

The Laurel County Invitational Basketball Tournament was quite a success again this year with good crowds attending the four sessions and especially the last two nights. There were possibly over 4,000 fans in the fieldhouse Friday and Saturday nights.

Clay County retained their crown and the host school was yet to come close to winning its own tournament but nevertheless, there have been some very good ball games these four years and this was no exception starting with the opener last Wednesday night between the Tigers from Manchester and Joe Harper's Monticello Trojans.

We found out two things for sure and one is that Clay County is a strong state team and should win the 13th region handily while three of the teams in the LCIT are bona fide 12th region challengers along with McCreary County and even possibly Stanford so this region may be up for grabs.

For the first time since our schools consolidated Laurel County cannot be considered a threat for the 12th region title and the Cardinals will have their hands full getting out of the 48th district even as a runner-up team. LCHS could beat a good team on a given night but it could lose to a weak team on certain nights the way it has played so far.

Mike Baker did come through in the Middlesboro game with two clutch free throws that saved the game but the Cards really have a couple of tough ones coming up at Monticello Friday night and at Lexington Henry Clay next Tuesday night.

Clay County, behind the all-stater Gary Gregory has a big game coming up at Manchester Saturday night as top ranked Louisville Central comes to the area and many local fans may want to see that game and it would be advisable to get there early.

Mentioning Gregory as an all-stater may make some fans think it is too early for that kind of talk but the 5'9" guard is as good as they come and he can do about anything possible in a game, especially down the wire in the clutch situations. Gregory is possibly the best all-around player in this area in many years and this will, of course bring up arguments which cannot be proven.

I will go out on a limb and state that he is as good as any individual player I have seen since starting to write sports in 1961 and inch for inch the best as it is hard to

compare 5'9" players with larger players up towards 6'5" or more. This leaves somewhat of a lee way which is the way it should be to keep out of too many arguments.

There was no all-tournament team selected again this year and Clay County and Casey County received trophies and Gregory would have been a unanimous choice as MVP had there been one. Clay County Coach Bob Keith took his players over in front of his crowd during the presentation ceremonies which was handled by Athletic Director Holbert Hodges.

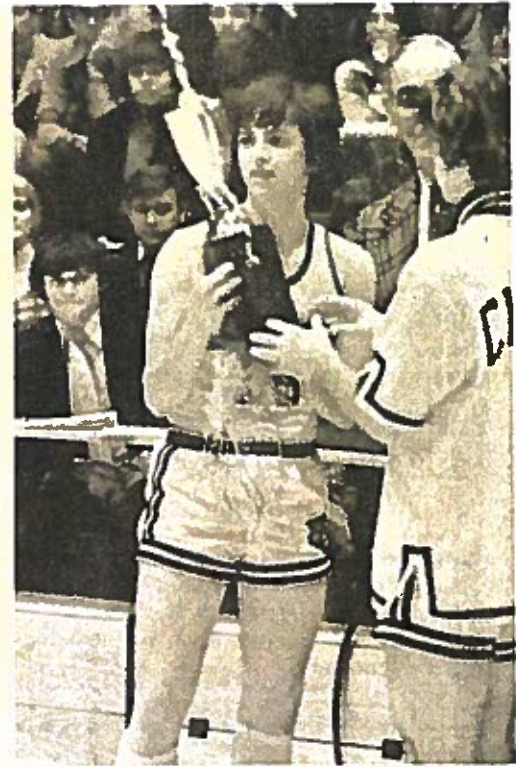
Here is my pick for all-tournament and this is only five where ten or twelve should be selected and this is also just one opinion and may make Laurel County fans mad as none of the Cardinals would have made it.

Gary Gregory-Clay County; Jack Prewitt-Casey County; Billy Joe Coulter-Danville; Butch Grubb-Clay County and Ernie Buell-Middlesboro. This could bring up arguments with the exception of Gregory and the choice of Grubb was purely for defense and other things that don't show up in the statistics.

Other top flight players were Danny Price and Dwight Bastin of Casey County; Joe Houston of Danville, Billy Bingham of Middlesboro; Daryl Dunagan and Charles Duncan of Monticello; the other three Clay County starters, Cecil Hooker, David Smith and Marcus McKissick; and the Laurel County players at times although none of them had two outstanding games as the Cards are balanced.

The biggest disappointment of the tournament was probably Danville's Edwin Grey, who made the all-state tournament team last year but the frail guard did not look like the same player last week. Corbin also looked somewhat disappointing but the Redhounds of Coach Roy Woolum are a young team and should come along later in the season with their good height. The Laurel County-Corbin games this year may be played in slow motion as neither team streaks up and down the floor.

The Super Bowl will be on TV at 3:00 Sunday and it should be a good football game although most fans seem to think that Miami will run away with the "Purple People Eaters". Minnesota is a good, solid team with few weaknesses but the one big weakness the Vikings seem to have will very likely lead to their downfall



THE THREE CO-CAPTAINS of the Clay County of the Laurel County Invitational Tournament w defeating Casey County 73-66. From left to ri Director Holbert Hodges, who presented the trog the net. Gregory scored 104 points in his team' standing player in the four night meet which dre nights as the fieldhouse was near capacity.

and that is too many turnovers, something that the Dolphins do very little of.

Since the Dolphins won last year and the Vikings never have even with some great teams we will look for an upset but don't get over excited and put anything on that as the Dolphins have to be the favorites on paper and on the field where it counts.

UK Coach Joe Hall did not read this column last week and he played Ronnie Lyons on throughout the LSU game and the little guard, who tries hard could not handle it. He made numerous turnovers as did his running mate, Mike Flynn but worst of all Lyons let his man move under on him as usual and he cannot help this.

G. J. Smith looks better every game and he will have to be used more as he can help the shooting of the Wildcats which is not too bad compared with their other phases of the game. Jimmy Dan Connor is far overrated and always has been. UK better get out and recruit some basketball players before it finds itself slipping in the weakest major conference in the Nation.

Two outstanding high school players are right in Lexington but UK has little chance of getting them and most fans know why and this also must be changed if the Wildcats are to return to National prominence in basketball.

Still, the Cats will win the hame games, as usual and that could be enough to keep

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