

Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame Museum, One Hall of Fame Court, New Castle, IN 47362, (317) 529-1891.

Perhaps only in a state that could inspire a film about high school basketball (Hoosiers), and sell out its state tournament finals for six consecutive decades would there be a high school hall of fame and museum. Located thirty-five miles east of Indianapolis, this modern structure is built near the New Castle High School Fieldhouse, one of the largest in the country. The museum cheerleads us through eight decades of Indiana school basketball. A ten-minute introductory sequence of slides (much like the lead-in scenery to *Hoosiers*) takes a team from the sectional tournament until it walks onto the floor of the Hoosier Dome for the state championship game.

From the theatre, the displays are arranged in a circular pattern moving year-by-year through the bi-level structure. The usual "button-pressing" produces an inspirational talk through a projection mannequin of John Wooden, a tape of coach Ray Crowe's memories of Oscar Robertson, and a myriad of clips of state championships and other classic contests. The displays which center on pictures, uniforms, trophies, and autographed balls are attractively arranged in well-lighted cases. A large digital selection board allows one to find the record of each high school that ever played basketball in Indiana. Over sixty percent of these schools no longer exist due to consolidation. Atmosphere is maintained as one walks through the museum by recorded undulating cheers of a crowd and

the constant bouncing of a basketball. The latter, however, becomes tedious after a while. As with many of the sport museums of today, there is a hands-on area where one can shoot a ball as the clock runs down and imagine your goal winning the state championship. This is quite popular with touring school groups.

Certain displays capture periods of time when the prevailing social customs affected basketball. Programs and trophies from the separate state tournament for Catholic schools in the 1930s and 1940s are shown. The accomplishments of black schools, such as Indianapolis Crispus Attucks with Oscar Robertson, who has a whole display case to himself, are highlighted. Several areas discuss girls' basketball in schools before their tournaments were sanctioned in 1976. All these encourage reflection on changes through the years.

The Hall of Fame display is bland, with members merely represented on illuminated panels. Additional cases give prominence to paraphernalia of those associated with college and professional basketball in Indiana, such as "Chuck" Taylor of Converse shoe fame, Tony Hinkle, Bobby Leonard, Larry Bird, George McGinnis, Rick Mount, Terry Dischinger and Bobby Knight. The Museum's library is small and contains the records of all state tournaments, All-Star Classic games and assorted books concerning biographies and coaching.

The purpose of the museum is best described in the title of its souvenir booklet "A Trip Down Memory Lane"-nostalgia. The place and attitude, even myth of Indiana basketball is exemplified in the 1954 championship when tiny Milan defeated giant Muncie Central (the theme of the *Hoosiers* film). As one of the last states with one classification for all schools, it is virtually impossible for a small school to win. But the museum keeps this vision alive and gives the visitor a picture of the place and intensity of community school sport rivalry in America's midwest.

When leaving, the visitor walks across the outdoor concourse, a huge brick mosaic in the shape of the state of Indiana, containing the names of contributors on each brick. Tradition is indeed etched in stone here!

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