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***High School Basketball's First Great Dynasty:  
Passaic High School's Wonder 5 and its  
159 Game Winning Streak***

From 1919 to 1925. Passaic, New Jersey High School won 159 straight games. In the era when a center jump followed each basket, the team used its height to gain possession and its speed afoot and swift, quick passing to score. So adept were the players at moving the ball and fast-breaking to the basket that they often outscored their opponents by 40 or more points. In 1921-22, their greatest season, they recorded 33 victories, topped the century mark eight times, and outscored their opponents 2293 to 612. The architect of this system was Coach Ernest "Prof" Blood who implanted it in the city's grammar schools which then provided him with a steady stream of players ready to play his style of basketball.

This paper analyzes the nature of high school basketball following World War I, its meaning to Passaic High School, and its benefits to the city of Passaic. In a broader perspective, it examines the significance of the winning streak within the realm of high school athletics. For the high school it enhanced school loyalty, promoted cohesion, and brought it regional as well as national recognition, while for the struggling, industrial city of Passaic, it boosted civic pride and generated publicity. Perhaps its greatest contributions were the bond high school athletics cemented between school and community and the prototype it established for other cities to follow.

The Wonder 5's winning streak was recognized by the Basketball Hall of Fame when it unveiled a permanent display of the six teams there in 1974. Coach Blood and John Roosma, one of the Wonder 5's premier players and later a star at West Point, have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

This research is based upon information gathered from Passaic, Paterson and Newark newspapers, Passaic High School Yearbooks, letters and documents provided by John Roosma before his death in 1982, interviews with John Roosma and his family, and interviews with Benjamin Blood, Coach Blood's son.