

Brooksie covered state tournament in 1945

Written by Bob Brooks

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The state high school boys basketball tournament is celebrating 100 years this week, so I thought I would take a look at a couple of moments from my years of covering the high school finals.

As I was telling our esteemed editor, Jim Ecker, I covered my first state tournament in 1945 at Drake's original fieldhouse in Des Moines when Ames defeated Muscatine, 35-33. I was just out of high school at the time.

Cedar Rapids Franklin played Waverly for the state title in 1944 at the old fieldhouse in Iowa City. Franklin was coached by Orville Rust, a legendary figure from the old school who also was head football coach and head track coach.

Franklin was my high school team, because I had played with those boys as a sophomore before shin splints took me out of sports. That ailment would be referred to in this day and age as high ankle sprains.

When I arrived on the broadcast scene in Cedar Rapids, the Davenport Blue Devils were the reigning state champions. And to this day, they hold the record for most victories in the state tournament series and the most championships with nine titles.

In those years, I kept thinking, "Am I ever going to have a time as a broadcaster that Cedar Rapids would have a team that would win a state championship?" And so it happened in 1962 when Cedar Rapids Regis, under Bob Jennings and led by the late Jim Cummins, defeated Laurens, 76-64, to bring Cedar Rapids its first state championship in my tenure as a broadcaster.

And believe it or not, in black-and-white television at KCRG, we hauled the cameras to the windows outside our studio on 1st Avenue and 1st Street West and had live television of the

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championship parade down 1st Avenue.

My most memorable game, I think, would be the 1967 title game in Class 2A between Cedar Rapids Jefferson and Ames. It was held at Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines. Ames had a star by the name of Dick Gibbs and Jefferson countered with B.J. Trickey and Larry Lawrence.

My color commentator happened to be B.J.'s father, Ben Trickey, who had coached Marshalltown to a state championship and won nine letters at Iowa in football, basketball and baseball. Consequently, he still had that competitive fire with a son playing in the title game.

Jefferson got down by 20 points in the game, but in the second half they started their comeback. And every time they got a fast-break basket, Ben Trickey hit me in the ribs with his elbow.

And come back they did to tie it in regulation and win in overtime, 72-71. It was the first time the title game had ever gone to overtime, and it is still the only title game that featured an NBA player - Gibbs, of Ames - and a National Football League quarterback in Lawrence of Jefferson in a state championship showdown.

To say the least, it ranks as the most thrilling state tournament game in my memory. And I can still feel, on occasion, the elbows that hit me in the ribs from father Ben Trickey.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)