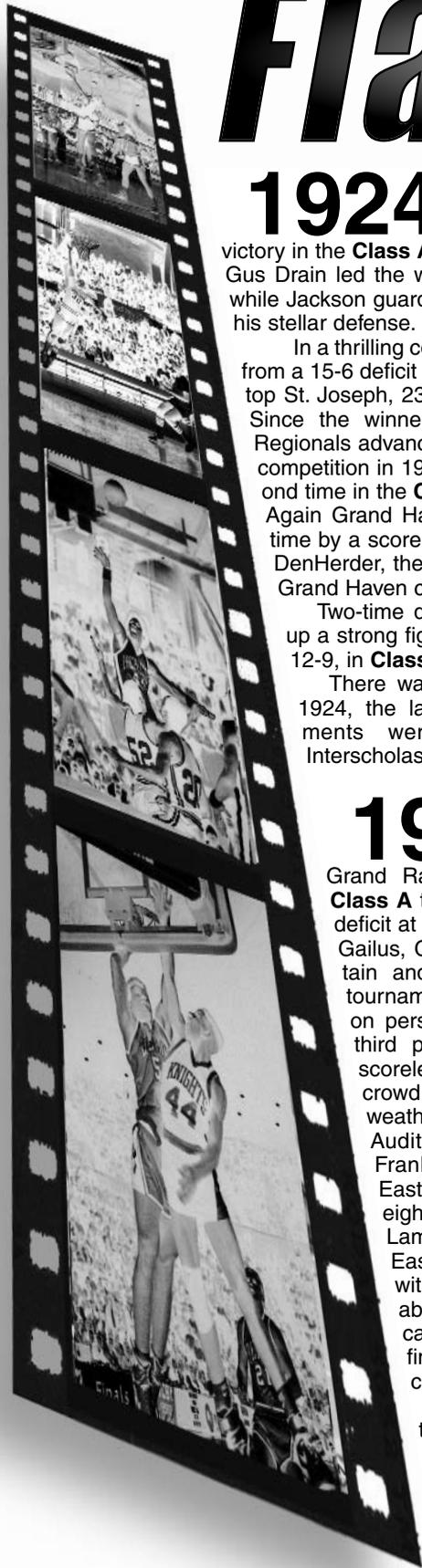


Finals Flashbacks



1924 Jackson overcame an early Detroit Southeastern lead to score a 17-11 victory in the **Class A** Final at Ann Arbor. Forward Gus Drain led the winners with three field goals, while Jackson guard Roy Jagnow was praised for his stellar defense.

In a thrilling comeback, Grand Haven rallied from a 15-6 deficit at the end of three quarters to top St. Joseph, 23-22, in a Regional title game. Since the winner and the runner-up of the Regionals advanced to the Final round of state competition in 1924, the two teams met a second time in the **Class B** Final at East Lansing. Again Grand Haven emerged victorious, this time by a score of 14-9. Led by captain Fred DenHerder, the win marked the first of seven Grand Haven cage crowns.

Two-time defending champion Holly put up a strong fight before falling to Reed City, 12-9, in **Class C** at East Lansing.

There was no Class D tournament in 1924, the last season the state tournaments were run by the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Association.

1934 Lansing Eastern defeated Grand Rapids Union, 21-19, for the **Class A** title, rebounding from a 19-13 deficit at the end of three quarters. Joe Gailus, Grand Rapids Union's co-captain and leading scorer during the tournament, was forced from the floor on personal fouls at the end of the third period, and Union was held scoreless the rest of the way. A crowd of 4,500 fans braved adverse weather to attend the Final at Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids. Franklin "Bud" Lamb paced Eastern, with five of the team's eight points in the final frame. Lamb tied with Russ Thompson of Eastern for high scoring honors, with eight points. While Gailus' absence hurt, Union failed to capitalize on free throws in the final four minutes of play that could have won the game.

Grand Haven jumped out to a 12-2 lead in the first quarter, then coasted to a 33-14 triumph over Ypsilanti Central in **Class B**. It was the sixth championship in 10 years for Coach Gus Cohrs and the

Blue and Gold. Forward Charles Dirkse and center Jim Richards led the winners with 10 points each.

In **Class C**, a fourth-quarter rally fell short as St. Clair dropped a 27-22 decision to heavily favored Holland Christian. John Zwier, 6-5 center from Christian, led all scorers with 11 points, including a number of tip-ins.

The opening contest of the day's four-game fray produced the biggest upset, as tight defense and balanced scoring led Maple Rapids to an 18-11 victory over Ann Arbor St. Thomas in **Class D**. The winners of nine consecutive District titles and six Regionals, Maple Rapids had never advanced to the Finals. Berkhusen paced the victors with six points.

In Upper Peninsula action, Ishpeming, under the guidance of the legendary coach Clairmont "C.C." Watson downed Crystal Falls, 25-12, for the **U.P. Class B** crown before a crowd of 1,200 at Northern State Teachers College in Marquette. Kemp paced the winners with seven points.

Scoring five unanswered points to open the fourth quarter, Vulcan grabbed a 24-22 lead, but could not hold off the steady attack of Gwinn, falling to the Modeltowners, 32-25, in **U.P. Class C** play.

LaCount, a flashy center from Alpha, scored 24 points as the Mastodons crushed Michigamme, 34-9, for their second successive **U.P. Class D** title. In the 1960s the Alpha school district consolidated with schools from the villages of Amasa, and Crystal Falls to form Crystal Falls Forest Park.

1944 A causality of war in 1943, the boys tournaments returned to the sports landscape in both the Upper and Lower Peninsula in the spring of 1944. Saginaw Arthur Hill's 6-2 center, Dick Rifenburg, notched 24 points, including 17 in the second half, as the undefeated Lumberjacks upended Kalamazoo Central, 44-39, for the **Class A** crown before a capacity crowd of more than 5,500 at the Boys Vocational Fieldhouse in Lansing. Considered Michigan's best basketball prospect in 20 years, (and still one of the state's all-time great cagers), Rifenburg spent his younger years in Kalamazoo before his family moved to Saginaw, and knew many of his opponents. In another twist, Kalamazoo Central coach Mac Johnson had played for Arthur Hill coach Bill Kelly several years earlier when Johnson was an athlete at Cass City.

In **Class B**, Ralph Bennett's two baskets in overtime gave Marshall a 34-32 come-from-behind conquest of Traverse City in the day's most thrilling matchup. Trailing 30-28, TC substitute Bill Crawford sent the game to OT with a bucket at the buzzer. Bennett finished with 13 points. Jubilant Marshall fans poured onto the floor following their team's victory, and in the process, ran over winning coach Bruce Gray. Ruffled and somewhat bruised, Gray



Associated Press Photo

Lofton & Rouge

smiled anyway for the trophy presentation.

Equaling what was then a record for high score in a Final, Lansing St. Mary trampled Cass City, 50-23, in **Class C**. Jim Pizzo led the winners with 13 points, while teammate Joseph Hedden added 10. One oddity of this game was that the usually accurate St. Mary bounce passes wandered off in all directions – until the officials found that the ball was lopsided by being only partially inflated.

Leroy suffered its first loss in 24 contests, a 31-25 defeat at the hands of Benton Harbor St. John in **Class D**. Forward George Wilson led St. John with 15 points.

In U.P. tournament action at Ishpeming, Bob Rabquette tallied 25 points as Escanaba downed Negaunee, 54-45, for the **Class B** crown.

Bob Hockings netted the game-winner with 20 seconds remaining as Crystal Falls successfully defended its **U.P. Class C** title, edging Gladstone, 32-31, in a nail-bitter. Paine notched 21 points for Gladstone to lead all-scorers.

A big third quarter allowed Channing to squeak past Rock, 39-36, in **U.P. Class D** action.

Amasa rallied for a 51-43 comeback win over Cedarville in **Class E** play. Cedarville roared out to a 19-8 first-quarter lead, and then shot with reckless abandon, allowing Coach Gerhardt Gollackner's Hemitites to cut the lead to 19-14 at the end of the quarter, then overtake Cedarville at the half, 37-27. Palm netted 18 to lead the Amasa attack.

1954 After three visits to the MHSAA Semifinals, Muskegon Heights grabbed its first-ever title with a 43-41 overtime win over Flint Northern at Jenison Field House in East

Lansing in **Class A**. Tied at 41 at the end of regulation, the Vikings opted to hold the ball for nearly three minutes of the extra period, after the Tigers missed two shots following the opening tip-off. But as Viking guard Bob Failing drove in for the final shot, he was called for a charging foul. Under the rules of the time, Murt Johnson of the Heights stepped to the line, and calmly sank two free throws for the only points of OT. Future University of Michigan star M.C. Burton scored 22 points to pace the Heights.

After visits to the MHSAA Finals in 1949 and 1951, Coach Lofton Greene found that the third time was indeed the charm, as River Rouge pressed, pestered and ran past a much taller Holland Christian team, 56-53, in **Class B**. Christened the "Mighty Mites" due to their small stature, the victors were led by Jack Belken and Blanche Martin in the contest. Greene, who passed away last July at the age of 84, led the Panthers to 12 Class B titles between 1954 and 1972.

Heavily favored Lansing St. Mary rolled to its first **Class C** title since 1944 with a 60-28 pounding of Marine City. St. Mary all-state junior Ralph Coleman led all scorers with 21 points. According to press reports, "the prayers of half of the members of St. Mary's church were answered" on the Monday following the title game, when Mary Lapka, wife of St. Mary's coach Len Lapka, gave birth to a 6-pound, 9-ounce baby boy. Mrs. Lapka was due on the Tuesday before the Finals, but half the members of the Lansing-area church "said prayers that (the baby) would come late so that Mary could see her husband's team play through the tournament."

Held to a single field goal in the

Semifinals, Gobles 6-6 center Don Gilchrist exploded for 20 points as the Tigers trounced Remus, 56-28, in **Class D**. Remus was crippled by the absence of all-state forward Bob Rhode, who was injured in Friday's Semifinal match.

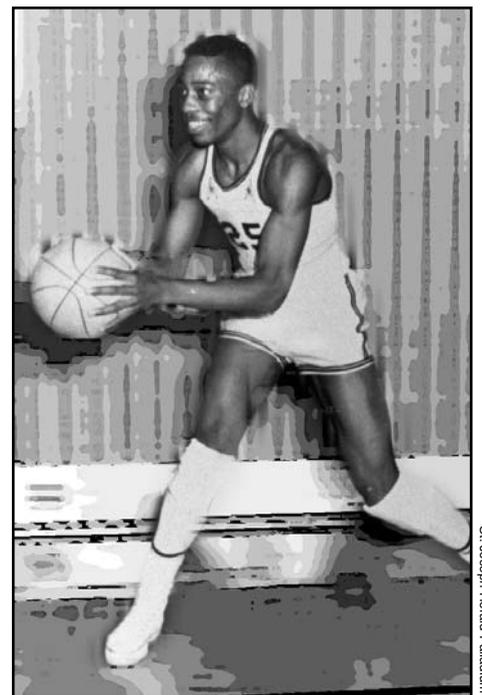
The U.P. **Class E** title game was won by Alpha, 52-48, over Perkins. It was the first title for the Mastodons since 1950, and the last of its five crowns in the history of the Class E tournament.

1964 The Benton Harbor offense ignited for 32

fourth-quarter points, en route to a 78-73 win over Detroit Northern, ending an MHSAA title drought that dated to 1941. A crowd of 12,487 packed Jenison Field House for this **Class A** thriller. Trailing 37-27 at the half and 65-61 midway through the fourth, the Tiger eruption was led by junior L.C. Bowen, who netted 15 points in the final frame. Tony Ashman topped Benton Harbor with 28 points, while Bowen finished with 25. On three occasions in the previous decade, the Tigers had made it to the dance, but came away empty-handed. Northern's Bill Tally, a 6-0 junior guard, finished the game with 34 points, the second-highest total in the history of the Class A tournament at the time. The game marked the retirement of longtime Northern coach Eddie Powers.

Willie Betts of River Rouge earned the distinction of becoming the first (and only) player in Michigan history to be a part of four MHSAA championship basketball teams, as the Panthers grabbed the fourth of five consecutive **Class B** crowns with a 86-67 win over Lakeview. Fred Hudson led the Panthers in scoring with 31 points. The victory marked Coach Lofton Greene's 100th tournament win.

Coach Eddie Lauer celebrated his 25th



St. Joseph Herald-Examiner

TRAVIS CONLAN



Gary Shook, Otsego

season at Grosse Pointe St. Paul with a 53-39 triumph over Byron Center in **Class C**. St. Paul's 6-7 center Bob Martin and all-state guard Jimmy Bigham set the tempo scoring 23 and 21 points, respectively.

Despite a 32-point, record-tying performance by Baraga's Larry Kangas, the Upper Peninsula squad could not overcome the distinct height advantage held by defending **Class D** champion Britton-Macon, falling 79-57. Veri Sanch led the winners with 26 points, followed by Phil Benedict with 21. Kangas' point total matched the Class D Finals record set by Maple City Glen Lake's John Laskey in 1959.

1974

Trailing Detroit Cass Tech by as many as 11 points early in the **Class A** title game, Birmingham Brother Rice emerged with a 60-56 overtime victory at historic Jenison Field House in the last Finals played at that building. The heroics were provided by Rice's Jim MacGuidwin, who nailed a 20-foot field goal in the final seconds of regulation to force overtime. The 6-6 guard then scored the first bucket of the extra frame to give the Warriors a 56-54 lead they never relinquished.

Muskegon Heights jumped out to a 21-20 halftime lead, and worked its deliberate offense to a 52-44 victory over previously unbeaten Holt in **Class B**. Michael Smith led the winners with 18 points, while Jeff Tropf registered 20 points for the Rams. The victory was especially sweet for Heights' coach Ossie McCarty, who

became one of the few individuals to win a cage title as a player, then return to coach his alma mater to the crown. McCarty was a starter on the Tigers' 1956 and 1957 **Class A** championship squads.

Junior Bill Harris fired in 33 points, including 22 in the second half, to lead Bay City All Saints to a 71-59 win over Detroit Servite in the **Class C** title game. The victory marked the first title for veteran coach Russell (Lefty) Franz.

In **Class D**, Pat Gallagher scored 24, including six of seven from the charity stripe, while teammate Len Lillard pulled down 18 rebounds as Ann Arbor St. Thomas rolled to a 68-53 victory over Harbor Springs.

1984

Flint Northwestern became the first school to win MHSAA girls and boys basketball titles in the same season with its 64-43 triumph over Detroit Southwestern in **Class A** at Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor. Senior Jeff Grayer scored 27 points and sophomore Glen Rice added 22 to lead the Wildcat attack.

Oak Park downed Saginaw Buena Vista, 63-54, in the **Class B** Final. A 10-0 run by Oak Park to start the fourth quarter put the game out of reach. Archie Tullos of Buena Vista led all scorers with 24 points, including 12 in the third period of play.

A pair of Bill VanderBilt jump shots late in the fourth quarter, followed by six free throws by guard Tim Sneller gave the Hamilton Hawkeyes a 52-48 victory over previously unbeaten Kalamazoo Christian in the **Class C** game.

Scott Johnson sank two free throws with 13 seconds remaining, and teammate Rodney Wells added another charity toss

five seconds later to give Powers North Central a slim 65-63 victory over defending **Class D** champion Detroit East Catholic.

1994

Dwayne McMiller pumped in 21 points, while teammates Edward Norvell added 17 and junior Robert Traylor chipped in with 15 points and 12 rebounds to lead Detroit Murray-Wright past Detroit Pershing, 80-73, in **Class A** action.

It was the first year the Finals took place in the Breslin Student Events Center.

St. Clair Shores Lake Shore sealed an undefeated season in dramatic fashion as senior Travis Conlan's jumper rolled around and around the hoop before falling through with two ticks remaining on the clock to defeat East Grand Rapids, 38-37, in a see-saw **Class B** battle. Sophomore Corbett Elsen gave the Pioneers a short-lived 37-36 lead with 12.8 seconds remaining. Conlan led all scorers with 17 points, while senior Jim Karris paced East Grand Rapids with 12 points and seven boards.

Grandville Calvin Christian senior Ben Verbeek's buzzer-beater provided a spectacular finish to the **Class C** title game and an 85-83 overtime win over Orchard Lake St. Mary's. Tied 83-83 with 6.6 seconds remaining in overtime, the Squires quickly pushed the ball up court following a pair of missed free throws by Eaglets. Joel Bluekamp hit a streaking Verbeek, who sank the layup for the school's first-ever basketball title.

Grand Rapids Covenant Christian prevailed in its quest for a second straight **Class D** crown, posting a 79-70 win over Eben Junction Superior Central. Joel Holstege netted 23 for the winners, while twin senior forwards Jamie and Terry Kienitz scored 22 and 21 points, respectively, for the Cougars.

— Ron Pesch



1994 Class C Final

Gary Shook, Otsego

the finish