

RALEIGH HAS ITS SHARE OF STATE CROWNS

Junior High Took First Team Title

By GEORGE SPRINGER
Sports Editor, Beckley Post-Herald

Raleigh county has existed, officially, 100 years. That's a little older than many of the sports that catch your eye on the pages that daily bring you all the results. There may have been some organized teams back in the earlier days of the county history, but recognized sports weren't really official until the turn of the century.

Old records reveal there was a baseball team in Beckley in 1900. Football was played, unofficially by the high school in this city, as far back as 1905. It was around 1910 that basketball started to boast of some teams. It was only 19 years ago that organized baseball swept into the county, though there had been a lot of amateur ball teams before that time.

Most prominent of these clubs is the Raleigh Clipper team, which has been gracing the diamonds for all of 35 years. It took a while for the Raleigh county athletes to become proficient enough to start making themselves known around the state.

First official state champion that we can find was Sam Cohn, a former sports writer here, who won the West Virginia closed tennis tournament in 1927. That was 77 years after the inception of our ever-growing county.

And it was some time later, 8 years to be exact, before a team brought home a state championship. That honor fell to Central Junior High of Beckley, for in 1935-36 years after Raleigh County became official — the Blue Eaglets copped the West Virginia State Junior High crown.

Since that time there has been a regular parade of team title winners, which means that Raleigh now is considered around the state as a producer of tough teams to beat. For a while the Blue Eaglets were the only one cleaning up and it wasn't until 1912 that a high school crown came this way.

Marsh Fork High of Montcoal went to the West Virginia Class B championship at Morgantown and brought home the bacon. Then it was Stratton High of Beckley that copped the state Negro gridiron crown in the fall of the same year.

In 1946, four titles fell this way, Woodrow Wilson grabbing off the state basketball crown at Morgantown after Ross Irle's Blue Eaglets had won their seventh state hoop title. That summer Raleigh County Post 32 brought the American Legion junior baseball diadem here and in the fall, Stratton followed it up with its second West Virginia High School Union football crown.

In 1947 and 1948 Coach Jerome Van Meter's Woodrow Wilson Flying Eagles ruled supreme throughout the state in football, hanging up a total of 23 consecutive wins and copping two state football crowns. In between the American League baseball team was coming through again.

So, by measuring in this manner, the county can be well proud and proud of the way the sports picture has continually improved as the years went along. Maybe the second 100 years will not be as hard.

In other sports the county has had its share of individual winners in bowling, amateur boxing and golf and several fine softball teams have gone far in state events. The competition in the last two decades has been stepped up and you'll find the rest of the state worrying a-plenty about Raleigh county for the next 100 years or more.

Many of the athletes of the olden days went on to make names for themselves on the gridirons, basketball courts and baseball diamonds of the intercollegiate and professional world.

It's a very bright and pretty picture that we view on the eve of the opening of the Official Centennial celebration, which will keep reminding you every day that every Raleigh Centurian has that right to throw out his chest and say: "We've done our share, and we'll continue to do so."

Throughout your sports pages this morning, you'll find the details of all the sports, as well as some of the outstanding individual achievements that have been attained by natives or those men who have adopted Raleigh County as their home.

Since Marsh Fork was the first high school team in the county to bring home a state championship, let's take a peek back and see what made the Bulldozers of Montcoal click for that one. Clyde Underwood, product of Woodrow Wilson High, had just left the county school for a coaching job at Nitro High and Carl Jarrell moved up to the vacant position from his post at Mountain View Junior High at Dry Creek.

Jarrell took over just one week before the basketball season was to open. So his task was a task at hand and the Charleston Reds, an always-strong aggregation were to be met in Charleston.

The new mentor took hold quickly and that first one resulted in an 81-56 victory. What was Jarrell's personnel in those days? Not bad when you think of the same fellows today. One of them was Virgil Carr. He was first string guard. He's the present Marsh Fork coach and a Morris Harvey graduate.

There was Dewey Romine, also of Morris Harvey, along with Dean Jarrell, very elusive center. Glen Tabor, high — shooting forward, scored 31 points for the Jarrellites in that opening game. Don Lamb paired with Carr in the back court and subs included Acord, Farley, Kyle and Everett.

Three wins were chalked up then the team dropped a 50-45 decision at Talcott. It won three more, but couldn't break the Talcott jinx and fell at home in a close one, 36-35. Three more wins and a defeat, this time by Stoco, 42-34. Then a sweep of the rest of the regular slate for a 13-3 season record.

Came sectional tournament time and Marsh Fork was ready. There was first a 51-34 win over Clear Fork and then, sweet revenge. Talcott fell in the title tilt, 40-35. A close tilt all the way until the Bulldozers pulled away in the fourth quarter for victory.

The regionals were at South Charleston. Huntington Vinson was trounced, 74-45. Tabor, Carr and Jarrell hitting double figures. Sandyville was the opponent in the final and it was 61-32 for the Marsh Fork caeters, who qualified for the trip to the "B" tournament at Morgantown. Tabor scored 33 points in that tilt.

Concord Training of Athens was the first opponent at the University city and the Mercer County team hit the dust, 48-39. Jarrell scored 16 and Romine 10 as Tabor, test.

Marsh Fork's State Champs, '42



Marsh Fork's 1942 Class B state basketball champions are grouped above as they stepped off in Beckley long enough to have their photo snapped. Coached by Joe Jarrell, the team defeated Barrackville in the championship contest at Morgantown. Back row, left to right, Coach Jarrell, Bobby Taylor, Don Lamb, Glendale Tabor, Dean Jarrell, Jack Kyle. Front row, Azel Farley, Jr., Orville Carr, Dewey Romine, Richard Everett, Darl Acord.

Beckley First Of County High Schools To Enter Into Grid Competition

If the history of football extends any further back than 1905 when the Beckley Seminary had its first team, the records are not available. As the county grew and grew and more high schools came into existence, the play spread out all around and more and more fans took cognizance of the sport that had its beginnings back in 1869 when Rutgers played Princeton in the first intercollegiate tussle.

Mark Twain of Stovesbury and Marsh Fork of Montcoal were the next to enter the picture, starting in 1925. Collins High, which burned and was abandoned in 1944, had its first football team in 1922. Stoco and Shady Spring high's came into the picture in 1926, though the school at Lego took up basketball before it did football, not entering into a grid picture until 1926. Trap Hill was the next to marshal an eleven, that occurring in 1929 and of course, the newest of the county schools, Sophia, came into existence quite a good deal later. It started football in 1943. Clear Fork was in the field in 1930.

For a while the coaching situation at Beckley's high school was changeable. The first paid coach was until Doug Bowers took over the helm of the Flying Eagles, and when Jerome Van Meter came to Beckley in 1929, he put a stopper in the continual changing of coaches at Woodrow Wilson, since he is still doing the work there year after year.

However, the number of coaches at the other schools has been many. Boys getting out of college seemed to make Raleigh county their starting point, and they kept moving up the ladder to bigger high schools.

Records of the newer and smaller schools in the county are practically impossible to dig up. Of course, a person could sit down and pour over every issue of every paper to dig them up, but it would take "special help" to produce that kind of information.

There was a story once that Roy Lee Harmon wrote in the Post-Herald more than a decade ago. It went like this:

"Beckley is football-mad today. But it was a different story 18 years ago, back in 1930 when the grid sport was trying to get a toe-hold here.

"Records of the Hinton-Beckley football warfare will show that the first game was played in 1916. But the truth of the matter is that the local team of '16 was a 'pick-up' outfit and was not representing the local high school. Some of the boys around town simply got together and went over to battle the Summers lads.

"But the first team which represented the Beckley institution in 1920, was practically in the same class with a red-headed step-child. The school principal put the old kibosh on football. He didn't like it. So, Dr. Frank S. Harkleroad, now a physician at Beckley, piloted the team in spite of opposition and lack of cooperation from the school chief. Dr. Harkleroad was a chemistry teacher in the high school in 1916.

"Yesterday I met Al Quesenberry, of the Maxwell and Keyser firm, and since Al was a member of that first Beckley high school grid team, I asked for details of that hectic season in 1920. I had been told that Al played a lot of right tackle for the Beckleys.

"Quesenberry said that Andy Applebeck Peters was principal at the high school in 1920.

"Andy wouldn't sanction a school team, so Dr. Harkleroad went ahead and the boys held practice sessions whenever possible — not regularly like the boys of today," Al said.

"The school, of course, would no, buy any equipment," he continued, "but the boys were not easily discouraged. The late George Moss, of the Raleigh Hardware company, which was located in the building where Murphy's store is today, agreed to obtain the uniforms for the boys at wholesale prices. Then the players canvassed the town for donations. The results were very pleasing. With such sterling sportsmen as Piggy Mc-

Overnight Trips Caused Hardships To School Teams

A football game that broke records for being wild and woolly was played between Montcoal, now Marsh Fork high school, and Mark Twain in 1925.

During that year, teams of both girls and boys played basketball in inter-school competition. They scheduled games together and the lack of rapid transportation caused most of the games to be overnight trips.

C. D. Munson, now an assistant superintendent of schools, was the Montcoal coach on that fall day 20 years ago when his team squared off against Mark Twain, in its first scheduled game. Montcoal players were resplendent in their orange and black uniforms—colors copied after those of West Virginia Wesleyan, the alma mater of the principal, James L. Hornbeck, now principal at Sophia.

Not only were the colors handed down but so were the uniforms, given by Wesleyan so Montcoal could field a well-dressed aggregation. Coaching for the Authors was David Reemnyder.

Confusion reigned as 11 completely inexperienced men took the field for each side. With the coaches doubling as referees, the game was very exciting, according to eyewitnesses.

When a player made a mistake, time was called out, and the error was explained. In the end, the game finished in a 0-0 tie.

Stribling Fought In Beckley Ring

Boxing has had its in and outs on the Raleigh county map, with amateurs providing most of the action. From a professional angle, W. Crockett Mullins, reigned around 1914 until 1918 when injuries forced him from the ring. Mullins was a pupil of W. A. "Young" Stribling and in the early '30s, the challenger, George Dempsey's crown, fought George Norton under the auspices of the Beckley Lions club at RHM park.

Aubrey "Kid" Martin, who died in 1936, was another county professional who did considerable fighting. He was state lightweight champion. Of recent vintage is Cooper White and his brother, Cotton. The former did a lot of professional fighting while he was in service, fighting at some of the leading clubs in the east. Before turning pro White was a state golden glove champion and Beckley has had other boys winning such laurels, most prominent being "Wild Bill" Clark.

COUNTY BASEBALL STARTED IN '20S

The Raleigh County Baseball league first organized in 1922, ran for one year then passed out of the sport picture until 1933 when Needy McQuade, sports editor of the Raleigh Register in those days, rebanded the loop. As many as 24 teams were in it during a single season, and there were three classifications in some of the busier years, ranging from A down to C.

No records are available on the list of teams that have won championships in the circuits down through the years.

Coach Ross Irle's 1938 state champions were his pride and joy because in all the years of coaching they were his only undefeated team, winning 27 straight, including victories over Pratt, Clendenin, Thom-as Jefferson of Charleston and Fairmont in the state tournament.

Here's the group plotting an attack before a game. Inner circle, left

TENNIS CHAMPS WERE ALWAYS FROM BECKLEY

Tennis is among the minor sports that has met with much success in Raleigh county, given an impetus in the early 1920's by the presence of Francis T. Hunter, one of the top-ranking national netsters in the nation, who was publisher of the Beckley Post-Herald at that time.

Hunter gave the sport its start at that time and brought in the national champion of many years ago, Vincent Richards, to Beckley for an exhibition. Not living in the city at that time, but reading about the exhibition was Sam Cohn, Baltimore native and municipal champion of that city, who had just come in to work in the coal fields.

Sam tells us he journeyed in to Beckley, saw the exhibition and then played considerably with a lot of the players, who had courts out on Woodlawn Avenue at that time. Woodlawn then had only about two houses on it.

Hunter sold the Post-Herald and left Beckley, but his seeds grew and showed profit as Cohn went on to win six state singles championships, which is still a record for West Virginia. And Sam, now a native of Beckley, paired with Aubrey Smith, Woodrow Wilson graduate, to capture five state doubles crowns.

The two Beckleyans swept the closed state tournament for the first time in 1927, Sam winning the singles and he and Smith ruling the doubles. Tandem crowns were added by this pair for five straight years. Cohn hit the singles jackpot three years in a row, then copped his next three, every other summer.

Many other Beckleyans competed in the state events, among some of the older players being Harry Garvey, who like Smith was also quite a baseball player; Ted Kitts, Herb Stansbury and Malcolm Lilly.

Cohn won many other tournaments across the state, such as the Southern West Virginia Open and the Blue Grass at Charleston and Bluefield, respectively. Stansbury, though never winning any major titles has long kept tennis among his first loves and even now was just recently elected president of the Middle Atlantic Lawn Tennis association which recently revived its annual tournament at White Sulphur Springs.

First courts in the city were said to have been built on the Beckley Institute grounds in 1915. Another court was on Neville street and owned by Judge J. H. Hatcher, another strong follower of the game in the early 20s.

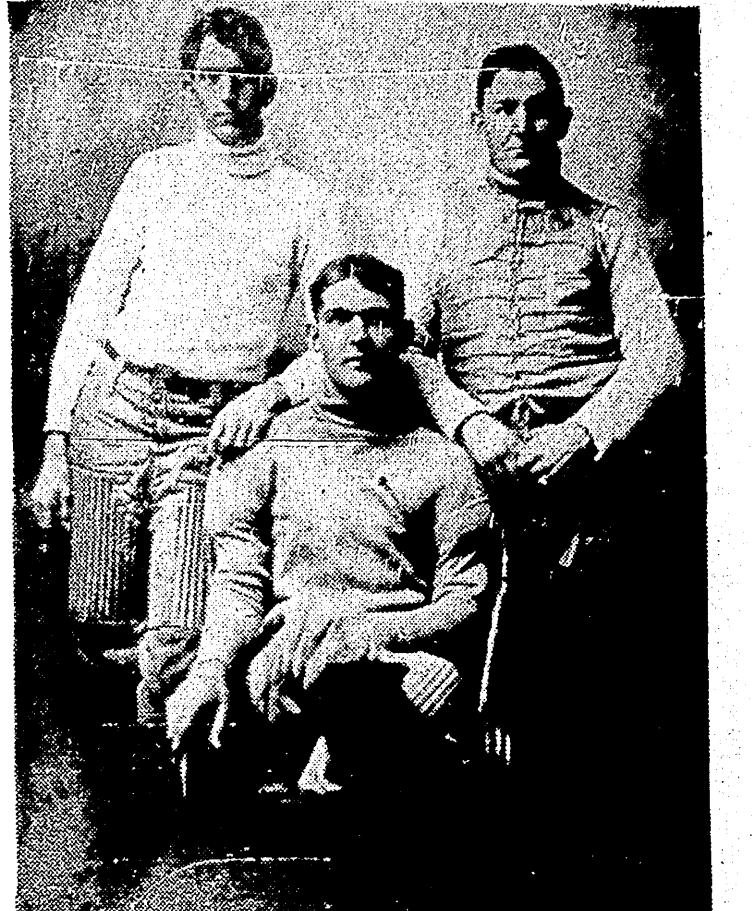
Building up of tennis fast disappeared and the sport died out a good deal through the depression years, though Woodrow Wilson High, when it came into existence, built two courts on its property adjacent to the high school and has had tennis clubs on its extracurricular activity. No attempts have ever been made, however, to organize the sport with varsity status at the high school.

Two years ago veteran tennis players and newcomers got together to organize the Beckley Tennis club. It has been very successful and late last year the group, which has a membership of around 45 or 50, built new courts on Ewart avenue, including a clubhouse with shower rooms, and these men hope to revive the interest in tennis that has existed during about one-third of Raleigh county's history.

McNEISH EXCELLED

Until George King of Morris Harvey and "Hap" Huey of Davis & Elkins came along in the West Virginia Intercollegiate Conference, Jim McNeish, now coaching at Stoco High, held the record for most points in a tournament game, 31.

Beckley Gridders, '05



Three members of the 1905 Beckley Seminary team turned to the field of medicine after leaving the local school. Phil Williams, standing on left, was an end. Ernest Richmond, standing right, was the fullback. Both are deceased. Seated is Robert Lewis, now a physician in Denver, Colo., who played left guard for the Seminary. (Photo Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. George Williams)

84 Per Cent Wins Is Irle's Record

Coaches have come and gone in the majority of the Raleigh County schools, but Ross Irle goes on forever. And no wonder. Look at the record the Central Junior High mentor has compiled as he starts his 23rd year with the Blue Eaglet athletic forces this fall. For nearly a quarter of a century Irle has had his basketball and football teams winning 84 per cent of their contests.

That's amazing. It's a big record for a guy as short in stature as Ross. It's one that few in the nation could probably equal. It's no wonder that Coach Jerome Van Meter of the senior high school says: "As long as Ross Irle stays at junior high, I'll want to stay at Woodrow Wilson."

We told you in one story in this Centennial edition how Central Junior High leads all the county in piling up state championships—seven of them. But here's some of the other things Irle has done as a courageous coach:

1. Went through a basketball season undefeated—27 straight victories.
2. Had four hoop teams that lost only one game, and two of those losses were in final round games of the state championship tournament.
3. Coached one team, 1936, that won 30 games and lost only three.
4. Had 12 seasons when his basketball quintet won 20 or more games.
5. Totaled 365 wins against 58 defeats in basketball for an 864 percentage.
6. Coached two undefeated and untied football teams—1930 and 1945.
7. Had five other grid seasons when only one loss was suffered.
8. Shows a football total of 96 wins, 36 defeats and 28 ties for a 719 percentage.
9. In the two sports has won 461 games and lost 95. Percentage: 830.
10. That's an average of 22 wins and four losses in two sports for

YEAR	W	L	Pct.
1928-1929	14	6	.700
1929-1930	16	2	.889
1930-1931	21	2	.932
*1931-1932	21	5	.808
1932-1933	23	2	.929
1933-1934	23	2	.920
1934-1935	21	7	.750
*1935-1936	30	3	.909
*1936-1937	19	3	.864
*1937-1938	27	0	1.000
1938-1939	17	3	.850
1939-1940	15	3	.833
1940-1941	22	4	.846
*1941-1942	22	4	.846
1942-1943	18	2	.900
1943-1944	21	1	.955
1944-1945	22	1	.977
1945-1946	22	1	.977
1946-1947	16	2	.889
1947-1948	22	1	.957
1948-1949	18	1	.947
1949-1950	18	2	.900
Totals	365	58	.864

YEAR	W	L	T	Pct.
1928	2	4	3	.333
1929	3	2	3	.600
1930	8	0	0	1.000
1931	8	1	0	.889
1932	6	1	2	.857
1933	5	3	2	.625
1934	4	3	2	.571
1935-1939	NO TEAMS			
1940	3	2	3	.600
1941	7	1	3	.875
1942	9	1	1	.900
1943	5	2	1	.714
1944	3	4	2	.429
1945	7	0	0	1.000
1946	6	3	1	.667
1947	3	2	1	.500
1948	3	2	2	.600
1949	3	3	1	.500
1950	5	1	2	.833
Totals	96	36	28	.719

Central Junior High's State Champs Of '38



Coach Ross Irle's 1938 state champions were his pride and joy because in all the years of coaching they were his only undefeated team, winning 27 straight, including victories over Pratt, Clendenin, Thomas Jefferson of Charleston and Fairmont in the state tournament.

STATE CHAMPS CROWNED OVER PAST CENTURY

TEAMS

Baseball
 1946—Post 32 American Legion
 1948—Post 32 American Legion

Basketball
 1932—Central Junior High
 1935—Central Junior High
 1937—Central Junior High
 1938—Central Junior High
 1939—Central Junior High
 1942—Central Junior High
 1942—Marsh Fork, Class B
 1943—Central Junior High
 1946—Woodrow Wilson High

FOOTBALL

1942—Stratton High
 1946—Stratton High
 1947—Woodrow Wilson High
 1948—Woodrow Wilson High

INDIVIDUALS

Tennis
 1927—Sam Cohn (singles)
 1927—Sam Cohn-Aubrey Smith (doubles)
 1928—Sam Cohn (singles)
 1928—Cohn-Smith (doubles)
 1929—Sam Cohn (singles)
 1929—Cohn-Smith (doubles)
 1930—Cohn-Smith (doubles)
 1931—Sam Cohn (singles)
 1931—Cohn-Smith (doubles)
 1933—Sam Cohn (singles)
 1935—Sam Cohn (singles)

Legion Baseball Team First Won Honors In 1930

The 1946 Post 32 American Legion junior baseball nine wasn't the first in the Raleigh County club's history. Back in 1930, the sports editors wrote many stories on the fine team that represented this city, won the district championship and went on to Charleston to take on that city in the semifinals of the Southern tournament.

Beckley's team won the district crown in a high-scoring game with Hinton walloping the Summers Countians, 33 to 15. Post 32 scored in every one of the innings that day, was credited with a total of 34 base hits. It had seven errors chalked up against it.

The Charleston series found Beckley doing okay behind Woods, its pitcher. With the score tied in the eighth, 3-3, the Beckley hurler blew up and the Capital City club won with a six-run rally. "Lefty" Hudson (could it be the Charleston sports editor of today?) was the winning hurler in this game, which wound up 9-5. McGraw of Beckley rapped out three hits in four trips.

Charleston took the second game, 5-0, behind the six-hit shutout pitching of Roberts. Gross hurried the losing cause. The line scores:

Beckley 020 000 101-59 2
 Charleston 210 000 05X-9 8 2

WOODS AND McVER; HUDSON AND ROBERTS

Charleston 001 001 021-5 7 1
 Beckley 000 000 000-0 6 4

ROBERTS AND SMITH; GROSS AND HALE, McVER.

Romey Hampton, president of Raleigh County Umpires Association, took charge of appointing umpers for all Centennial ball games.

got only eight. Then came the final. Wiping out an early 2-0 advantage the Bulldozers rode high and mighty to a 37-42 convincing victory over Barrackville. Tabor got not with 21. Jarrell had 15 and Carr, 10. Tabor, Romine, Jarrell and Lamb were voted All-State tournament awards after the contest scoring 16 and Romine 10 as Tabor, test.