and Eddie Diller did likewise for the Rockets as the score see-sawed.

Midway in the period, Burgei put in a rebound and sophomore sub, Gerry Rieman, pushed in another goal to put Kalida on top 16-13. Reichenbach got two of those back from the foul line and,

with 3:50 showing on the clock, Basinger put the Rockets back in the lead at 17-16 with their first field goal of the quarter.

Gerdeman connected from the floor for Kalida and Burgei put them two-up with a free toss.

With 1:55 left in the half, Gene Reichenbach hit from the side to tie the score at 19-19, but that was as long as the Rockets could keep up.

THE CLOCK showed 1:06 when Rieman converted a free throw to put Kalida ahead for good. Then, in the last minute of the period, they converted four more free tosses, two by Gerdeman and two by Williams. This gave the Wildcats a 24-19 halftime margin.

During the first half, Kalida made 14 out of 19 free throws, while the Rockets made nine without a miss.

Kalida roared out like a bunch of made Wildcats after halftime. They made their first five field goal attempts without a miss, while Pandora-Gilboa missed seven before connecting.

In the first 90 seconds, Gerdeman, Burgei and Tom Hark all hit from the floor to give the Wildcats an 11-point spread and in the next two minutes they added two more by Potts and Hark to make it 34-19 before the Rockets were able to score again. Doug Reichenbach's goal with 4:54 remaining finally broke the ice for the Rockets, but for all practical purposes, the game was over.

Burgei, who carries Kalida's hopes for another excellent season next year, dunked three more points and before the

quarter was over, he made six more to give him 11 of his 17 in that round.

The Wildcats continued to pour it on. They led 47-31 at the three-quarter post and built up a 20-point lead at 55-35 with 3:55 still to go in the game.

It was then that Coach Kurry started putting his regulars on the bench, although he had made several substitutions earlier.

THE KALIDA subs were unable to do much scoring from the field against the stubborn Rockets defense but they still kept adding free throws. Nine of Kalida's last points were scored at the charity stripe.

Pandora whittled away at the margin, but Kalida was too far out in front to make much of a threat. They came within 12 points, 59-47, in the last two minutes but by that time almost a third of the packed house at Delphos St. John's gym had already put on their coats and gone home.

The victory was the sixth straight for Kalida and seemed to put them back on the right track after they seemed to be slipping towards the end of the season.

Kalida, which was deprived of an undisputed league championship when they lost to Columbus Grove on February 1, barely got past lowly Bluffton and beat Leipsic only by two point on the Kalida floor in their last game of the season. They have now amassed an excellent record of 20 victories and three defeats.

Their only two other losses besides to Grove were to Celina Immaculate Conception on November 28 and to Delphos St. John in Delphos Holiday Tournament.

Pandora-Gilboa still has a losing record, having won 10 and losing 11.

### Kalida

Burgei – 6/12 5/8 17 1. Potts – 3/8 3/3 9 1. Williams – 1/6 9/10 11 2. Gerdeman – 4/12 6/7 14 2. Hark – 2/5 0/0 4 4. Rieman – 1/4 4/7 6 3. Hoffman 0/4 0/0 0 0. Warnecke – 0/0 1/2 1 1. Piescher – 0/1 0/0 0 1.

Totals – 17/52 28/37 62 15.

### Pandora-Gilboa

G. Reichenbach – 4/12 1/2 9 3. D. Reichenbach – 7/19 6/6 20 3. Esmonde – 0/7 3/3 3 2. Basinger – 3/13 2/2 8 4. Diller – 0/1 2/2 2 5. J. Reichenbach – 0/0 1/1 1 2. Stall – 1/2 2/2 4 1. Gratz – 0/0 0/0 0 1. B. Velasquez – 0/1 0/1 0 2. O. Velasquez – 0/0 1/2 1 0. Pierman – 0/0 0/1 0 0.

Totals – 15/55 18/22 48 23

Kalida	8	16	23	15	62
Pandora-Gilboa	9	10	12	17	48