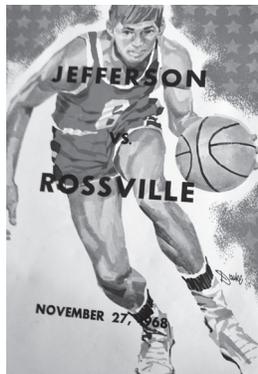


# SMALL TOWN BUT NOT SMALL TIME: ROSSVILLE'S (ALMOST) UNBEATABLE HORNETS

*Written by Rob Hunter*



“When I first started researching this book, started asking sportswriters and athletic directors if they knew of any obscure outposts of Hoosier Hysteria, the name Rossville came up over and over. Rossville is the real deal.” From *HOOSIER HYSTERIA ROAD BOOK: A Guide to the Byways of Indiana*

High School Basketball (2001), by Dale Lawrence.

Time is memory’s enemy, but I remember. It was late July, 1971. My mother, my sister, and I were heading west on SR 26 toward Lafayette, where my sister would soon be attending college. We had made the jog in the road at Middlefork and whisked through a village called Sedalia when soon we were in sight of a bigger place, something that could call itself a town without apology, complete with water tower, downtown businesses, and blinker light at the intersection of another highway. I noticed the name, but it wasn’t until we were west of the light – about the time we passed the Methodist church -- that it registered with me. “This is Rossville?” I asked, sitting up at once. I wheeled around in my seat. “That was Rossville? The Rossville?”

It was, indeed: Rossville of the famous basketball Hornets, three-peat Hoosier Conference champs, three-peat Regional champs, two-time Semistate finalist, the shocking slayer of Lafayette Jeff and a school of 277 students whose team trailed top-ranked, unbeaten East Chicago Washington by four at halftime, missing the State Finals by a respectable twelve points. Yes, there really was a Rossville.

There had been for some time. Platted in 1834 and incorporated in 1870, Rossville was the town of 830 Hoosiers that was almost in Tippecanoe County

and very nearly in Carroll County, but resided in neither. Named for a Clinton County judge, its high school basketball teams had been significant since 1914, when they first cracked the Sweet Sixteen. The following year their quintet beat eventual state champ Thorntown, 25-23. Then, in 1947, future Hall of Famer Phil Buck scored 11 points in the last two minutes of a heart-stopping 51-50 upset of Lafayette Jeff for the school’s second trip to the Semifinals.

“Rossville had a really great tradition,” John Kamstra (’71) said recently. “And so, growing up there, you kind of lived basketball. My dad played for Rossville and my uncle played. And they actually played on the same team; my dad was three or four years older than Uncle Phil (Buck). The whole environment was very conducive to the town being supportive of basketball. And all of us grew up with that in our blood, and I think that made a difference.”

Bob Dyer (’71) adds, “We were a unique, close group of talented athletes who knew at an early age that we were going to do good things. In grade school at recess, we didn’t play baseball, run races or kick balls around. We played basketball. During the summer, we all scrimmaged at the basketball courts at the park. This wasn’t a casual gathering.

This was business - Game nights were really cool. The town practically shut down.”

It was phenomenal. Not only did the number of season ticket holders exceed the town’s population, the number of good players – according to folk wisdom – was also disproportionately high. And the coach who fashioned three stellar teams in a row had the most inauspicious of starts.

A native of Pine Village, 30-year old science teacher Mike Jones came to Rossville in 1964 after assignments at Roachdale and Cathedral. His first Hornets team claimed



*Coach Mike Jones*



only four wins out of twenty-one starts and, though the next three seasons featured more wins than losses, Jones feared he might lose his job in 1968 after a 12-9 team lost in the Sectional's first round. But the following campaign featured four senior starters and a front line that averaged a shade under 6'3". They began at once to raise eyebrows, including those of basketball guru Dr. E. E. Litkenhous, who ranked them tops in the state in late November.

Like the Mellencamp lyric, Dave Mosson ('69) and his friends were small town. They lived on or near the diversified farms that peppered the landscape between Rossville and the bigger north central communities that produced the aluminum, headlights, batteries, and car bodies on assembly lines that never slept. Fortified by burgers from the Sanitary Lunch, they knew sweaty toil in the summer, the musky aroma of cut hay, and evenings with countless fireflies. They knew hoops in driveways and hoops tacked up in haymows; knew how to trap, block out, set screens and fast break. They knew one another's capabilities as well as they knew their own, and they weren't afraid to dream large, work hard, and set goals. "The group (of players) that graduated two years prior to us was a tremendous group that we went up against every day at practice as freshmen and sophomores," Mosson says. "It was brutal. . . . We spent a lot of time working on the 1-2-2 three-quarter court press, and it was a bear getting that ball across court against them."

"It was a great place to grow up," he adds. "I remember distinctly that (Dave) Seifert, (Jon) Canine, and I and Phil (Wilson) had as eighth graders made a pact that we would play in the State Finals as seniors."

Shoring them up was senior Mike Garrett and a talented but unproven group of underclassmen. "Going into that year I was pretty wide-eyed," Bob Knapp ('71) recalls. "My goal was to hopefully play some varsity as a sophomore, that's what I wanted to do. Mike (Jones) actually sat us down on the bleachers and talked about his job being in

jeopardy, and I was shocked; I'd never heard that kind of talk. And he said he needed us to commit ourselves to the game. . . . He was a good coach. I don't think he was an exceptional offensive genius, but he was a heck of a motivator. He had a way of reading us, and I wanted to please that coach."

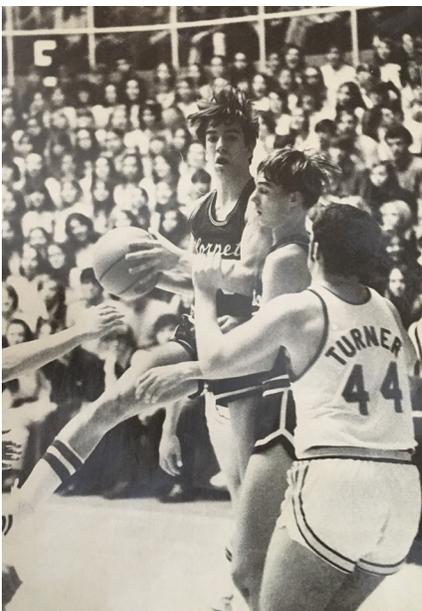
Tom Bonebrake ('71) agrees. "I think Coach Jones' real strength was motivation. He knew when to turn the knobs at the right time and how to get to each one of us individually."

The coach certainly had a fan in big Jon Canine ('69). Jones had run onto the court and complimented Canine following a close loss at Central Catholic the year before. Canine's reaction? "Man, you'll die for this guy."

"(Jones) was competitive, he was intense," John Kamstra recalls. "His expectations were high. But at the same time he made it fun."

Jones was slender and dark-haired, nearly as tall as his tallest players, with merry eyes that could turn resolute. He and his assistant, Mike Reynolds, often scrimmaged with the team. Sixty to 70 percent of practice was spent on defense (Knapp: "Everything was predicated off

the defensive end of what we did."), with the goal of trapping opponents in the center court "railroad tracks" that were a feature of the old gym. ("We spent hours and hours and hours perfecting that press," says Mosson.) They did wind sprints at least three times per session ("We went full bore," Knapp remembers. "And you'd better get to the line.") and did a sprint just prior to a segment devoted to free throws, so that practice on this fundamental aspect would replicate game-condition weariness. (Knapp adds, "I honestly believe we were the best-conditioned team in the state of Indiana. I mean, there was no doubt in my mind we were.") The upshot of these concentrations was that pre-sectional opponents of the 1969 team were limited to an average of 58 points per game, versus Rossville's average of 83. Reach-in fouls were



*Rossville's Bob Dyer comes down with a rebound at Frankfort. (Garry Kamstra is in front)*



discouraged, and whoever expected the Hornets to err were in error themselves. Fewer than ten turnovers per game were not at all uncommon at Rossville, then or later.

They also rehearsed strategies for final possessions. "He'd (Jones) set the clock at two minutes and (put us) one point down," Canine remembers. The players worked the time to zero and the clock was reset at two minutes. They worked it down again. Then it was reset, again and again.

The frustration felt by opposing coaches can be heard in the voice of John Eberle, then the head coach at Central Catholic, after the Hornets pasted the Knights at home, 92-64. "That's a great offensive team," he told Kenny Bell of *The Lafayette Journal and Courier*, "and they really come at you with their pressure defense. We stayed with them and then we tried to go get them, and it backfired as we had no business trying to run with them. But, trailing as we were, it was our only chance to get back into the ball game."

The Hornets swarmed through the regular season with only two setbacks, both on the road: Lafayette Jeff (71-79) and Frankfort (79-80, ot), the latter without the services of the injured Mosson in a game that left the capacity crowd "limp with exhaustion."

"That one," the Frankfort loss, "was all on me," Canine remembers. Frankfort, down two, took the last shot in regulation and Canine failed to block out Frankfort's Steve Moore, who tipped in the tying basket. (Canine took scoring honors with 26 points.) But Rossville capped off the season with an epic 92-90 win on the road at Attica\* – sophomore John Kamstra providing the margin with a fielder at :07 that secured an unblemished Hoosier Conference crown -- and they avenged the loss to Frankfort with a victory over the Hot Dogs (100-92, Seifert with 34) in the Sectional semifinal before taking the title with a 103-88 whipping of Sharpsville-Prairie. Randy Reed ('70) says, "I would stand out at the hash mark near the bench which, these days, would be three-pointers, and just bank 'em in. I think I had 20-some points that (Sharpsville) game." Twenty-nine to be exact, leading all scor-

ers. It was Rossville's first Sectional championship in seven years.

(\*Anyone who saw the 1969 Rossville/Attica game remembers it. One witness called the atmosphere "electric." State Fire Marshall officers turned away the overflow crowd. Someone on Facebook wrote, "My love for high school basketball began that night.")

Noteworthy are the century point totals, something unlike teams coached by Jones. "Coach Jones had a huge phobia about hitting 100," says Bonebrake. Late game replacements were usually instructed not to score if 98 points were already

recorded. Jones told Bob Renner of *The Indianapolis News*, "Anybody that does that (hits the century mark) is just trying for publicity and I simply don't think it's good for the boys."

Ever the innovator, Jones invited motivational speaker Bill Jarrett to speak to the Hornets prior to

each round of the 1969 tournament. "He came to speak to us three times," Canine recalls. "And I still remember he (talked to us) about having confidence as though it were something bottled, it really helped me."

At the Frankfort Regional the Hornets shot the lights out metaphorically before they went out literally. They bounced from behind to beat Greencastle (72-64), then staved off determined Crawfordsville (75-71) to take the Regional crown seconds before Case Arena – and much of Frankfort – suffered a power outage. "I remember taking two steps off the bench to celebrate," says Bonebrake, "and everything going pitch dark."

"I went over to hug Phil (Wilson) at the opposite free throw line," Mosson recalls. Then it went black. "That was something else." Says Knapp, "Even the (lights in the) showers were out." The Regional champs showered by candlelight. The outage was attributed to a short circuit caused by



*Left to right: Garry Kamstra, John Kamstra, Tom Bonebrake, Coach Mike Jones, Bob Knapp, and Bob Dyer*



“unusually wet snow.”

Hornets fans who hoped for a Semistate rematch with Lafayette Jeff were disappointed. For although Rossville was the smallest school in the Sweet Sixteen, the 1969 Lafayette Semistate featured not one but two Cinderellas: Rossville and plucky North Vermillion, the surprising one-point (72-71, over Jeff) winner of the Lafayette Regional. They were joined in the second game by South Bend St. Joseph's and once-beaten Gary Tolleston, the odds-on favorite with standout player Henry Goodes.

North Vermillion was big and sported something called the “popcorn press.” No one knew what to expect, but Rossville approached them like any other opponent. They trailed Vermillion by three after the first quarter, but caught them in the second with the hot-handed Mosson nailing three consecutive fielders – two in the last 10 seconds of the half --to give the Hornets a 40-32 lead at intermission. They padded the bulge after three, and coasted home with a 90-74 victory. Their first taste of play at Mackey Arena was as sweet as the shrimp cocktails they consumed at Morris Bryant's between sessions. (Mackey, it turned out, was very friendly to Jon Canine. He scored 54 points in two Semistate games, then added 25 the following year with the Ball State freshmen.)

Tolleston got by St. Joe (81-75) in a game described as lack-luster, something the Blue Raiders couldn't afford to be in the nightcap, and after three quarters the Rossville seniors were on the verge of fulfilling their eighth grade dreams, down 62-65. But they ran out of legs and gas in the fourth, committing an uncharacteristic 9 turnovers, 25 for the game. “I was absolutely exhausted,” Canine recalls. “I had 26 points but I was running on fumes.” Tolleston took the Semistate crown, 96-79. Jones was gracious in defeat.

“They are a good team. I hope they go all the way,” he told Jack Hopkins of The Journal and Courier. “They are carrying our colors now.”

The following weekend Tolleston defeated unbeaten Vincennes Lincoln (77-66) in the afternoon, then fell to George McGinnis, Steve Downing and their Indianapolis Washington teammates, coached by first-year mentor Bill Green, 79-76. It was Washington's second-closest game in a perfect season, and Tolleston's last basketball game as a high school.

Mike Jones, no longer fearing the threat of walking papers, remained as coach and in a brand new gym. But the season's end meant farewell to the graduating Wilson, Mosson, Seifert, and Canine, a scoring combo accounting for 55 points per game.

Given that attrition, Rossville's return to the Lafayette Semistate in 1970 may have been a surprise to the Hornet faithful. The starting lineup flipped from four seniors and a junior to four juniors – Kamstra, Knapp, Bonebrake, and 6-5 Darrell Skiles and senior Randy Reed. John's brother, sophomore Garry Kamstra, was first off the bench. Were the underclassmen up to the challenge? Local papers predicted their success, and the combination won three season-opening games before losing a Thanksgiving Eve tilt at Lafayette Jeff (58-75) and

a close game (79-83) to Thorntown. They played no better at Sheridan. “We thought we could thump them,” Bonebrake recalls, “and after three quarters we were terrible.” Jones addressed their play at half-time. Says Bonebrake, “I remember that there was not a lot said, but most of it was at fairly high volume.”

(Garry Kamstra adds, “That was probably the most upset I'd seen him.”) Then, at or near the quarter break, Jones played a psychological trump card. “There isn't any more I can say or do,” he told them. “You guys gotta get it together,” and he



*Connie Powell, Darrell Skiles, Lucy Canine, John Kamstra, Kathy Evans, Garry Kamstra, Martha Kidd, Tom Bonebrake, Coach Mike Jones, and Bob Knapp - immediately after the Hornets captured the 1971 Frankfort Regional.*



left the huddle and sat down. Says Bonebrake, "It was a real turning point." Rossville took the win (64-59) and played the balance of the season like a different team, fast and smart and harnessed to a 46 percent shooting average. Says John Kamstra, "I think it just took awhile for that chemistry to get right." They won 12 of their next 14, the lone setbacks being a pair of five-point losses to Clinton Central (70-75) and Lebanon (60-65).

They repeated as Sectional champs and were assigned to Greencastle's new McAnally Center, a lovely venue 72 miles from Rossville. The draw favored the Hornets as they played not only the Regional's first game but also the tourney's surprise contender: The 10-10 Gladiators of Waynetown, upset winners of the Crawfordsville Sectional. Rossville coasted to a first round victory (93-55) in a contest that included a humorous moment late in the game. As the players lined up for a free throw, an exhausted Waynetown player asked Bonebrake, "Do you guys always run like this?"

Lebanon then held off North Putnam's first-ever team, coached by former Muncie Central mentor Ike Tallman and featuring 7-0 center Fred Cox, 91-83, setting the stage for a Rossville rematch. The Hornets couldn't establish a scoring rhythm in the regular season contest. Would this game be different? It didn't start out that way. Let's take a closer look at what followed, for the Regional championship game with Lebanon may have been the best and most competitive Rossville victory of 1970, and without doubt capped off one of the biggest two-game, single day performances (50 points, 30 rebounds) for junior John Kamstra.

As reported by Jack R. Martin of The Journal and Courier, the Hornets trailed 25-18 at the end of the first quarter but closed the gap at halftime, 41-43. They sped around the Tigers in the third to take a 64-54 lead, and led by 11 (68-57) with 6:47 to go and by ten (72-62) with 5:50 left. But Lebanon outscored them 10-0, and a little later it was 76-all. Following a pair of scoreless turnovers, the Hornets got possession with 1:15 left in regulation. Rehearsed for this scenario, Rossville worked the

clock down to eight seconds before calling timeout. Garry Kamstra's desperation shot from the right corner was wide and the game went into overtime.

Bonebrake, a "superlative ball handler" in the words of Martin, got around his man and scored a left-handed, driving lay-in 24 seconds into the extra period – added a free throw with 1:03 to go -- and the die was cast. John Kamstra iced it with a pair of free throws and the Hornets took the Regional, 81-77. Rossville outrebounded Lebanon

51-40, and committed only 10 turnovers in 35 game minutes; Lebanon had five more. "These guys just don't know when to quit," Jones told Martin. "I'm awfully proud of them."

He had every right to be. They'd come a long way since that night at Sheridan.

Awaiting them at Mackey Arena the following Saturday were the third-ranked Red Devils of Michigan City, coached by Doug Adams. They were big and fast and built a 43-33 lead at halftime. Rossville played them even in the third, and re-

duced the deficit by 3 in the fourth for a 7-point loss, 80-87. John Kamstra and Tom Bonebrake shared scoring honors with 23 points apiece, and Randy Reed added 20 in his final basketball game for the Hornets. True to form, Rossville committed only 9 turnovers. Michigan City had 22.

Meanwhile, unbeaten and top-ranked East Chicago Roosevelt survived two scares, first from Lafayette Jeff (56-54) and then from Michigan City (82-78) to take the Semistate. The following weekend they took it all with wins over Muncie Central (90-75) and Carmel (76-62).

Rossville's starting lineup for 1971 saw the return of four senior starters – Kamstra, Bonebrake, Knapp (tri-captains), and Skiles – along with junior Garry Kamstra. Senior Bob Dyer was first off the bench. "(Offensively) he (Jones) let us freelance a lot," John Kamstra recalls, "because, one, we fast



*Bob Dyer gets the easy put-back against Crawfordsville in the championship game of the 1971 Frankfort Regional. (Garry Kamstra is in the background.)*



broke and, two, we just knew each other. We knew each other so well that you wouldn't necessarily have to run a play to get a good shot. And I think we were very unselfish."

It doesn't diminish the narrative to note that this was the team that lost to eventual state champ East Chicago Washington; most fans remember Pete Trgovich, Junior Bridgeman, Tim Stoddard, Darnell Adell, and their coach, John Molodet. What makes the 1971 Hornets special is the momentum they built as the tourney progressed, and that they received at its height what everyone wants but not everyone gets: A second chance.

Like the 1969 team, the 1971 edition ran the regular season gauntlet with but two losses, Lafayette Jeff (73-87) and a holiday tourney contest with highly regarded Knox (79-82, ot). The loss to Jeff was particularly frustrating in that Garry Kamstra was unavailable, sidelined with an ankle sprain. A trash can filled with ice water was the usual prescription, but Jones went the extra mile. "I remember I went over to the Purdue trainer," Garry relates. "Coach Jones took me to him to see if there was anything to be done. (The trainer) was, like, 'No, you can't play on that ankle.' But it healed and I came back."

Rossville and 6th ranked Lafayette Jeff advanced toward one another, game by game. Jeff struggled at times, but no one could stop the high-flying Hornets. They swept like a cyclone through the Frankfort Sectional; three wins – including one over the Hot Dogs – with an average margin of 23 points. The following weekend they floored Lebanon (for the second time that season, 53 percent shooting and only four miscues) and Crawfordsville by an average of 20, their second and third Sagamore Conference conquests in the space of eight days. Rossville's second chance with Lafayette Jeff was at hand.

Dick Ham was the only Journal and Courier staffer who acknowledged the Rossville juggernaut, but even he didn't pick the Hornets to win the game; neither did Dr. Litkenhous. In reality the

Bronchos were in big trouble, and it began when Rossville's team bus pulled up to the curb.

"We arrived at Mackey Arena only to discover that the entrance to the gym was blocked by the entire Jeff cheering section," Dyer recalls. "We got off the bus and walked unescorted through the yelling, aggressive crowd to the entrance doors. Some of us got spit upon." Bonebrake takes it from there: "And I remember someone kind of pushing me out of the way and a hand coming over the top of me and grabbing a (Lafayette Jeff) kid. And it was Coach Jones. And (he) came over the top of a couple of guys and (over) my shoulder and grabbed this kid, slammed him up against the concrete wall and told him, 'Don't you ever touch one of my boys again!'"

Says Garry Kamstra, "We were all very motivated to win that game."

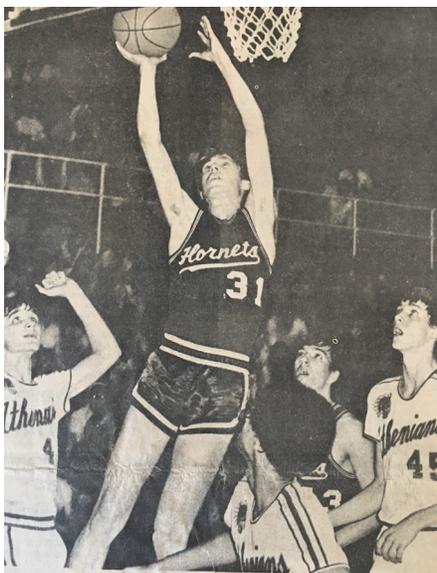
The fired up Hornets wasted no time. They led 22-16 at the end of the first quarter, and by four (43-39) at the half. They extended the lead by ten

at the three-quarter break (69-55) and sealed the deal with a 25-22 fourth that stung the Bronchos, 94-77. John Kamstra poured in 30 points and added 11 rebounds. Brother Garry was good for 24 points and Bonebrake added 20. The Hornets outrebounded Jeff, 41-39; big Darrell Skiles led everyone with 15. Rossville errors? Only nine, five fewer than the Bronchos.

Their long-range bombs thrilled most of the capacity (14,123) crowd that witnessed them; East Chicago coach John Molodet certainly took note. Says Dyer, "The sports highlights that evening showed Rossville making a shot at the end of the game with me pulling the ball out of the net and

running over to the Jeff cheering section, holding the basketball high in the air above my head." He adds, "That felt so good!"

As stunning as it was – one would have liked to heard the reaction when the score was reported at the other Semistates – the victory contained the seeds of impending defeat. "I don't remember when it happened," says John Kamstra, "I just re-



Garry Kamstra scores at the 1971 Frankfort Regional finals versus Crawfordsville. Bob Dyer watches behind Kamstra.



member that in between games, after we'd beaten Lafayette Jeff, that I couldn't turn my neck. I had to turn my whole body (to see)." Molodet, well aware of Kamstra's scoring potential, assigned both Trgovich and Bridgeman to cover him, and Kamstra was held to 11 points for the game. As if this weren't enough, Bob Knapp was dealing with a week-old ankle sprain that left him at about 70 percent effectiveness.

The hamstrung Hornets nonetheless found themselves in a tie game as the first half wore down, trailing by only four (27-31) at intermission. Garry Kamstra took up the slack created by his hobbled teammates and burned the Senators for 28 points; his two-game total of 52 was tops in the state. But East Chicago pulled away in the third quarter and won a berth in the State Finals with a 79-67 victory. They went on the following weekend to defeat Floyd Central (102-88) and Elkhart (70-60) to take the 1971 title.

Following the Semistate, Molodet told Corky Lam of The Indianapolis News, "That (Rossville) is a very sound basketball team. If they're hitting they can beat anyone. But if they're not, And among the Hornets there remains a certain amount of angst when it comes to that Washington game, a fitful speculation about what might have been. Garry Kamstra remarks, "We still say to this day if we (had been) really healthy – if John hadn't had a stiff neck and Bob hadn't had his ankle (sprain) – we might have played them down to the wire, or maybe got lucky and threw one in at the buzzer and beat 'em."

Knapp and Bonebrake concur. "It would have been nice," Tom says "to have played them at full strength and see what would have happened."

"We were up against the two quickest guards we'd faced that year," Knapp adds. "Like Tom says, I'm not sure we could have beaten them, but you always wonder."

Nearly 50 years ago Indianapolis sportswriter Bob Williams called Rossville "one of those leg-

endary small towns forming the backbone of Hoosier Hysteria." Though twice as big today, Rossville is recognizably itself, still the town with the water tower and blinker light, businesses and public places, still the last sizable community westbound motorists encounter before penetrating the suburban sprawl of Tippecanoe County. And it is still -- even emphatically -- the home of the Hornets, a community that claims five members of the Hall of Fame, including Miss Basketball Jennifer Jacoby (1991). Joining them are four Indiana All-Stars (including Garry Kamstra in 1972), a collegiate All-Star, and a Class A boys' basketball championship in 2002. Hornets fans who know their hoops history perhaps debate amongst themselves the question of which team was better: The 1969 Regional champs, or the ones that immediately followed? "I think maybe depth-wise (1969) was (the best team)," John Kamstra says. "But I think the three of us (with Knapp and Bonebrake) when we became seniors, and then Garry was a junior, I think we had more basketball talent."

Jones himself wrestled with the question and came up with this answer: The 1970 team, he told Star sportswriter Joe Hamelin, was quicker than the team from the year before but not as good on the boards, nor as tenacious on defense. They were, however, the better perimeter shooting team, as evidenced by their average. "I just don't feel that I have quite the ingredients I had last year," he said, "but I think this team has just a little more poise."

And so it goes. "But it was a moot point to the congregants of the Methodist church, an institution in the same location decades after a kid and his mother and sister passed by for the first time." His was a new face amongst them one Sunday

morning, wearing a red-and-white polo that said Rossville Basketball: Longtime Fan, and they were pleased to shake his hand and welcome him. Yes, he told them, he had been a Hornets fan since college. A woman old enough to remember touched him on the sleeve and said, "I saw those three Regional champs play!"

Jon Canine and Dave Seifert received Most Valuable Player Award.



Jon Canine (left) and Dave Seifert, co-MVP's 1969 Hornets, with head coach Mike Jones.



“Well, you saw something very special,” he replied. And time for once is powerless. Those teams, those players, and that coach remain special. They always will be.

“Satisfaction in coaching,” Jones told Frankfort News Bureau chief Dave Maroney, “is the biggest part of your pay. A coach could take a job paying 50 cents an hour and make more money than he does coaching, considering the number of hours put in. It’s a great satisfaction to work with

boys willing and eager to learn and who want to achieve.”

-- Rob Hunter

*Note: The author wishes to thank the interviewees and the Hall of Fame staff.*

*This article is dedicated to the memory of Mike Jones (1934-2017) and George Kamstra (1926-2018), Rossville High School Class of 1944.*

**1969  
Sectional Champs!**



**HAPPY HORNETS** – A smiling Rossville crew, flanked by cheerleaders and coaches, poses with its Frankfort Sectional basketball championship trophy Saturday night after the Hornets’ 103-88 victory over Sharpville-Prairie. Rossville whipped Frankfort 100-92 Saturday afternoon to gain the finals, while Sharpville slipped by Clinton Central 61-59. The defending champion, Wainwright, bowed to Sharpville Thursday night. The championship was the first for coach Mike Jones at Rossville, and the first for the Hornets since 1962. (Staff Photo)



**1971  
Sectional Champs!**



*Kneeling: Steve Morris, Bob Knapp, Dick Knapp, Tom Bonebrake, Lucy Canine, Kathy Evans, Martha Kidd, and Connie Powell.*

*Standing: Head Coach Mike Jones, Carl Chezem, Asst. Coach Mike Reynolds, Roger Meador, Darrell Skiles, Asst. Coach*

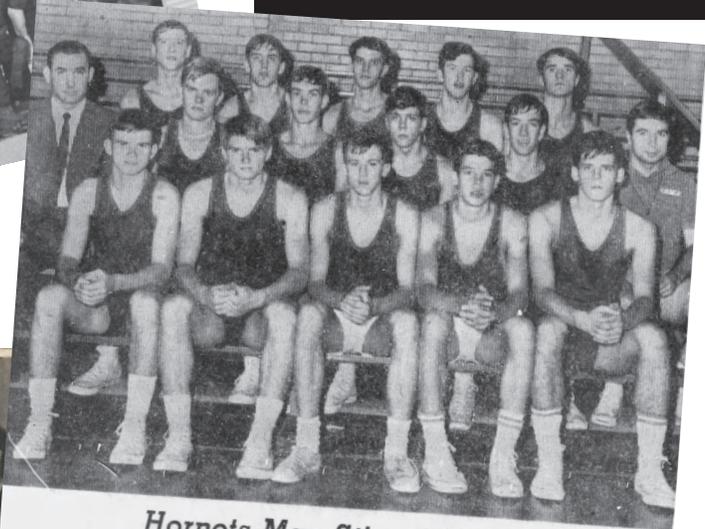
*Ken Miller, Garry Kamstra, Bob Dyer, Greg Carter, John Kamstra, Craig Meador, Manager Byron Irmeger, Manager Jack Skiles (hidden behind), Manager Steve Egly, Manager Ed Butler, and Manager Phil Andrew.*



# Sectional crown, 94-54



# Community News Coverage!



## Hornets May Sting Again

Rossville High School will be starting its fifth season under Coach Mike Jones when it hosts Wolcott Nov. 8. Representing the Hornets this season are, front from left, Dave Mosson, Phil Wilson, Jeff Miller, Bob Knapp and Tom Bonebrake; second row, Coach

Mike Jones, Bill Ticen, John Kamstra, Ralph Haynes, Bob Dyer and assistant coach Mike Reynolds; third row, Jon Canine, Mike Garrett, Dave Seifert, Darrell Skiles and Randy Reed. (Staff Photo by Pat McIntyre).



## Rossville Hopes for Another 'Big One'

Rossville basketball coach Mike Jones and his six Hornet lettermen inspect the school's newest trophy, on display in the school office. Rossville picked up the trophy for winning its third straight Sectional last week at Frankfort. Joining

the Hornet coach are (from left) Garry Kamstra, Bob Knapp, Darrell Skiles, Bob Dyer, John Kamstra and Tom Bonebrake. They are seeking their third consecutive Regional title this week. (Staff Photo)

# Tiny Rossville a Giant In Hoosier Basketball Circles

By DAVE MARONEY  
Frontier Bureau Staff

ROSSVILLE — Consultants have produced a world of giants in Indiana high school athletics. Yet, a Clinton County midsize — Rossville High School — manages to survive among the giants.

Rossville, in fact, is a giant in its own right when it comes to basketball, the most prestigious of Indiana's prep sports. Rossville is one of only 64 schools still alive as he second round of the 1971 late basketball tournament approaches. With an enrollment of just 89, Rossville is the smallest school left in the chase for its state basketball championship. But this is not a new role for the school.

**3RD REGIONAL**  
The Hornets are scheduled Saturday to make their third consecutive regional tournament appearance. And they are sure that a week from Saturday they'll be making their third consecutive semi-state away appearance. The rule of the "little guy" in Indiana basketball is never try. But under the capable guidance of Coach Mike Jones, Rossville continues to try. The smallest school still alive in the state tourney is ways the "people's choice."

That tag falls on Rossville's squad this year, but Coach Jones fails to see any advantage to it. "Being a small school," Jones says, is "always a disadvantage because you have less boys to choose from."

One of the biggest problems stemming from small enrollments, Jones says, is "lack of bench strength."

"It's a matter of numbers," Jones says. "Most coaches feel there's one good basketball player out of every 100 in a school."

Rossville has a male enrollment of approximately 130 boys. According to the widely accepted theory, the school would have 1.3 "good" basketball players.

**CONSISTENTLY GOOD**  
There are several coaches who would testify, however, that Mike Jones consistently produces excellent basketball teams despite the lack of members at the school. Jones assumed the Rossville basketball post seven years ago. His first squad had to digest an entirely new coaching philosophy and got off to a slow start.

The first Jones team posted a 4-17 record, and three of the four wins came the last month of the season. Things changed quickly, however. The Hornets posted 17-8, 14-7 and 12-9 season marks be-

fore their present string of tournament prosperity began.

Three seasons ago, the Clinton County school won sectional and regional titles before bowing to upstate power Garry Tolson in semi-final action. The Squad finished with a 24-3 season record.

This impressive showing, Jones believes, paved the way for Rossville's success the past two years.

Last season the Hornets again captured sectional and regional championships before bowing to state-ranked Michigan City by seven points. The team finished with a 21-5 mark.

The Hornets returned to Frankfort last week and notched their third consecutive sectional championship, winning the tournament there without difficulty.

**69.7 AVERAGE**  
Jones, during his seven-year tenure, has posted 113 victories against 49 losses for a 69.7 percentage. Discounting his first season, when Rossville spent a good portion of the year adapting

to the Jones system, the Hornet coach has 109 wins and 32 losses for a 77.3 winning percentage.

These are giant marks in any league. Jones makes no secret of his success. He defines it simply as "the power of positive thinking."

A defeatist attitude among the players was something Jones says he fought during the early stages of his career here.

"After the team began to win, the players began to realize they could win." "At this point the players began developing pride and confidence."

The development of this positive attitude at Rossville High School has given the soft-spoken Jones great satisfaction.

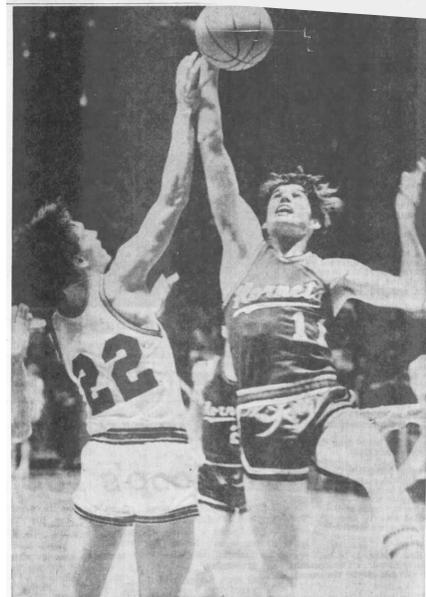
"Satisfaction in coaching," he says, "is the biggest part of your pay. A coach could take a job paying 50 cents an hour and make more money than he does coaching, considering the number of hours put in. It's a great satisfaction to work with boys willing and eager to learn and who want to achieve."

Tournament activities at the school hit higher gear Friday. Student body members observed "red and white day," wearing those colors as school. A pep session was also scheduled for Friday afternoon.

Residents of the community — those fortunate enough to obtain tickets — will join in Saturday, principal Bill Tielow reports.

A caravan, scheduled to travel from Rossville to Frankfort for the tournament, will be formed at 11 a.m. Saturday at the high school here. More than 75 vehicles are expected to join the caravan, which will leave at 11-15.

If Mike Jones and the Hornets have their way, Saturday's caravan won't be the last one of the season.



## Couple of Hot Hands

Rossville's John Kamstra (11) and Lafayette's Dave Wilson (22) duel it out for possession in break from their roles as team scoring leaders in Hornets' 94-77 Semistate victory over Bronchos. Kamstra racked up

30 points to lead Rossville into night's championship match with East Chicago while Wilson topped Jeff attack with 22 points. (Staff Photo)



# Rossville In The News!

## Litkenhous HS Ratings

By DR. E. E. LITKENHOUS  
THE TOP 25

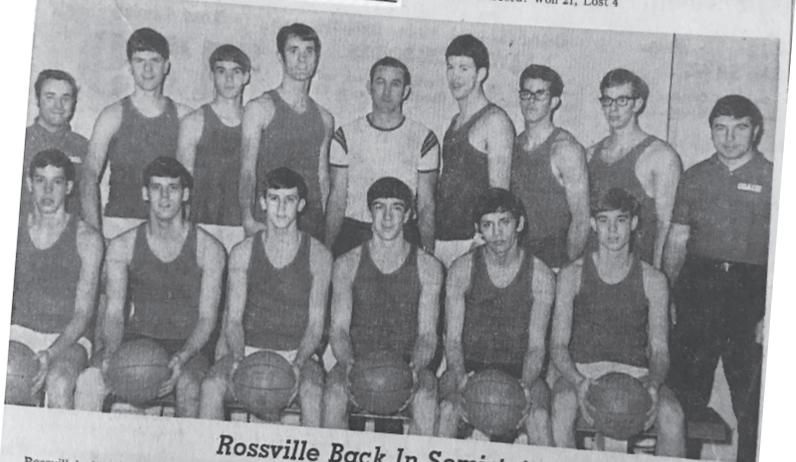
1. Rossville	98.5
2. Gary Tolleston	97.1
3. Southport	96.7
4. Columbus	93.4
5. Warren Central	93.2
6. Marion	92.8
7. Goshen	92.4
8. Scottsburg	92.0
9. Greenfield	89.3
10. Muncie Southside	88.0
11. Jac-Cen-Del	86.3
12. Frankfort	85.9
13. Jeffersonville	85.6
14. Fort Wayne Catholic	85.1
15. North Davies	84.7
16. Decatur Central	84.6
17. Terre Haute Gerstmeier	84.6
18. South Decatur	84.5
19. Bryant	84.0
20. East Tipp	83.9
21. Wes-Del	83.5
22. Bainbridge	83.3
23. Bluffton (Greentown)	82.3
24. Eastern	82.3
25. Bedford	80.6

Battle Ground	48.9	New Market	30.0
Carroll	71.6	New Ross	36.1
Clinton Central	66.6	North White	52.3
Clinton Prairie	51.5	Pine Village	36.4
Coal Creek	39.2	Pioneer	55.4
Covington	61.1	Rensselaer	67.3
Crawfordsville	61.3	S'Western	57.9
Darlington	62.8	Turkey Run	36.9
DeMotte	50.3	Wainwright	74.5
Fountain Cen.	47.4	Waveland	39.8
Frontier	60.8	Wanetown	46.2
Klondike	47.4	Wells	55.6
Ladoga	38.7	West Laf.	75.1
Lebanon	78.4	Wheatfield	27.4
Linden Cen.	67.3	Winamac	63.3
Muncie Cen.	77.6	Wolcott	82.5
New Castle	74.2		

Wednesday Evening, March 11, 1970

Nickname: Hornets  
School Song: Anchors Aweigh  
Season Record: Won 21, Lost 4

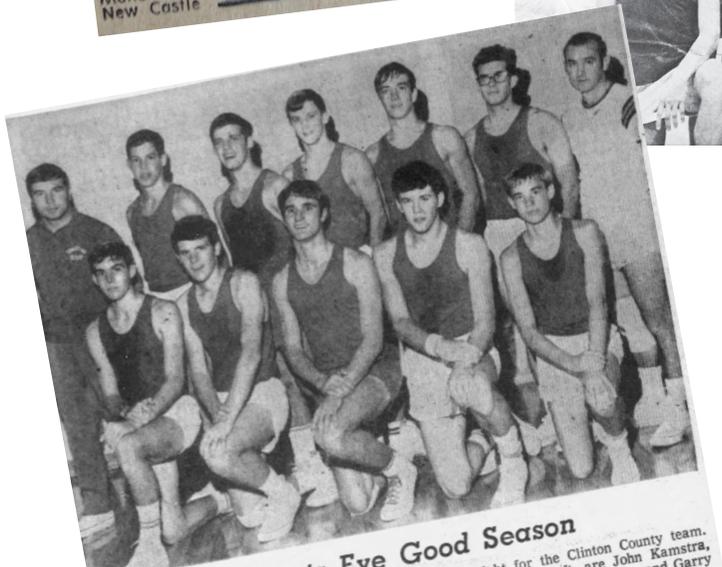


### Rossville Back In Semistate

Rossville's Hornets are the only returning team to the Lafayette Semistate field for Saturday's play in the Purdue Arena and the Hornets are hoping to improve on last year's performance when they made their furthest tourney advance by going to the championship game before bowing to eventual State runnerup, Gary Tolleston. Rossville, with a 21-4 record, goes against 20.3 Michican City in the Semistate opener at 12:30 p.m. From left, front row, Bob Knapp, Tom Bonebrake, Jeff Miller, Bob Dyer, Steve Morris and Garry Kamstra; back row: assistant coach Ken Miller, Mike Tislow, John Kamstra, Randy Reed, Coach Mike Jones, Darrell Skiles, Craig Meador, Roger Meador and assistant coach Mike Reynolds. (Staff Photo)

Sports Supplement Frankfort Morning Times, Wednesday, November 19, 1969

# Rossville basketball

### Hornets Eye Good Season

Winners of Sectional and Regional titles and a finalist in the Lafayette Semistate last season, the Rossville Hornets expect the boys above to provide another winning season. Coach Mike Jones has only one starter, Randy Reed back from the 24-3 team of a year ago, but five other lettermen make the picture bright for the Clinton County team. In front row, from left, are John Kamstra, Mike Tislow, Reed, Darrell Skiles and Mike Kamstra; second row, assistant coach Mike Reynolds, Bob Knapp, Tom Bonebrake, Jeff Miller, Bob Dyer, Craig Meador and coach Mike Jones. (Staff photo by Bill Robinson).



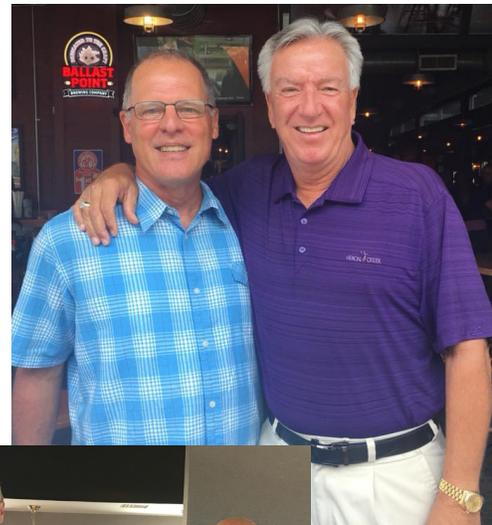
# ROSSVILLE - Then & Now

Rob Hunter,  
author, with  
Jon Canine  
(‘69) in  
suburban  
Louisville



Front row -- Ralph Haynes, John Kamstra, Tom Bonebrake, Bob Knapp, Bill Ticen, Phil Wilson, and Dave Mosson. Back row -- Craig Meador, Jon Canine, Darrell Skiles, Randy Reed, Dave Seifert, Mike Garrett, Rick Ryan, and Coach Mike Jones.

Tom  
Bonebrake  
and  
Robert  
Dyer.  
Rossville  
teammates



John and Garry today



Left to right; Jon Canine, Janice (Timmons) Canine, Ellen (Freeland) Mosson and David Mosson



# ROSSVILLE - STATS

## Rossville Hornets 1970-71

Season Results - 24 wins, 3 losses

93 Wolcott 46  
98 Benton Central 71  
73 Lafayette Jeff 87  
79 Thorntown 60  
83 Sheridan 46  
88 Linden 76  
93 Clinton Prairie 53  
90 Harrison 57  
82 Carroll 66

## Knox Holiday Tourney

79 Knox 82 ot  
77 Kankakee Valley 62  
100 Delphi 68  
81 Central Catholic 69  
67 Lebanon 49  
87 Pine Village 62  
81 W. Lafayette 43  
89 Southwestern 78  
86 Wainwright 49  
86 West Central 60  
81 Attica 71

## SECTIONAL (at Frankfort)

70 Clinton Prairie 42  
91 Frankfort 75  
115 Tri-Central 88

## REGIONAL (at Frankfort)

88 Lebanon 68  
87 Crawfordsville 68

## SEMISTATE (at Mackey Arena)

94 Lafayette Jeff 77  
67 E.C. Washington 79

## ROSSVILLE HORNETS 1969-70

Schedule and Results

Head Coach: Mike Jones

92 Wolcott 69  
90 Winamac 69  
76 Benton Central 63  
58 Lafayette Jeff 75  
79 Thorntown 83  
65 Sheridan 59  
93 Clinton Prairie 50  
97 Battle Ground 69  
80 Carroll 43

## Clinton Central Holiday Tourney

70 Clinton Central 75  
89 Carroll 52  
86 Delphi 59  
97 Central Cath 71  
60 Lebanon 65  
99 Pine Village 59  
82 West Laf 72  
82 Southwestern 54  
90 Wainwright 46  
89 East Tipp 66  
88 Attica 42

## SECTIONAL (at Frankfort)

77 Carroll 42  
86 Delphi 81  
94 Sharpsville-Prairie 54

## REGIONAL (at Greencastle)

93 Waynetown 55  
81 Lebanon 77 ot

## SEMISTATE (at Mackey)

80 Michigan City 87



# ROSSVILLE - ROSTER

## Rossville Hornets

### Roster, 1969-70

Head Coach: Mike Jones

<u>Ht, Wt, Class</u>
Jeff Miller 5-10, 135, 12
Randy Reed* 6-4, 180, 12
Mike Tislow* 6-2, 175, 12
Tom Bonebrake* 5-10, 160, 11
Bob Dyer 5-11, 155, 11
John Kamstra* 5-11 ½, 150, 11
Bob Knapp* 5-10, 145, 11
Craig Meador 6-0, 175, 11
Darrell Skiles* 6-4, 185, 11
Garry Kamstra 6-0, 135, 10

\*Lettermen

## Rossville Hornets

### Roster, 1970-71

Head Coach: Mike Jones

<u>Ht, Wt, Class</u>
John Kamstra 6-1, 165, 12
Tom Bonebrake 5-11, 160, 12
Dick Knapp 5-7, 135, 10
Bob Knapp 6-0, 155, 12
Garry Kamstra 6-2, 150, 11
Carl Chezem 5-11, 155, 11
Steve Morris 5-9, 155, 12
Craig Meador 6-0, 185, 12
Roger Meador 5-11, 185, 11
Greg Carter 6-3, 200, 12
Bob Dyer 6-0, 170, 12
Darrell Skiles 6-5, 200, 12



### 'Field Goal By Kamstra'

That announcement was heard often in West Lafayette Gym Saturday night as Rossville's Kamstra brothers, John and Garry, combined for 36 points in Hornets' 81-43 drubbing of Red Devils in Hoosier Conference test. Above, John Kamstra starts a

lay-up, after driving between Steve Dietrich (background) and Sam McClung (40), as Dan Frickey (30) watches from free throw circle. Win was Rossville's 14th in 16 games. (Staff Photo)

