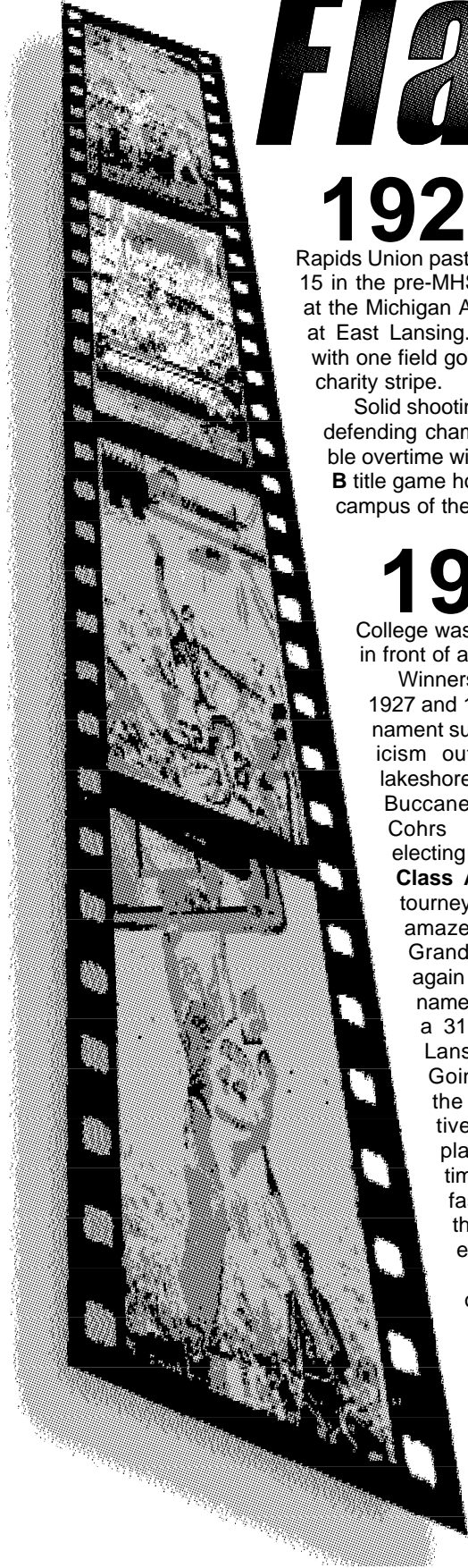


# Finals Flashbacks



## 1921

Cherry "caged the ball" six times, and added a free throw to lead Grand Rapids Union past favored Detroit Northern, 29 to 15 in the pre-MHSAA **Class A** tournament held at the Michigan Agricultural College gymnasium at East Lansing. F. Monihan paced Northern with one field goal and 5-of-8 shooting from the charity stripe.

Solid shooting from the free throw line gave defending champion St. Joseph a 24-23 double overtime win over Farmington in the **Class B** title game hosted at Waterman Gym on the campus of the University of Michigan.

## 1931

Demonstration Hall on the campus of Michigan State College was the site for all four title games in front of an estimated crowd of 4,000.

Winners of Class B crowns in 1924, 1927 and 1929, Grand Haven's prior tournament success was a point of major criticism outside the small lakeshore community, so Buccaneer coach Gus Cohrs responded by electing to compete in **Class A** bracket of the tourney in 1931. To the amazement of many, Grand Haven once again dominated tournament play, including a 31-15 trouncing of Lansing Central. Going against the conservative style of play of the time, Cohrs' squad showcased a faster brand of ball, followed through on missed shots, and employed a zone defense.

Six lead changes in the second half provided tournament fans with plenty of excitement in the **Class B** finale, as St. Joseph slipped past Coldwater, 22-20. Trailing 11-6 at halftime, Coldwater's Lloyd Green pushed his team out front on three occasions. Coldwater led

20-17 late in the contest, but two buckets in the final 50 seconds by St. Joseph's Marvin Schadler gave the Bears a 21-20 lead. Nicholas Zitta's free throw just before the final gun provided the final margin.

Defending **Class C** champ Kalamazoo St. Augustine turned back University High of Ann Arbor, 24-14. Coach Harve Freeman's rotary offense and zone defense was too much for the Ann Arbor squad, as guard Charles Muth scored 12 points to lead the winners.

Held to a single point in the first half, center Clifford Emlong scored 13 of Bridgman's 17 points in the second half to rally his squad to a 24-11 win over St. Clair Shores South Lake in the **Class D** title match. The title was the second in three years for the Bees.

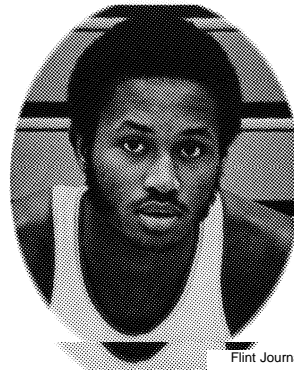
## 1941

Michigan State College's Jenison Field House played host to the Lower Peninsula tournaments for the second straight year. Friday's semifinal action was split between two courts, with the Class A and B games played on the field house floor, and the Class C and D games staged on the adjoining upper gymnasium court. Spectators were free to move from one to the other without an additional admission charge.

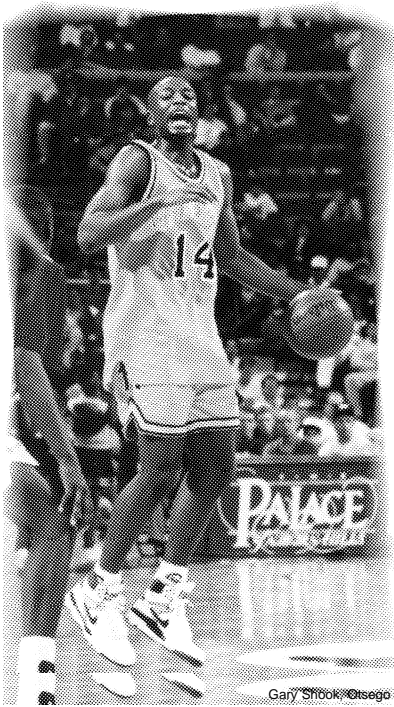
Benton Harbor picked up its first **Class A** basketball title with a 34-28 win over Saginaw. Four lead changes early in the second half enlivened the crowd. Saginaw's Bob Fry topped all scores with 12 points, while Sterling Klum ended with 11 points for the Tigers.

Don Osterman and Joe Smith closed out stellar cage careers in fine fashion as Detroit St. Theresa held off a late rally by Sturgis to gain the **Class B** crown, 34-20. Smith poured in 16 points while Osterman, the youngest of three brothers to compete for St. Theresa's, added eight. It was the third Class B crown and fourth appearance in the finals in six years for the undefeated parochial squad. A crowd of 6,500 witnessed the contest.

Lansing St. Mary earned its third **Class C** crown in six years with a 26-19 victory over Harbor Springs. Led by second-year coach Leo Callahan, the Big Blues did not waste many shots, opening up a 15-9 halftime lead. Roy Crissey led the victors with 12 points, while guard Ed Farhat added six.



**Wayman Britt**



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Coach Marshall Shearer picked up his fourth crown in 14 years at the helm as Stevensville thumped Hanover, 42-25, in **Class D**. Stevensville opened up a 16-point lead, 20-4, at the halfway point. Bob Fisher of Hanover chalked up 15 points for top scoring honors, while Art Raab and Bill Posch each netted 14 points for the winners.

The Sault Ste. Marie Blue Devils beat Stambaugh, 30-27, in the **Class B Upper Peninsula** finals before a crowd of 3,000 at Luther L. Wright High School in Ironwood. Stambaugh led after both the first and second periods, but a 13-0 run by the Soo in the third quarter negated a strong performance by Stambaugh center Harold Anderson. Playing on an injured ankle, Anderson scored 10 points in the first quarter of play.

Coach Eddie Chambers and his Crystal Falls cagers grabbed their fourth consecutive **Class C U.P.** crown, downing Felch, 37-26. A "Mink" Sartori scored 13 points and Donald Aeschliman added 12 points and grabbed the majority of defensive rebounds for the winners.

William Mikulich scored 22 points as Eben toppled Hermansville, the defending **Class D U.P.** champ, 40-26. The loss was the first of the year for Hermansville.

In the first year of **Class E** play, comprised of schools with a student body numbering 75 or less, Palmer downed Hulbert, 39-28. Werner Talus, a hero in Palmer's upset win over Marenisco one night earlier, and Hulbert's E. Stewart shared top scoring honors with 11 points apiece.

**1951** In a thriller at Jenison Field House, Kalamazoo

Central escaped with a 50-47 victory over Highland Park to become the first **Class A** squad to win three consecutive titles. (See Legends of the Games article, page 6). A heavy favorite, Central trailed for much of the first half before pulling ahead, 35-28, midway through the third. The Parkers battled back to within two, 39-37, to open the fourth quarter, and remained within striking distance throughout the final frame. But a pair of quick buckets, one by 6-7 center Ron Jackson and the second by guard Jim Bishop, gave the Maroon Giants a six-point lead, and the team held on for the win.

Shooting an uncharacteristic 7-of-24 from the free throw line, River Rouge fell from the ranks of the undefeated to St. Joseph, 39-33, in **Class B**. Trailing 28-20 at the intermission, Rouge held the Bears to 11 points in the second half, but could not convert on its chances from the charity stripe. The win was especially sweet for Ray Haack, who started the season as an assistant coach, but inherited the top job when Head Coach Buzz Burgoyne unexpectedly resigned one week before the end of the regular season.

Frank Tanana scored 16 points to boost his nine-game tournament total to 214, and his season sum to 542 points, as Detroit St. Andrew blasted Marlette, 52-26, for the **Class C** crown. Averaging nearly 24 points per game through the playoffs, Tanana shared the limelight with Jerry Olesko, the Flyers field general, who finished with 18 points. The victory marked the first of back-to-back titles for St. Andrew and Head Coach Raymond Ross.

Upper Peninsula representative Brimley bombed Dimondale, 74-31, en route to its second consecutive **Class D** title. Jim Mills, Dick Weston and Al Piche combined for 56 points to lead the Bays. Ken Burns finished with 15 points for Dimondale, including all 13 of his team's first half points. The 43-point margin is still the top point spread for a championship game.

**1961** Led by Walt Lipiec's 19 points, Detroit Catholic Central crushed Muskegon Heights, 72-53, in the **Class A** contest, played before a capacity crowd of 12,131 at Jenison Field House. Catholic's full-court press forced 19 turnovers by the Tigers, including 10 in the final seven minutes of play, to blow open an otherwise tight contest. Bill Maher ended with 16 points and Brian Motter added 15 for Catholic.

River Rouge delivered a 79-44 rout of Holland Christian in the **Class B** final. Led by 6-5 freshman Willie Betts, the Panthers dominated the second quarter, outscoring the Maroons 21-8 for a commanding 39-21 halftime lead. Rouge had four players finish in double figures, led by Jon Roman with 17 points.

Gary Schick finished with 20 points while Jack Wachter added 15 as Grosse Pointe St. Paul earned its first cage crown in school history with a 67-51 victory over Parma Western in **Class C**. Steve Clark led Parma with 18 points.

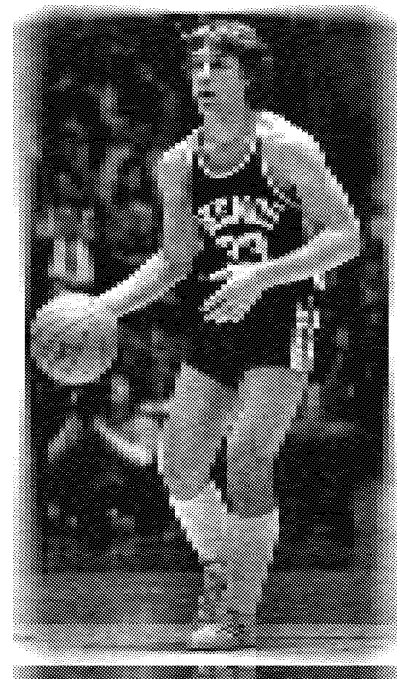
After 35 years as a coach in the Upper Peninsula, Vic Hurst was rewarded with his first MHSAA title as Marquette Pierce downed a determined Freesoil squad, 68-61, in a **Class D** battle of the undefeated. Dave Benson led the Warriors with 17 points, while teammates Dennis DeMerse and the Laurich brothers – Conrad and Larry – each added 15.

Emil Benti tossed in 27 points as Michigamme earned its second crown with a 59-48 win over Nahma in the **Class E** contest at Escanaba. Class D champs in 1926, Michigamme controlled the boards and contained Nahma's top scorer, Paul Thibault.

**1971** After downing top-ranked Pontiac Central and prep

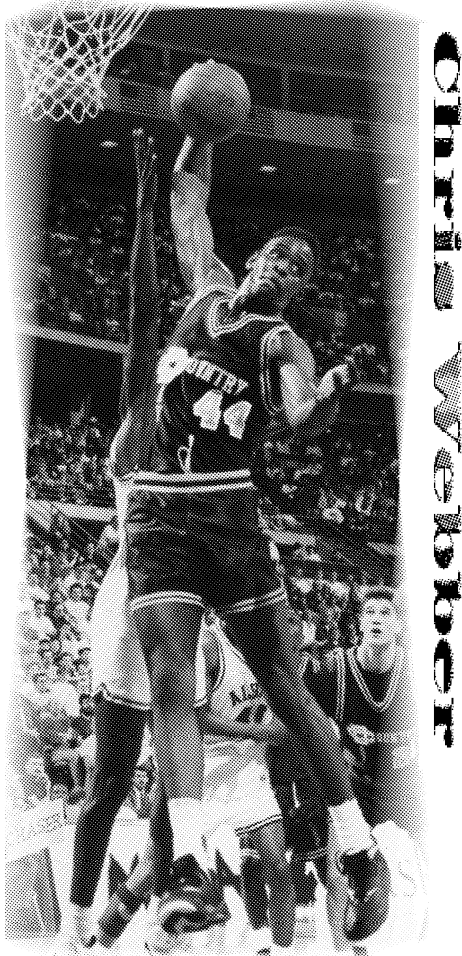
All-American Campy Russell in the semifinals one week earlier, Detroit Kettering fell victim to Flint Northern, 79-78, in the **Class A** title game at University of Michigan's Crisler Arena. Just five weeks previous to the title contest, Pontiac Central had demolished Northern by 33 points.

Led by coach Bill Frieder and a solid 2-3 zone defense, Northern went to work on shutting down Kettering's own prep phenomenon, Lindsey Hairston. Despite the absence of all-state forward Tom McGill, who was forced to the bench with four fouls, Vikings ended the third stanza with eight quick points and a 56-49 lead. Hairston



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MHSAA Files



Gary Shock, Otsego

erupted for 11 fourth-quarter points to pull Kettering within two, 75-73, with 1:44 to go. However, a pair of free throws by Rick Jones and one by Tom Jackson in the final seconds of the game sealed the win for Northern. It was the school's first title since 1947. Hairston ended with 21 points. Wayman Britt led Northern with 18 points and 19 rebounds.

Three crucial turnovers in the final three minutes by Muskegon Heights allowed River Rouge to pick up its third **Class B** crown in a row, by a score of 71-65. Leading 60-59, the Panthers converted on two of the three errors for a 64-59 lead. Al Boswell finished with 25 points and 16 rebounds before fouling out with 1:39 to go, but the Rouge lead was simply too much to overcome. The win marked coach Lofton Greene's 500th career victory and the Panther's 11th title in 18 years.

Shelby finished the year as king of **Class C** with a 71-57 victory over Stockbridge in a showdown of the unbeaten. Kimm Griffin, Shelby's 6-5 senior, netted 22 points, including six field goals in a row to open the contest. Fred Sanford added 19 while junior Paul Griffin, Kimm's cousin, finished with 14 for the Tigers. The Griffins combined for 29 rebounds on the day.

Team captain Carey Ross scored 22 and Clarence Shipp added 21 as Covert rolled past Freesoil, 79-70, before a crowd of 16,600 in the **Class D** title game. The Bulldogs dominated the third quarter, outscoring Freesoil 24-12 to pull away. Dick Shereda led the Pirates with a game-high 29 points and 17 boards. Of Covert High School's 60 students, 17 were in uniform for the contest – 12 on the basketball team, and five cheerleaders.

**1981** Mark Harris pumped in 44 points, while his teammates added an additional 64 as Flint Central outlasted Detroit Murray-Wright, 108-90, before a capacity crowd of 13,609 at Crisler Arena for the **Class A** final. Harris' total eclipsed Ralph Simpson's single-game scoring mark of 43 points set in Detroit Pershing's 1967 championship contest. Eric Turner, Central's 6-3 senior guard, impressed the crowd with a series of no-look passes en route to 17 assists and 12 points. Keith Gray added 27 points to the cause for Flint, while the Pilots were led by William Love's 29 points and Willis "Stretch" Carter's 25.

In **Class B**, Okemos battled to a 49-46 win over Mt. Pleasant. Dave Valkanoff paced the Chiefs with 12 points and Mark Abraham added 10. The Oilers were led by Charles Pisoni's 18-point outing, while teammate Mark Anderson bucketed 16.

Returning to the finals for the first time since the glory days of Marvelous Mel Peterson some 25 years previous, Stephenson downed Three Oaks River Valley, 64-48, in **Class C**. Mark Simon led the winners with 19 points, while Dave Machalk chipped in with 14, including 10 in the first half.

Detroit East Catholic picked up its third consecutive **Class D** crown with an easy 93-57 win over Crystal Falls Forest Park. Anthony Grier netted 18 points in the first half as the Chargers took a 45-24 halftime lead. Grier ended the day as the top scorer with 26 points while teammate James Ross contributed 22.

**1991** Detroit Southwestern's Perry Watson closed out a stellar career as a high school coach as the Prospectors avenged their only loss on the year with a 77-63 victory against Detroit Northern. The game was played before 15,686 fans at The Palace of Auburn Hills. Led by Jalen Rose and Voshon Lenard, the Prospectors opened up a 40-23 lead en route to their second consecutive **Class A** crown. It was the ninth title-game appearance in 10 years by Southwestern. Rose closed out his prep career with 25 points and 18 rebounds and Lenard netted 21.

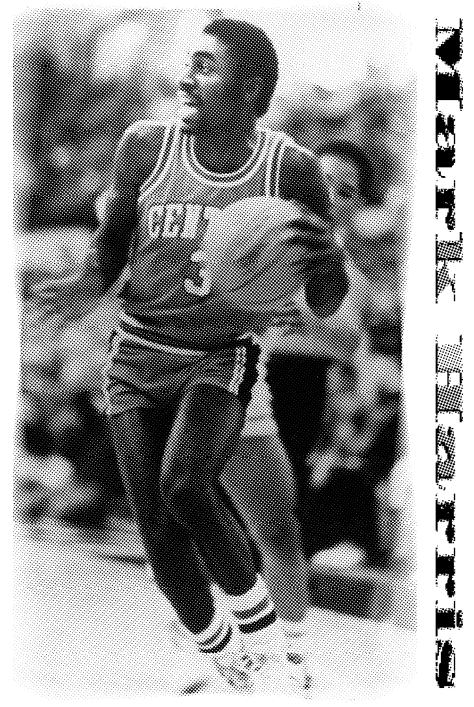
A crowd of 17,801, including ESPN,

Detroit Piston Isiah Thomas and a host of media luminaries, were present for Chris Webber's final game as a prep. Webber went down with a twisted ankle in the first half but returned to thrill the crowd and lead Detroit Country Day to its third consecutive title, 68-57, over Albion. The first of the three championships came in 1989 in **Class C**, while the last two were won in **Class B**. Webber ended with 27 points and 22 rebounds, while Kevin Colson kicked in 16 points for the Yellowjackets.

Saginaw Nouvel bounced out to a 30-8 lead, and then held off a late rally by Iron River West Iron County to secure a 51-37 victory in the **Class C** contest. The Panthers forced 10 turnovers in the first half and took advantage of their height to dominate the contest. Jamie Dill led the winners with 17 point and six rebounds.

Defensively, Chris Pomey limited Allendale center Joe Modderman to eight points as Ann Arbor Gabriel Richard cruised to a 62-48 triumph over the Falcons in **Class D**. Modderman scored 39 points in Allendale's semifinal victory over Detroit East Catholic the day before, but Pomey worked on shutting down the 6-8 junior. That, combined with balance scoring gave the Fighting Irish their first title since 1974, when it was known as Ann Arbor St. Thomas. Neal Morton topped the champs with 19 points and Eddie Hale pitched in with 15.

— Ron Pesch



Flint Journal