

Golden Cyclones, 1931 National Basketball Champions

ROXANNE M. ALBERTSON

North Texas State University

JEAN PEKARA

North Texas State University

During the early 1920-s various commissions including the Hoover and ACACW met to deal with perceived excesses in school girls sport competition. As a result of their influence the decline in intercollegiate and interscholastic sport programs was rapid in many educational institutions. But many schools continued to compete in basketball and even sponsor state championships. These programs served as training grounds for AAU women's basketball competition which was expanding throughout the nation during the 1920-30's.

One of the most famous AAU women's basketball teams between 1928-1932 was the Dallas Employers Casualty Golden Cyclones. After losing the national championship by one point each year in 1928, 1929, and 1930, they defeated the Wichita Thurston team in 1931 for the AAU title.

The most famous member of the team, Mildred (Babe) Didrikson brought national recognition to the Cyclones because of her performances in track and field and basketball in 1930-31. Yet on this team there were more skilled players including All Americans high scorer Agnes Lori 1928-32, forward Rubye Mansfield 1930-31, center Belle Weisinger 1931, and guard Kathleen Peace 1931. Weisinger recalled that though Babe was a fine athlete she was not the team's best player. "We had some pretty good players those days. "

Between 1928-1932, the Cyclones traveled widely playing teams throughout the South, Southwest and Midwest. Lillian Sessions remembered that their games were big affairs. "We would have thousands of fans to come to our games and the band played. " According to recollections of team members their desire for athletic competition far outweighed social pressures for conforming to "feminine behavior." From the reports about game attending fans and crowds it appears that many Americans enjoyed watching skilled female basketball competition.

The purpose of this paper was to investigate where the Cyclones developed basketball skills, circumstances surrounding the rise of the team to national prominence, societal pressures team members endured or overcame in pursuit of athletic goals, reasons for the demise of the Cyclones, and what team members did after their Cyclone days.