

Selections

From

ALL NATIVE BASKETBALL



A HISTORY OF
TOURNAMENT PLAY

1947 to 1953

1960 to 1979

All-Native Basketball

A History of Tournament Play

1947-53 – 1960-78



Written and Edited

by

Len Harrington



This book is dedicated to
the Native players and fans
who have made basketball
their Number One sport in
Northwest British Columbia.



FORWARD

A book commemorating the All Native Basketball Tournament of the North Pacific Indian people's participation in this specific sport is long overdue.

Basketball and Northerners has been especially well-suited as a sport combination for years - in fact - if the Canadian founder of the game could see how well the two go together, Dr. James Naismith might have changed his residence from Almonte, Ontario to Prince Rupert. A "difficult" climate (rain) juxtaposed with relatively generally available facilities, has produced an exceptional love of basketball by northern men and women of all walks of life. But it was in the native villages, often aided by excellent volunteer officials and coaches, that the game has taken on an added lustre of significance.

I well remember the original tournament from 1947 - 1953 in the old Second Avenue Civic Centre in Prince Rupert where literally hundreds of hours of hard work by some who are still with the tournament, such as Kitamaat's Alan Hall, Kitkatla's Russel Gamble, and Hartley Bay's Johnny Clifton, resulted in a cultural event originally planned by Don Forward,

the Civic Centre's first Director of Recreation.

Later on the tournament grew in size once it was revived in 1960 and the old Civic Centre could no longer hold the fans who wanted to be part of the event, so final games were played in the new High School. The fire in the old Centre in 1968 put an end to the era entirely and the tournament remained in the school until the new Civic Centre became home in 1972.

It's difficult to single out individuals over the years, but some warrant mention. There's Kitamaat's Crosby Smith whose soft, long set shots thrilled fans in the early years of the 60's. Kitamaat also had Gary Grant, a player who gave 110 percent every minute on the floor. Then there's Art Helin whom they say could score standing on his head if he so wished. In the early 60's, Kitkatla had a trio of players - Elmer Ridley, Don Brown, and Fred Gamble - a smooth passing forward line that was the best front line of any team seen over the years. When Metlakatla, Alaska was in, they had Randy Hayward who obviously was the closest we've ever seen to being a professional player. He would average 30 points a game or better. Then there is Kitkatla's diminutive Clarence Innes who stood about 5'6'' and proved consistently that it's far from being a tall man's game.

Of course there were many other memorable stars over the past 20-plus years - including the great 1947 - 1953 performance of Chris Wilson of Kitamaat - too many to mention in the foreward but all remembered in this excellent text by Len Harrington who has consistently given unstintingly of his time and talk to sport in general, and this tournament in particular, throughout his career here in the northwestern British Columbia.

To all who have given themselves in the past, to all who will be part of this tournament in the future, I offer my thanks and commendation. Each adds excellence to not only his own life, but ours as well, by joining active participation and culture together in an event that brings people to a better understanding of each other through the potent medium of sport.

Iona Campagnola

M.P., Skeena

Minister of State

Fitness and Amateur Sport

The First Tournament

The first All Native tournament ran for seven years starting in 1947. It eventually folded due to a lack of interest. Here's the story of those years as written by Ken Specht and published in the program of the 1960 tournament.

“Even prior to 1947, basketball had long been a serious sporting endeavor among the coastal Indian villages, but no formal attempt had been made to decide the most formidable array of talent, despite the fact that innumerable local jousts were held.

In 1947, the Prince Rupert Basketball Association decided to hold the first Northern British Columbia Coast Indian Championship tournament.

On March 12, some 400 spectators and seven all-native teams trooped to the Roosevelt gymnasium and displayed such sportsmanship during the highly successful tourney that it was decided to hold the meetings annually.

The three-day agenda that year saw Kincolith emerge from the tournament after a decisive 55-40 victory over Aiyansh to win the B.C. Packer trophy. The most valuable player award, presented by 99 Taxi, was given to David Doolan for his good sportsmanship and basketball ability.

The next three consecutive all-native tournaments, played at the Civic Centre, were dominated by the powerful Kitamaat Village contingent who outplayed and outscored all opposition they met.

Perhaps one of the greatest stars to emerge from the three-year Kitamaat domination was Chris Wilson of the victors who won the Bill Scuby most valuable player trophy three straight years.

Wilson, Kitamaat's lanky centre, always delighted the fans as he consistently garnered 20 or 30 points per game. (note - this was before the jump shot came into being).

In 1950, the competitions were handled and organized by a Native Basketball Association committee.

During Kitamaat's reign, the smelter city village gained their last two titles by virtue of wins over Port Simpson by scores of 65-35 and 53-30. The Port Simpson Athletic Club gained their revenge by eliminating the Kitamaat squad 44-33 in the early rounds of the 1951 tournament.

Port Simpson, however, lost in the finals as a strong Kitkatla contingent snatched the championship in an exciting 46-41 victory to gain the new B.C. Packer trophy (Kitamaat retained the old trophy as they won the series three years in a row).

Wylar Innes of Kitkatla won the most valuable player trophy and a gold medal. Silver medals were presented annually to members of winning teams each year after 1950.

The smallest crowd in the history of the tournament was on hand to see the thrilling 1951 games. Cold weather and high winds prevented the outlying coastal villages from making the trek.

Another factor preventing greater attendance at the games was poor accommodations for both teams and spectators.

Interest in the championship tournaments slowly began to wane. In 1952, the tournament, to be held in Port Simpson, was called off when entries were so few in number it didn't constitute enough teams to make the effort worthwhile.

A final attempt to hold the tournament was scheduled in April, 1953, with only four teams competing. After many championship competitions, Port Simpson finally gained the coveted B.C. Packer trophy by virtue of a 51-40 final victory over Kitkatla.

Vernon Dudoward, who netted 32 points during the game, captured the most valuable player award.

No real effort to hold the contest has been made since, and the trophies still sit in the dusty archives of the Port Simpson gymnasium."



An Idea That Worked!

Irwin Garfield proposed the idea for an All Native Basketball Tournament in the fall of 1959.

Irwin owned the Old Empress Hotel and most of his drinking customers were Indians. He knew most of them personally, and learned that back in the late 40s and early 50s the natives enjoyed great rivalry in an annual basketball tournament.

Garfield sponsored a team in the Prince Rupert Basketball Association's city league. Most of his players were natives, so he thought it would be a good idea if the association re-organized the all native tournament, for several reasons.

The main reason was to stimulate interest in the sport. Basketball had long been one of the major Prince Rupert sports. They would pack the old Civic Centre gym, and Roosevelt gym before that, but now attendance had dropped off and only a handful of faithful fans bothered to turn out.

Garfield put forth his idea for reviving the tournament during one of our frequent after-the-game brew sessions. I can't recall all those in attendance at this particular gathering, but we agreed it was a challenge worthy of our talents. The association was sick in the bank account and we felt this gamble might boost basketball back to a major attraction, and put a few bucks in the bank so we could send teams out of town and bring others in to improve the calibre of ball.

So, we called a meeting of the Prince Rupert Basketball Association, set up committees and dates. And the Prince Rupert and District All Native Basketball Tournament was born at a Civic Centre meeting on some forgotten date in the fall of 1959.

None of us had any experience running a big tournament. Garfield said he was sure we'd get at least six villages to enter. It was decided to have two divisions - a senior and a junior. We wrote letters to every village in

the area, explaining our plan and asking their support with one or two teams.

(We did change the junior section to an intermediate section somewhere along the line, but I really can't tell you why).

The basketball association was a very democratic group, so we told Al Kelsey (not asked or elected) that he would be chairman of the tournament. Just so it would be a little more interesting for Kelsey, we also gave him the job of ordering trophies and lining up accommodations for teams together with Garfield.

Publicity was handled by Daily News Sports Writer, Ken Specht, along with Bill Bailey and yours truly. Bailey and I were asked to put together a program. In our spare time we went to local merchants, explained what we were trying to do and attempted to sell them advertising in the program. It was a difficult job. We had few clues as to what to do.

Only a few merchants turned us down, even though we told them that several hundred natives would come to town for a week and would be spending money, probably at their store. The few that refused said they'd have to buy from them anyway, so why should they advertise. We seriously considered telling the natives not to do business with these chintzy merchants, but didn't go ahead with the idea.

To make a few more dollars, we also set up a dance for the final night. Bailey and Basketball Association president Bill Gurney were charged with making the arrangements, and we got Johnny Clifton's Hartley Bay Five to provide the music. Old time sports fan Sparky Smith offered his services, so we put him in charge of ticket sales.

High school basketball coach Don Hartwig was given the job of making up the draws for both sections. They made me financial chairman. To this day I can't recall why I got the job, unless it was because I handled finances for the R.C.M.P. Sub-Division.

Veteran basketball and poker player Bill (Mouse) Morrison was named to set up referees, and young Bobby Smith was to line up scorekeepers and timers.

A rules committee to handle all protests consisted of Bill Gurney, Al Kelsey, Dick Nickerson, Bill Morrison and Don Hartwig.

We lined up the Civic Centre for March 2nd to 5th in 1960, figuring that would be sufficient time for the number of games. We also arranged for Russell Gamble to handle "policing" the crowds. We wanted the fans

to enjoy themselves, but if there was to be trouble we wanted their people to handle it.

Eleven rules were set down for the initial tournament. Most of those rules are in effect today. Here they are:

1. Any native, enfranchised or otherwise, shall be eligible to play.
2. Any player, coach or manager found under the influence of alcohol during the tournament will be automatically suspended. This rule will be strictly enforced. (note - once they were eliminated, they could drink all they want).
3. Senior games will be four, 10-minute quarters. Intermediate games will be four, 8-minute quarters.
4. Seniors will play 5 minute overtime periods for tie games. Intermediates will play 3 minute overtime periods.
5. Lineups must be in the hands of the scorekeepers 15 minutes before game time.
6. All teams must be ready to go on the floor immediately after the previous game.
7. Player passes will be issued for entry to all games.
8. Awards will be presented immediately following the final game. A committee has been formed to pick the All Star Team, Most Valuable Player and Most Sportsmanlike Team. (note - more awards were added as the years went by).
9. Any protests must be in the hands of Chief Referee Bill Morrison, in writing, no later than 30 minutes following the game.
10. The 1960 Canadian Amateur Basketball Association rules will govern the tournament.
11. In cases where uniform colours clash, a toss of coin will decide which team must change.

The organizers felt we should import a referee who could officiate the odd game and also conduct off-hour clinics on rules with the players and coaches. Wink Willox of Vancouver, a veteran official since 1940 and Educational Director for the B.C. Basketball Referee's Association, agreed to attend and provide his experience.

We even arranged for a broadcast over radio station CFPR with Dan McAfee doing the play-by-play and myself handling the colour. We did the final senior game that year. It was to be the first of dozens of broadcasts

over the years by CFPR and later by CHTK. When we moved down to the High School and later to the new Civic Centre, it was not rare to have both stations broadcasting at the same time. In the 1970s, some games were televised by CFTK-TV on a delayed basis.

That reminds me of a story. One of the last telecasts we did had Hartley Bay as one of the teams involved. Just about every other senior team had been seen in tournament action. It was a 'first' for Hartley Bay. I told Chief Johnny Clifton we'd be doing the game, but he didn't seem too happy. When asked why, Johnny explained that the reception tower at Hartley Bay had been knocked off its base and they weren't getting any picture down there. So, Hartley Bay people never did get to see their team on TV.

But, getting back to the first year, financing proved to be our biggest headache. The Basketball Association was broke and we had to plead with merchants to trust us on credit. This they did. We also told teams they'd have to pay their own expenses and if there was any profit, we'd see that they got the major share.

As things turned out, we made \$1,200 of which \$1,000 was split among the teams and \$200 went into the Basketball Association's empty bank account.

In later years, teams were granted per diem allowances as more money and the stability of the tournament became factors.

A crowd count that first year revealed that 80 per cent of the fans were native. This percentage increased until today when more than 95 per cent of crowds are native.

It would be an understatement to say that first year was successful. We made money (and a lot of mistakes to be corrected in future) and the future looked bright for this to be an annual event.

I can only add that I hope I'm still around when they celebrate the 50th anniversary of the All Native Basketball Tournament.



The Tournament

Year By Year — 1960

The revived All Native Basketball tournament in 1960 attracted a total of 15 entries. This was about five more than the rookie organizers had expected, and about as many as they felt they could handle in that four-day span (March 2 - 5) at the old band-box Civic Centre gym.

Ten senior teams submitted entries by the February 19th deadline. It was decided to play them in a double-knockout series. Five intermediate teams also entered. This total was insufficient for double-knockout, so they were set up in a round-robin series.

The senior teams were Kitamaat, Rupert Thunderbirds, Greenville Athletic Club, Hartley Bay, Port Simpson Y.P.E.A., Port Simpson Athletic Club, Kitkatla K.E.C., Kitkatla Aces, Aiyansh Y's and Miller Bay Vikings.

Intermediate entries were Manson's Tom-Tom Five, Rupert Royals, Metlakatla, Port Simpson Athletic Club and Aiyansh Comets.

A few days before the tournament opening, Hartley Bay advised they would be unable to take part due to the death of a villager. The Prince Rupert high school senior Rainmakers were asked to fill in the schedule because by then it was too late to hustle up another all native team. Rainmakers were to play two games, defaulting each to their opponents.

This was the same Rainmaker team that continued on to provincial high school finals at Vancouver where they placed second.

Two highly-respected north coast residents officiated at opening ceremonies held that first night. Dr. R.G. Large, representing the City of Prince Rupert and an honorary member of the Native Brotherhood of B.C., and Frank Calder, the president of the Nishga Tribal Council, both expressed congratulations to organizers and competitors alike. Calder went on to say: "A tournament such as this is of great educational value and creates a feeling of fellowship and sportsmanship between villagers and the city of Prince Rupert."

Another honoured guest at the tournament was Wink Willox, Educational

Director for the B.C. Basketball Referee's Association. Willox was flown in to conduct clinics and to referee the odd game.

When it was all over, Wink was asked to comment on what he had observed. "Well, to be honest with you, I have seen some of the finest outside shooting I've ever seen. Some of these guys were shooting like they had bomb sights. However, these teams do have a lot to learn about setting up plays, not dribbling as much and defending against the shooter. Once they learn this, we'll see basketball second to none."

As for the tournament, here's what I wrote in the following year's program about the initial tourney:

"Sharply at 9 a.m. on March 2nd, the first game of the 1960 series got underway as Miller Bay Vikings beat Port Simpson Y.P.E.A. 76-53. The second game that morning saw Aiyansh Comets edge Rupert Royal in the first of hundreds of thrillers to come by a score of 37-36.

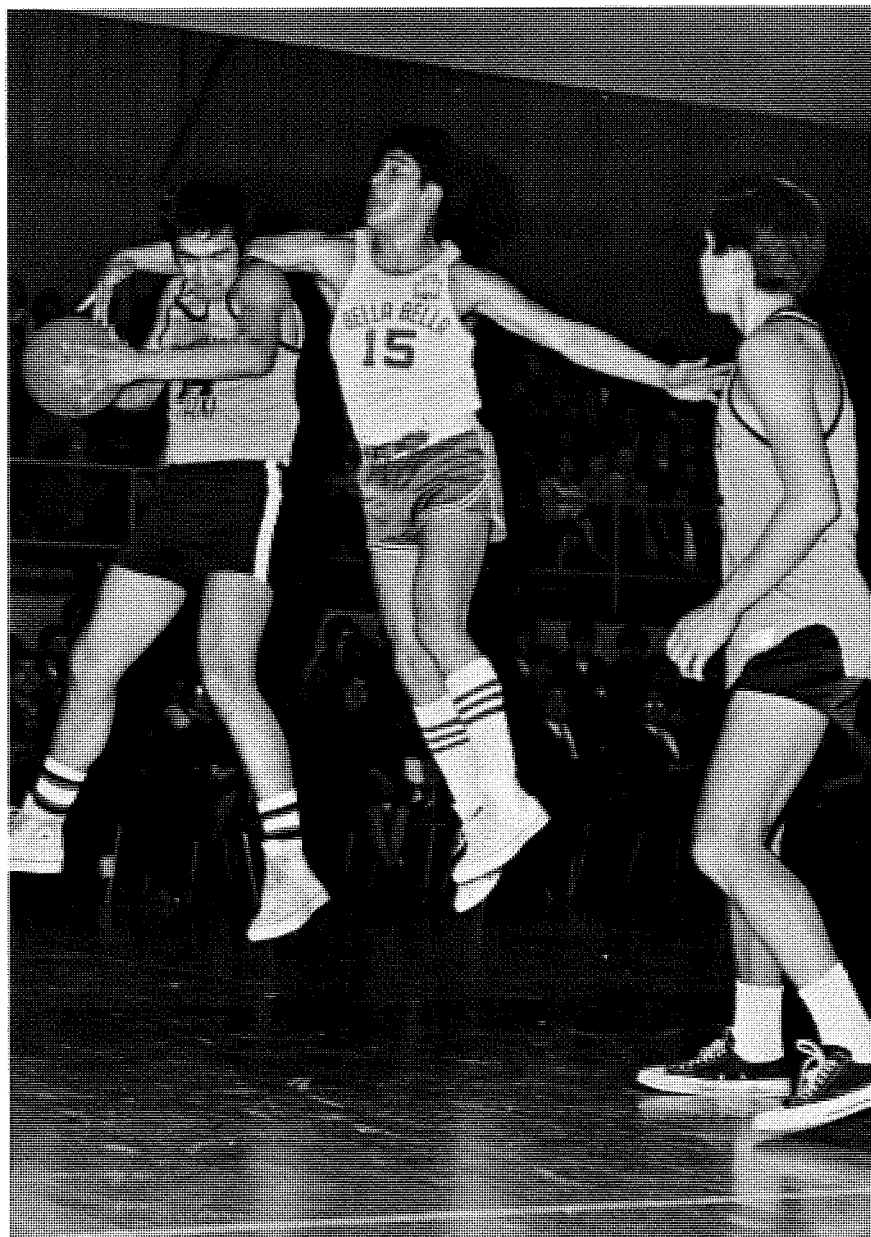
"In other games that day, Kitamaat outscored Aiyansh Y's 72-64 in a game that was action-packed throughout. Manson's Tom-Tom Five (where did they get that name?) then defeated Metlakatla 38-30 behind Terry Brown's 18-point effort, and Jackie White fired home 22 points in leading Port Simpson AC's to a resounding 63-29 win over Aiyansh Comets. In an all-Kitkatla encounter, K.E.C. smothered the Aces 86-32. The final game saw Rainmakers over Thunderbirds 67-21.

"Action continued on Thursday as Greenville out-hustled Port Simpson Y.P.E.A. 60-45. The other Port Simpson senior entry, Athletic club, surprised Miller Bay Vikings by scoring a 41-37 win. However, the AC's were back in action that night and dropped a 70-46 decision to Kitkatla's K.E.C.

"Other games on Thursday saw the Vikings bounce Kitkatla Aces 86-41; Rainmakers outscore Aiyansh Y's 46-29; Kitamaat wallop the Thunderbirds 93-41; Port Simpson AC intermediates take Metlakatla 41-35; and Rupert Royals out-drum the Tom-Tom Five 43-30.

"By Friday, the third day, it was becoming clear as to what teams we could expect to battle it out for the championship. Kitamaat and Kitkatla K.E.C. were heavily favoured in the senior section while Port Simpson AC and Metlakatla looked like the class of the intermediates.

"Both K.E.C. and Kitamaat were undefeated when they tangled Friday afternoon. The winner would advance to the final while the loser was



relegated to the loser's section. Don Brown tossed in 24 points for K.E.C. and gave them that berth in the championship game with a 57-45 victory over Kitamaat. Other games in the loser's section saw Aiyansh Y's eliminate Port Simpson AC's and Port Simpson Y.P.E.A. knock out Rupert Thunderbirds (sorry, fans, we couldn't locate the scores of these games).

"K.E.C. rested up and watched as Kitamaat came back Friday night and eliminated Aiyansh 65-51 behind Gary Grant's 25 point effort. In the Saturday afternoon semi-final, Miller Bay, who had taken out Y.P.E.A. 72-51 Friday night, gave Kitamaat quite a battle before losing out 54-48. This set up a rematch between Kitamaat and K.E.C. in the final.

"Meanwhile, in the intermediate section, the final game of the round-robin series worked out as though it had been set up purposely. Port Simpson entered the final with two wins and one loss, the same as their last-game opponents - Rupert Royals. The winner was to be decided in this matchup.



“It was Port Simpson taking the Lucky Lager trophy as the first intermediate champions as they came back from a 14-11 first-quarter deficit and went on to defeat the Royals 56-44. Jackie White and Frank Swanson paced the winners with 15 and 14 points respectively. Nelson Clayton pumped in 21 points in a losing cause for the Royals.



Fans packed the gym for the senior final Saturday night. They expected the game of all games, and they weren't disappointed. Here's how Daily News sports writer Ken Specht wrote up that championship contest:

“An inspired Kitkatla Excelsior club, which entered the final quarter of the senior All Native Basketball tournament championship game with a 10-point deficit Saturday night, scored an overwhelming 27 points to edge Kitamaat 61-57 before more than 700 screaming fans at the Civic Centre.

“The thrilling win gave Kitkatla a clean five-game sweep of the four-day series and provided an unforgettable climax to the first All Native tourney in seven years.

“As in earlier games, the deadly trio of forwards Don Brown with 20 points, Fred Gamble with 19 and Elmer Ridley with 18, dominated as they scored all but four of the team’s 61 points.

“Gamble, who entered the final quarter with an eye half-closed by an injury received early in the third quarter, squinted through his one good eye, grinned and bucketed 11 points. Kitamaat’s chances were dealt a heavy blow three minutes before the end when their scoring ace and captain, Roy Grant, fouled out.

“A twisting jump shot by Brown with two minutes and 19 seconds left gave Excelsiors the lead, 55-53, for the first time since the first quarter. Playing ‘heads up’ ball, they fought off a desperate Kitamaat offensive to post the victory.

“At the conclusion of the tournament, Frank Calder presented the Lucky Lager trophy to Excelsiors’ captain, Elmer Ridley. Calder lauded the teams for their efforts and said the “sportsmanship displayed during this tournament is typical of that shown in all such previous series.” Calder also presented a similar Lucky Lager trophy to Jackie White of the victorious Port Simpson Athletic Club Intermediates.

“Runnerup trophies were presented to Kitamaat in the senior division and Matlakatla in the intermediate section.

“Individual trophies were presented to the senior all-stars -- Rod Bolton and Crosby Smith of Kitamaat, Don Brown and Elmer Ridley of Kitkatla, and Art Helin of Miller Bay. Intermediate all-stars were Jackie White and Frank Swanson of Port Simpson, Steve Johnson of Aiyansh, Clarence Nelson of Metlakatla, and Jerry Jefferies of the Tom-Tom Five.

“Referee Wink Willox presented most sportsmanlike team trophies to Miller Bay Vikings and Aiyansh Comets. In presenting these awards, Willox said “This is the trophy I most like to award. Championship teams can lose the next series and they no longer are the retainers of such an honour, but when a team is chosen as the most sportsmanlike, they have it with them for the rest of their lives.”

“Willox also presented the most valuable player awards to Crosby Smith in the senior division and Jackie White in the intermediate division. Willox was then presented with a handsome cigaret case by emcee Len Harrington for “the wonderful effort he had put into the tournament.”

And so the first annual All Native basketball tournament had ended. It

was an experiment to revive basketball interest in Terrace. And it proved several things. It proved to be the biggest sporting event that year. It proved that the idea for an All Native tournament was a good one, and it proved that the native people were the best fans in the north. It was to continue to prove itself in all these categories for the next 20 years.



We Had Action That Wasn't Basketball!

Everyone who has attended All Native tournament games can recall their favourite series, their favourite game, their favourite player and perhaps even their favourite referee.

Although I haven't been too close to the tournament since moving to Terrace seven years ago, I can recall a number of incidents during the early years that added to the colour of what took place on the courts.

I recall the first year when I was still a member of the R.C.M.P. It was during the finals in the old Civic Centre. The small gym was packed and many fans were turned away at the door because you could only get about seven or eight hundred into that auditorium that normally seated about 400.

Three late-comers accosted me in the main lobby. I was off-duty and merely acting as a tournament official. It seems their village was playing and they simply had to get into the gym to cheer the boys on. I tried to explain it was impossible but they refused to take 'no' for an answer.

At that time I was a six-foot, 200-pound policeman in pretty good shape. These Indians were all somewhat taller and out-weighed me considerably. I also noticed they had muscles in places I'd never dreamed would exist. In plain words, it was get them into the gym or get a new picture for my identification card because my face was about to be re-arranged.

Having lived with this face 28 years, and having come to rather like it, I decided something must be done to assist my new friends --- enemies if I refused.

So, I got the key to the door leading from the back of the gym to the stage in the hall next door. The gang followed me and lined up at the door. On the other side, I knew it was packed with fans and they'd have to push right in, after which I'd slam the door and lock it before the mass of people fell back onto the stage.

As I opened the door, the trio of heavys bulldozed their way in and held

off the crowd as I slammed the door shut and locked it. I knew they were still in a hallway beside a dressing room door, but felt that as anxious as they were, they'd make their way to where they'd see the game.

Later, after it was all over and people had drifted out, the boys came forth and thanked me profusely for my good deed. They even offered me a drink out of the last bottle they had smuggled into the gym. I could hardly refuse, could I!

Another story from the early days concerned an intermediate team that shall remain nameless. This team entered the tournament as favourite to win their section, and there weren't too many fans who thought they wouldn't take home the marbles.

The team breezed through their first game in top fashion. In their second game, they ran into problems and were knocked into the loser's section. The next morning, a delegation of villagers came to the executive committee rather sad-faced. It seems the team's coach had fallen ill suddenly and they wanted permission to replace him.

Permission was granted and a new coach graced the bench in their next game. During that game, one of the executive came laughing to the rest of us. He said he'd just seen the old coach and we should come and take a look. This we did. The old coach looked like he'd lost an argument with a 10-ton truck. He had a couple of black eyes, a nose that must have been suffering from at least three breaks, and enough cuts and bruises to keep an emergency ward busy for a couple of hours.

We later found out that some villagers weren't satisfied with the way the old coach 'coached'. They felt it was his fault the team had lost their second game, so they provided him with the "illness" that precluded him from continuing.

I recall the night in the old Centre gym when a well-oiled fan leaned a little too far over the balcony and fell 20 feet to the floor. He landed on his head and the crowd fell silent as others rushed to his aid.

A call had already been placed for a doctor and ambulance when the fan got up, held his head and shook off all assistance, and staggered back to his spot in the balcony. He was later seen cheering madly as the game grew exciting. To this day, I believe that if he had broken an arm and/or leg, he would have refused treatment until the game was over.

The games also brought out intense rivalry between fans as well as teams.

We had few fights, if any, among players (one referee was punched on the snout, but that's another story) but we did have a few fisticuffs among the spectators.

The one I remember the most also took place in the old Centre. A couple of oldtimers (they were in their sixties, at least) got into a shouting match in the first half of a game. By halftime, the wives had also gotten into the act and many fans watched this action more than the game.

Finally they decided the matter could only be settled by a battle. So, they headed for the lobby, with the wives acting as managers in this duel. Well, the footwork was as fancy as anything I've seen Fred Astaire do, and the language was far from printable, by nary a blow was struck as they shuffled about swinging and missing by wide margins.

Finally the action tired them out and they went back to the gym for the rest of the game. After it was all over, the old codgers were seen heading for the pub, arm-in-arm. Obviously the argument had been settled and they needed a few beers to get back in shape.

My most expensive laugh through the years took place after a tournament when some of the executive and a few players gathered in one of the sample rooms at the Savoy Hotel. We had a few cases of beer and planned to celebrate another successful tournament.

I must say right now that Bill (Mouse) Morrison started what turned out to be an expensive night. He did it by tipping an open bottle of beer into one of Tom Masich's pockets when Tom's back was turned. This started the beer fight and we wasted about three cases before we were laughing so hard that we didn't have the strength to douse each other any more.

I should point out that the basement sample room had chains hanging from the ceiling that travelling salesmen used to hang merchandise on. Someone got the bright idea that we should take Masich's jacket, hang it on a chain and "burn him in effigy". It cost us another case of beer to put out the ensuing blaze.

Then one of the players looked at all the chains and decided he'd play Tarzan swinging from chain to chain. Well, the first two chains held, but the third one gave way under the weight and half the ceiling came tumbling down.

This final stunt smartened everyone up and we sneaked away into the night. Next day, owner Gerry Sherman phoned me and asked who was going to pay the \$150.00 damage to his sample room.

Now here I'm going to tell you something that has been a secret for years. The money came out of the Prince Rupert Basketball Association's share of gate receipts after expenses. Needless to say we never again got a sample room for our fun and games.

Well, those are only a few of the humorous incidents I can recall. We also had some bad incidents, like the one where the referee was punched out and we had to ban the player for life.

As for me, I wouldn't have missed an All Native tournament for anything.



They Won't Forget Elmer Ridley

Elmer Ridley was an all-star for the first five years of the tournament, and won the most valuable player award in his fifth year. Had he not died tragically in the summer of 1965, Elmer would likely still be playing today because he was a class competitor with a capital 'C'.

Who can forget his classic, cool-headed, last-second shot from center in the 1962 final that soared 45 feet through the air and swished the net to give his Kitkatla team the championship. It was the most dynamic shot in the tournament up to that time, and few fans will disagree if we say it was the greatest shot in the 19-year history of the tournament.

It was a shock to north coast sports fans when word came out that Elmer had drowned while attempting to save his son, two-year-old Elmer Jr. The boy had fallen overboard from a gillnetter in Kelp Pass between Porcher and Lewis Islands.

Elmer didn't hesitate to jump after the lad into the thick kelp. Wife Christine stopped the boat and rushed to grab the youngster who had bobbed to the surface. Elmer was not to be seen, apparently held under by the kelp.

Two women on a passing boat joined in and gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on the boy for more than two hours. The little fellow never recovered.

A search by 26 boats from Kitkatla resulted in the recovery of Elmer's body four hours later.

Four days after the tragedy on July 21, the father and son were laid to rest in Kitkatla cemetery. More than 250 relatives and friends attended the service. It was the largest funeral ever held at Kitkatla.

In addition to being one of the finest native athletes in the area, Elmer was also a devoted husband and community worker. He had served as a village councillor for seven years and was vice-president of the Kitkatla Community Hall.



He was a credit to his village, his people and to the world of sport.

In the 1966 tournament, a trophy was presented on behalf of this popular basketball star. It was, and is today, the Elmer Ridley Memorial trophy for the most inspirational senior player, because if ever there was an inspirational player, it was Elmer Ridley.

The Old Civic Centre

Many Rupertites took the old Civic Centre for granted, and only a few today can remember the time and effort people put into getting the building for indoor recreation.

It was not an overnight dream. It took 13 years before plans formulated by the Gyro Club became a reality.

Back in 1929, the stock market crashed with a thud heard around the world. It was in this year that Gyro members decided to interest other city organizations to co-operate in building a community gymnasium.

They wanted a Y.M.C.A. with a swimming pool, but they ran into opposition and so revised their thinking to a civic centre without outside affiliation. But the depression hit with a bang and a campaign for funds was pushed aside by more pressing problems, such as where to get that next meal.

During this period, known as the Dirty 30s, the city of Prince Rupert was in dire need of money. With remarkable foresight, Gyro and Rotary clubs loaned the city money which had been set aside for the recreation centre. In exchange, the clubs got three lots at the corner of Second Avenue and McBride Street.

By 1938, the hard years seemed to be behind them, and the idea for a recreation building was revived. A rather small bank account was boosted, the lots were surveyed and plans drawn up.

In May of 1939, plans were completed and an invitation was extended to the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Sons of Norway to join Gyros and Rotarians in forming an organization to continue the work. Then came another setback.

Aldolph Hitler and friends decided it was a good time to conquer the world, so the free nations united to fight in what was to be the Second World War.

It looked like another 10 years before this dream came true, but the sudden burst of defence activity brought on by the world conflict proved to be a stimulant, and offered opportunity to raise funds which wouldnt be realized in normal times.

The city was canvassed and more than \$6,000 raised. An annual carnival was started and during the rest of the war, almost \$100,000 became a nest egg for what was required. As the money rolled in, the committee incorporated and set up a permanent administrative body.

On August 24, 1942, the Prince Rupert Civic Centre Association was formed. Now all they needed was a building.

As Prince Rupert grew in importance as a military port, the government knew it was necessary to set up recreational facilities for the hundreds of servicemen and women stationed there.

The Civic Centre Association was asked to co-operate in the construction of a Y.M.C.A. In a move destined to become a major factor in Rupert's history, the association agreed to give up its claim on the corner lots, with the



understanding the city would give it first option on purchase of any building there when hostilities ceased.

Negotiations were successful, and construction began in 1943. One concession was that space be left at the rear for a swimming pool in future. That dream came true in 1958, and the pool is still in use today.

After the war, and reams of red tape, the association finally took possession of the building and opened its doors to the public on March 17, 1946.

In the years since its opening and when it burned down in 1968, the Centre was renovated numerous times and had dozens of coats of paint. Right up until it was destroyed, they played regular bingo games just to keep the roof repaired.

It was erected under wartime construction methods, and many felt it would only be a temporary structure. But it withstood the use of hundreds of thousands of people over the years, and would likely still be in use today except for that unfortunate fire.



The Day Fred Got Hot

Back in 1963, we thought it was a record for the world. We knew that Fred Ridley's 64-point effort for Hartley Bay in the 1963 tournament against Masset was a record for the All Native basketball tournament. In fact it still is the tournament record today.

In any case, we checked the record books and found that the year previous, a seven-foot giant who played professional basketball for the Philadelphia Warriors (Wilt Chamberlain by name) had scored 100 points in a game. If Ridley had played the five minutes he had sat out in that memorable senior game, he might have tied Chamberlain.

We say "might have" because Fred was hot. Just about every shot he popped up, be it layup, jumper, set shot or foul shot, either went through the hoop cleanly or rolled around the rim and dropped through.

As it was, Fred's effort did tie the previous record held by Elgin Baylor of Minneapolis Lakers until Wilt did his thing.

And as far as we know today, Ridley's mark is the highest in amateur ball in Canada. We didn't check this out because we want to feel that Fred is in a class by himself.

The final score of that game was 86-49. Fred got 28 points in the first half and 36 in the final 20 minutes.

Fortunately, several hundred fans were on hand in the old Civic Centre's gym to see the feat and everyone knew history was in the making late in the game. They stood and cheered every time a Ridley shot whipped through the netting.

When we talked to Fred back then, he claimed he was five-feet, 10 inches tall, give or take an inch or two. That's not big for basketball, but for what he lacked in height he made up in skill, speed and accuracy.

"I think this is the best game I have ever played", Fred said in an

understatement following the game, He admitted it made him “the happiest man in town” at the time. Fred doesn’t play now as age caught up to him, but he has made his mark in basketball history.



Frank Parnell: One-Armed Wonder

Back in 1966, I wrote a story in *The Daily News* about Frank Parnell. He was just starting to play in the All Native tournament, and he eventually played for several years. That story is part of All Native history and I'm repeating here in this anniversary book. Here's the story, word for word.

"Frank Parnell was born with half a right arm, but the 16-year-old Indian youth not only shows it's no handicap, he manages to take part in most sports better than many normal boys.

"Parnell exhibited his skill this week on the Civic Centre basketball court where he starred for Port Edward's Christ the King Anglican Church in the All Native tournament.

"His team was eliminated in two straight contests, but Parnell potted nine of the 64 points garnered by his squad.

"The five-foot, 130-pound youngster was born at Masset with only a three-inch stump below his right elbow.

"I have an artificial arm," the happy-go-lucky lad says, "but I never wear it because my friends give me strange looks when we play together. They think I'll use it as a weapon. I took it off five years ago and haven't worn it since".

"He said he will reconsider his decision when he graduates from high school. Meanwhile, he gets along fine without it.

"Parnell plays outfield in softball, he catches the ball, flips it in the air, tosses away his glove, grabs the ball again and tosses it to the infield. He sheepishly admits being a good batter.

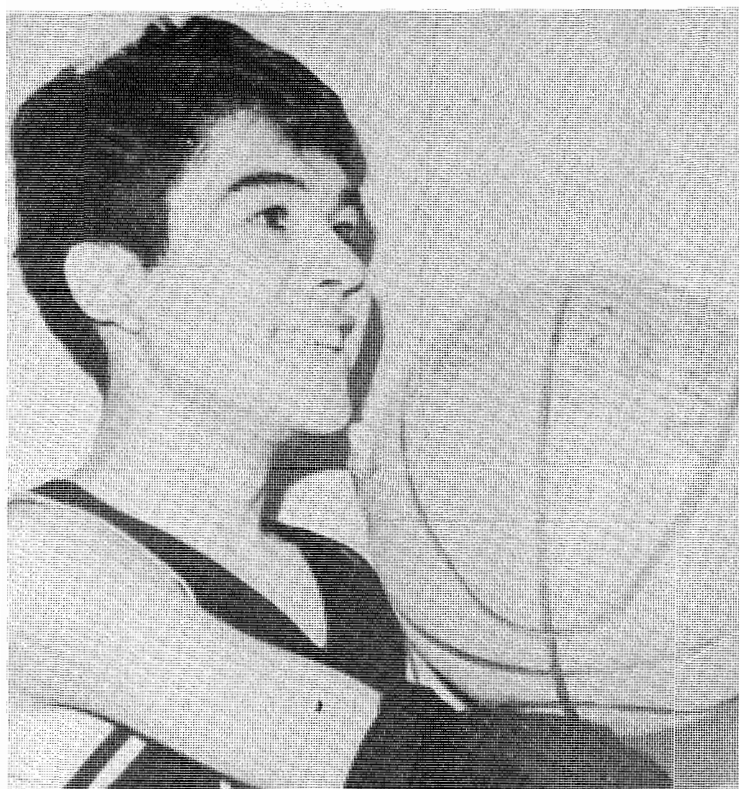
"I don't hit the ball far", he says, "but I manage to get my hits because of my speed".

"Team sponsor Rev. J.C. Blyth calls Parnell a leader of his Knights church club. "He has a wonderful attitude, mixes well, goes to church regularly and is a standout in sports", Father Blyth said.

“He said Parnell is a thinker during games. “I mean Frank makes up for his handicap by using his brain and anticipating opposition moves”.

“In addition to softball and basketball, Parnell is a top runner in track and field, and plays a better-than-average game of soccer. The one-armed wonder is on university program at Booth Memorial junior secondary school. He has a ‘C’ average. His school principal, Don Hartwig, says he could do better.

“Ed Wasylik, Parnell’s physical education instructor, said the youth has a little trouble with flips and vaults, otherwise he’s excellent in other aspects of physical training.



“Wasylik said Parnell does one-handed pushups with ease and is particularly good at volleyball training exercises. “I have the boys bat a volleyball against the wall to quicken reflexes;” Wasylik says, “and Frank is better than most”.

“Parnell is the fourth youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Parnell of Port Edward. He has four brothers and four sisters, none of whom have any handicap. Earl Parnell supports his large family by fishing for Nelson Brothers Fisheries Ltd.

“I wish I had all youngsters as good as Frank”, Father Blyth said. “I believe he would be one of the best Indian athletes in Canada if he had been born without his affliction”.

Award Winners

1960

Champions

2nd. place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Intermediate

Port Simpson

Metlakatla

Jackie White

none chosen

Frank Swanson

Jackie White

Steve Johnson

Jerry Jeffrey

Clarence Nelson

Senior

Kitkatla

Kitamaat

Crosby Smith

Miller Bay

Crosby Smith

Art Helin

Rod Bolton

Don Brown

Elmer Ridley

1961

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Hazelton

Port Simpson

James Sterritt

Port Simpson

James Sterritt

Roger Smith

Rod Sampson

Glen Smith

Butch Windsor

Kitamaat

Kitkatla

Gary Grant

Klemtu

Gary Grant

Crosby Smith

Roy Grant

Elmer Ridley

Ivan Hopkins

1962

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Kitamaat

Hartley Bay

Glen Smith

Kitkatla

Glen Smith

Jim Wilson

Maurice Bolton

Norm Faithful

Eddie Ryan Jr.

Kitkatla

Rupert Chiefs

Art Helin

Hartley Bay

Gary Grant

Fred Gamble

Elmer Ridley

Bob Sankey

Art Helin

1963

	Intermediate	Senior
Champions	Hazelton	Chiefs
2nd. Place	Skidegate	Kitkatla
Most Valuable Player	James Young	Fred Gamble
Sportsmanlike Team	Skidegate	Hartley Bay
All Stars	James Young	Fred Gamble
	Arnie Stewart	Elmer Ridley
	Les Robinson	Art Helin
	Billy Starr	Bob Adams
	Jamie Sterritt	Jacob Stewart

1964

Champions	Hazelton	Kitkatla
2nd. Place	Nelson Bros.	Chiefs
Most Valuable Player	Jamie Sterritt	Elmer Ridley
Sportsmanlike Team	Skidegate	Kitamaat
All Stars	Jamie Sterritt	Elmer Ridley
	Wayne Haldane	Roy Grant
	Ken Humpherville	Herb Morven
	Billy Robinson	Reynold McKay
	Bud Smith	Bob Johnson

1965

Champions	Kitamaat	Native
		Brotherhood Chiefs
2nd. Place	Nelson Bros.	Kitamaat
Most Valuable Player	Albert Robinson	Gary Grant
Sportsmanlike Teams	Bella Bella	Kitkatla
All Stars	Albert Robinson	Gary Grant
	Bud Smith	Art Helin
	Billy Wilson	Wayne Haldane
	Fred Stewart	Frank Swanson
	Kelly Williams	Don Brown

1966

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Inspirational Player

Intermediate
Kitamaat

Hazelton

Ray Mason

Port Edward

Ray Mason

Godfrey Wilson

Bud Smith

Glen Henry

Marty Hall

Senior

Native Brotherhood
Chiefs

Kitkatla

Art Helin

Port Simpson YPEA

Art Helin

Frank Swanson

Arnie Stewart

Don Brown

Fred Gamble

Reynold McKay

1967

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Inspirational Player

Hazelton

Kitkatla

Ray Smith

Kitkatla

Ray Smith

Bruce Smith

Ray Nelson

Clarence Innes

Marty Hall

Bruce Smith

Native Brotherhood
Chiefs

Kitkatla

Don Brown

Port Simpson

Don Brown

Wayne Haldane

Art Helin

Crosby Smith

Arnie Stewart

Crosby Smith

1968

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Inspirational Player

Bella Bella

Kitkatla

Paul Newman

Paul Newman

Terry Windsor

Bill Gamble

Ray Nelson

Gerald Amos

Gerald Amos

Metlakatla, Alaska

Kitamaat

Randy Hayward

Bella Bella

Randy Hayward

Gary Grant

Crosby Smith

Ken Humpherville

Rank Swanson

Gary Grant

1969

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Inspirational Player

Intermediate

Port Edward

Bella Bella

Clarence Innes

Skidegate

Clarence Innes

Nelson Leeson

Terry Windsor

Paul Newman

Marty Hall

Frank Parnell

Senior

Native Brotherhood
Chiefs

Hazelton

Wayne Haldane

Metlakatla

Wayne Haldane

Fred Clayton

Bud Smith

Randy Hayward

Ron Reece

Crosby Smith

1970

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Inspirational Player

Bella Bella

Kitkatla

Paul Newman

Port Simpson

Paul Newman

Clarence Innes

Bill Gamble

Dick Leeson

Medric Reid

Clarence Innes

Metlakatla, Alaska

Kitamaat

Randy Hayward

Metlakatla

Randy Hayward

Ray Nelson

Gerald Amos

Albert Robinson

Bud Smith

Crosby Smith

1971

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Inspirational Player

Kitkatla

Port Simpson

Clarence Innes

Skidegate

Clarence Innes

Bill Gamble

Herbie Grant

Robert Price

Robert Hughes

Clarence Innes

Metlakatla, Alaska

Kincolith

Randy Hayward

Metlakatla

Randy Hayward

Frank Hayward

Maurice Bolton

Ken Humpherville

Gerald Amos

Frank Hayward

1972

Champions
 2nd. Place
 Most Valuable Player
 Sportsmanlike Team
 All Stars

Inspirational Player

Intermediate
 Port Simpson
 Kitamaat
 Marvin Collinson
 Skidegate
 Marvin Collinson
 Robert Hughes
 Wayne Smith
 John Helin
 Art Alexcee
 Richard Green

Senior
 NBA Chiefs
 Metlakatla
 Randy Hayward
 Kitkatla
 Randy Hayward
 Frank Hayward
 Art Helin
 Paul Newman
 Clarence Innes
 Clarence Innes

1973

Champions
 2nd. Place
 Most Valuable Player
 Sportsmanlike Team
 All Stars

Inspirational Player

Kitamaat
 Port Simpson
 Marvin Collinson
 Kitamaat
 Medric Robinson
 Basil Grant
 Marvin Collinson
 John Helin
 Darryl Peers
 Medric Robinson

NBA Chiefs
 Kitamaat
 Clarence Innes
 Hartley Bay
 Clarence Innes
 Vern Brown
 Ken Humpherville
 Maurice Bolton
 Marty Hall
 Chris Bolton

1974

Champions
 2nd. Place
 Most Valuable Player
 Inspirational Player
 Defensive Player
 Sportsmanlike Team
 All Stars

Bella Bella
 Chiefs
 Albert Robinson

 Marty Hall

 Albert Robinson
 Chris Bolton
 Gerald Amos

Port Simpson
 Kitamaat

 Cliff Morgan
 Marv Collinson
 Calvin Barton
 Gary Reece

1975

Champions
2nd. Place
Most Valuable Player
Sportsmanlike Team
All Stars

Inspirational Player
Best Defensive

Intermediate
Kitamaat
Skidegate
Lyle Wilson
NBA Beavers
Marvin Collinson
Lyle Wilson
Harry Young
Brian Brooks
Cliff Morgan
Cyril Grant

Senior
Kitamaat
NBA Chiefs
Marty Hall
Metlakatla Panthers
Marty Hall
Larry Brown
Gerald Amos
Wayne Smith
Art Thistle
Clarence Vickers
Marty Hall

1976

Champions
2nd. Place
Most Valuable Player
Sportsmanlike Team
All Stars

Inspirational Player
Best Defensive

NBA Beavers
Skidegate
Colin Richardson
New Aiyansh
Colin Richardson
Mel Barton
Robert Cross
Sam Robinson
Sam Guno
Steve Adams

Kitamaat
Kitkatla
Chris Bolton
Bella Bella
Chris Bolton
Marty Hall
Calvin Barton
Gerald Amos
Clarence Innes
Clarence Innes
Kelly Williams

1977

Champions
2nd. Place
Most Valuable Player
Sportsmanlike Team
All Stars

Inspirational Player
Best Defensive

NBA Beavers
Kincolith
Calvin Barton
New Aiyansh
Calvin Barton
Sam Robinson
Monty Doolan
Steve Adams
Evan Ross
Steve Adams
Marvin Morgan

Kitamaat
Kitkatla
Gerald Amos
Masset
Gerald Amos
Marty Hall
Clarence Innes
Nelson Leeson
Marv Collinson
Frank Parnell
Kelly Williams

1978

Champions

2nd. Place

Most Valuable Player

Sportsmanlike Team

All Stars

Inspirational Player

Best Defensive

Intermediate

NBA Beavers

Kincolith

Melvin Barton

Kitkatla

Maynard Angus

Marvin Morgan

Calvin Barton

Melvin Barton

Steve Adams

Steve Adams

Fred Jackson

Senior

Kitamaat

Kitkatla

Gerald Amos

Bella Bella

Clarence Innes

Nelson Leeson

Morris Amos

Gerald Amos

Marv Collinson

Nelson Leeson

Larry Brown



In 1963 when we had 23 teams, we also had a shortage of referees for daytime action. Mouse Morrison, during one of his many periods of unemployment, ended up refereeing more than 40 games including eight in a row one day. By the sixth game, Mouse more or less hovered around the center line, running only on needed occasions. It took him two weeks before he could walk properly again. He claimed he went through four cans of talcum powder to cover up the rash he developed you-know-where.

☆ ☆ ☆

It was 1961 when we started the Sunday “All-Star” games. They only lasted a few of the early years. The senior and intermediate stars of the tournament, bolstered by other top players, would take on the Rupert City All-Stars and the High School Rainmakers, respectively. When the games started to become known as “the Hangover Bowl”, they were dropped from the schedule. Most of the players would celebrate after the Saturday night finals, and weren’t in shape for Sunday’s survival-of-the-fittest.

☆ ☆ ☆

Tom Masich of Jaffary’s Sports started the tradition of awarding the game ball to the winning senior team in the tournament. Ernie Sinclair of Far-West Sports carried on that tradition. The ball was brand new and used exclusively for all tournament games.

☆ ☆ ☆

Radio station CFPR started the broadcasts of final games. The only hitch was the station broke away at 10 o’clock so listeners could tune in for the traditional “10 o’clock News”. After missing key action, starting time was eventually dropped back to 8:30 p.m. so we could get the entire game in without breaking away.

☆ ☆ ☆

In 1961, the tournament committee decided to raffle off a car to raise more money. It was the first time and only time. We lost our shirts. The program also turned out to be a loser, so after four years it was dropped for most of the rest of the tournament.

Daily News Sports Editor, Gary Oakes offered a few ideas in 1962: “Tentative plans for the future include making it an All Native Week featuring boxing cards, a talent contest, a beauty contest and the like How about holding basketball in March, a track and field meet in the summer and a soccer tournament in the fall? A few summers from now Prince Rupert could be hosting the First Annual All Native Olympics!”



During the 1962 tournament, Humane Society Awards were presented to Edward George Sampson and James Dudoward by J.V. Boys, Indian Commissioner of B.C. They received the awards for heroic action and presence of mind in assisting in the rescue of Howard Charles Lincoln from drowning at Ryan’s Point near Port Simpson on December 1, 1954.



Mayor Pete Lester of Prince Rupert officiated at many tournament opening ceremonies. One year, instead of tossing up the first jump ball, Lester was asked to sink a free throw instead. Seven tries later, His Honour finally potted a layup.



One year, Civic Centre manager Jake Vandenbrink said they planned to set up closed-circuit television in the auditorium for fans not able to get into the finals. The idea was scratched when it was found the camera and crew would take up too much valuable space.



FROM A DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL: “We know from having fought along-side Indians during the war and watching their athletes and leaders work hard for their cause that both the players on the basketball court and the hundreds of fans who will be watching them will not make a liar out of our belief that the Indian is growing up, and faces a brighter and better future. The All Native Basketball Tournament is a great event. Let’s keep it that way. We’re proud of our native athletes”.

The 1963 tournament started off with a banquet attended by 225 players, coaches, managers, officials and visiting dignitaries. The banquet was put on by local merchants under the guiding hands of T. Norton Youngs. Norton spear-headed the banquet movement after learning the City couldn't afford such an undertaking. Guest speaker was Keith Maltman of the B.C. Government's sports and physical fitness branch. In his speech, Maltman said: "Sound planning and a concentrated effort, together with an informed public are prime requisites before championship calibre is obtained. A good example is Barbara Ann Scott, former World and Olympic figure skating champion. Before she became the world's best, Canada had some 3,500 figure skaters. After she copped the laurels, this figure blossomed to over 50,000". His final advice was; "Don't sit in the boat and look at the oars. Do something".

☆ ☆ ☆

Although we did have one referee punched out in the early years, we also had another come close. Referee Don Hartwig was the only one to think it wasn't funny when an irate fan chased him around the floor.

☆ ☆ ☆

A local resident who has attended many games over the years, told us that the brand of basketball played today is far superior to that in the early days. He also said the fans are much better behaved. "They've really cleaned up their act", he said. "We used to see half the crowd all gassed up, drinking in the lobby and so on. The toilets would be plugged with empty bottles every night. It's sure different today. I was at last year's tournament and there was no drinking in the stands, in the lobby or in the cans. The fans really need a pat on the back for the improvement".

☆ ☆ ☆

In 1964, Tom Masich and Bob Smith were lined up to get some halftime entertainment for night games. In addition to tumbling displays, foul shooting contests for fans and musical groups, here's some of the ideas the boys ignored.....A demonstration on how to chew gum by Alek Bill, foul-shot lessons from Mayor Lester, how to tell off a referee and get tossed out of the game by John Newton, how to win an argument with old Josh McKay, and how to get tossed out of a hotel by the Klemtu team.

During a Port Simpson - Aiyansh game in 1964, the Simpson boys were so anxious to score that they even passed the ball to referee Norm Eckstein. Eckstein held the ball briefly, then passed it back. By then the other official had blown his whistle and ruled a jump ball.

☆ ☆ ☆

There was a “No Smoking” rule in the old Civic Centre gym, but you wouldn’t know it. Fans puffed away until finally we had off-duty firemen patrol the gym advising smokers to put out the cigarettes. We even put up huge signs and finally the fans paid heed. During a time out, one fan yelled out: “Hey, I can finally see the other end of the gym”. In the new Centre, they just don’t smoke in the gym, PERIOD.

☆ ☆ ☆

When they moved the tournament to the new Civic Centre, it took players a while to get used to the much bigger floor and glass backboards. The backboards changed many a sharp-shooter into an average shot until he learned a gentler touch was required. One player was heard to remark: “Last year I averaged 18 points a game. I’ve played two games this year, taken just as many shots and am averaging 5 points a game. I might be washed up before I’m 23 years old”.

☆ ☆ ☆

Mel Brigeman, a referee from Vernon, has officiated at the past five tournaments. Mel has blown his whistle at dozens of major and minor tournaments across Canada, but he says that he has enjoyed the “Native Extravaganza” as much or more than any of them. “I am impressed with their shooting ability and physical stamina, but most of all their sportsmanship,” Mel says. “All kids in the province could learn a great deal from your tournament.”

☆ ☆ ☆

Our cover picture was taken in the old Civic Centre in 1962. Jack Wrathall was asked to get a shot of all the teams from the balcony. The teams were assembled and this is one of the pictures that was taken. Jack shot his in colour, but we were unable to find a copy for the book. We hope that in future the tournament historian will collect a series of pictures so that when it comes time to write the 25th anniversary book, we’ll include team, action and personality shots.

At the 1964 opening banquet, the Rainmakers high school team attended as special guests. They had just won the provincial championship and were the toast of the town. Their feat was a tremendous shot in the arm for basketball. Guest speaker J.V. Boys, the Indian Commissioner for B.C., pointed out that Prince Rupert was becoming known as the basketball community of the province through the All Native Tournament and the Rainmakers triumph. Again it was through the generosity of local merchants that the dinner was held.

☆ ☆ ☆

Last year they had another banquet, and through the auspices of Sports and Fitness Minister, Iona Campagnola, the national team coach attended. Jack Donahue was guest speaker and his mixture of comedy and seriousness was extremely well received. Donahue remained four days to conduct clinics throughout the area. Before leaving, Donahue commented that he wished his players on the national team could shoot as well as some of the players he had seen. Attending the games, he said, was an experience he'd never forget.

☆ ☆ ☆

Over the years, the total of trophies and prizes had increased. Four new trophies and two prizes were added to the lengthy list in 1978. Atom Motors came through with four new trophies. These were presented to the third and fourth place teams in each division. Two players - the most valuable in each division - got additional prizes as well. They received \$100 wrist watches for being named the best.

☆ ☆ ☆

Three men must be singled out for continued work with the tournament. Since the second year (1961) Russell Gamble, Allan Hall and John Clifton have provided invaluable direction and leadership to the tournament. They have devoted thousands of hours toward its success, and have been a permanent committee in all that time. To this worthy trio, we doff our hats for a job well done.

☆ ☆ ☆

We can't tell you the years they did the job, but we can list the names of all the chairman and co-chairman of the tournament since 1960. Most have moved away and two - Frank Sutton and Neil MacDonald - died in recent years. The others are Bill Gurney, Al Kelsey, Jake Vandenbrink, Doug Ruttan, and John Lambie. Bruce Forward has been chairman the last few years.

It's not possible to name every referee who has officiated during the tournaments. Here's a few from other parts of the province who have travelled to Prince Rupert especially for the All Native ... Wink Willox, Dutch Kramer, Harold Cronk, Bill Lynes, Tom Donaldson, John Olsen, Mike Woods, Mel Briggeman, Nole Caputo, Terry Garrett, and John Ross. There have been others in addition to our local officials, but we couldn't round up their names.

☆ ☆ ☆

When the idea for a 20th anniversary book on the history of the tournament was submitted, it was felt we'd print a book containing lots of information and just as many pictures. It turned out the information was available, but the pictures were not. The vast files of film negatives from The Daily News had been destroyed back in 1974 during an office clean-up campaign. We also had a wall of sports pictures in the Savory Hotel beer parlour. But they too were tossed in the garbage when the hotel renovated. Al Price had a good selection of pictures over the years, but he lost most of his when his basement was flooded. Anyhow, we did scratch up some and put as many in the book as we could.

☆ ☆ ☆

We all have our favourite players for varied reasons. I had one in the early 60s who shall be nameless for obvious reasons. This chap felt he was a fancy player. He'd dribble the ball in between and around his legs just to show off. Most times after his laughable display, he'd pass the ball and it would be intercepted. He'd hold the ball at arm's length towards his check, figuring he was fast enough to bring it back into his body before his check could grab it. This seldom worked as the check would take it away from him or tie it up for a jump ball. The best sight was the day he got a fast break in the old Centre and dribbled toward the basket at the lobby end of the gym. The doors were opened into the lobby. He looked back to see who was after him before laying up the ball, forgot how far away he was, and dribbled right into the lobby. He was my favourite comedian who didn't realize he was funny.

In the late 60s, I tried to get national publicity for the tournament. I wrote to several national publications, plus the National Film Board, explaining our tournament and why we thought it was unique. They all turned me down. Hopefully a copy of our history book will change their minds this year.



There have been a number of tournament chairmen and co-chairmen over the years. They are Al Kelsey, Jake Vandenbrink, Neil MacDonald, Doug Ruttan, John Lambie, Frank Sutton and the chairman today, Bruce Forward. Three men, however, have held permanent positions on the organization committee since the current series began back in 1960. Russell Gamble, Allan Hall and John Clifton have provided invaluable direction and leadership, and have devoted thousands of hours towards the tournament's success. Without these worthy men, the All-Native Tournament would not be the major event it is today.



A number of business firms donated \$25 each towards that first banquet back in 1963. The late T. Norton Youngs did most of the work and got donations from Don's Men's Wear, Ormes Drugs, Stone's Men's Wear, Cook's Jewellers, Kaien Hardware, 99 Taxi, Mitchell's Flower and Gift Shop, G.P. Tinker and Company, Rupert Motors, Gordon and Anderson, Fraser and Payne, The Universal, and Neil MacDonald of Skeena River Logging. La Gondola catered and knocked 25 cents off each meal as its donation. Burns and Co. Ltd. donated all the turkeys and the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-Op donated all the shrimp. Their generosity is not forgotten.



Over the years the tournament has had numerous sports-minded Prince Rupert residents acting as referees, scorekeepers, timers, doormen, ticket sellers and so on. It is impossible to gather all the names of these people who donated time and patience towards the tournament. So, rather than print the names of the few we know, we won't print any and merely say a most sincere "THANK YOU" for your efforts.