

The Lee County Legend

K E E P I N G T H E M E M O R I E S A L I V E

Blue Ribbons . . . Almost!

In this issue, The Lee County Legend wants to recognize two teams that will forever be remembered by Lee Countians. Lee County sports fans, especially those from in and around Pennington Gap will recall these two good teams and their great seasons.

**The 1963/1964 Pennington High Boys' Basketball Team
Coach Ikey Joe Chadwell**

**The 1976 Pennington High Football Team
Coach Don Williams**

Both teams capped off incredible seasons with an exciting run at the Virginia State Championship. The 1963/64 Bobcat Basketball Team and the 1976 Bobcat Football Team knocked off formidable foes in exciting circumstances to get to the state championship games. Both teams fell just a few points short of winning that Championship. In the manner that these teams excelled, both represented Lee County well at the very top level of competition.

Though both fell short in their quest of a State Championship, both made history. According to our research, these were the only two teams during Pennington High existence to play in State Championship Games.

Almost!



Is it a disgrace to finish 2nd? If you lose in the state championship game, does that mean you are not a winner? Are the 1st place finishers the only champions?

It has been nearly 50 years since 1964. During every basketball season that comes and goes, I still ask, "How did it happen?" The Pennington High boy's basketball team was picked to finish 4th in the district. Instead, this team made it all the way to the state championship game. How did the Bobcats put together such a storybook season?

It seems the answer lies in four main areas. The team had good training, stiff competition, good work habits and that "gracious Lady Luck" throughout the season.

Coach Ikey Joe Chadwell took care of the hardwood education. He taught offense but preached defense. He somehow convinced the players to hide emotions while playing with passion! Good sportsmanship was a given.

There were 8 high schools in Lee County then. The competition with these schools was tough. Keokee, Thomas Walker, St. Charles, Jonesville, Dryden, Flatwoods, Blackwater; most of these are gone now. In 1964, their basketball teams forced Pennington to play hard every time they stepped on the court. For sure, the size of the school had nothing to do with the final score. A Lee County School Hall of Fame memorial is in my mind. The opposing Lee County players left an indelible imprint on the lives of all the Bobcats.

Though a team may have a great coach, hard working players and the best competition, winning requires help from Lady Luck. Bobcat fans created most of the luck in 1964. They traveled with the team. They packed the gyms. At every game, their cheers that set new standards on the decibel charts, helped the team catch fire on the courts. The team did not want to disappoint fans like Earl Johnston and Claude Ely. Speaking with them before and after games was such an encouragement. Garda Turner Browning was another favorite fan. The team loved it that their Math teacher would come to every game. These fans and others too numerous to name here, will never be forgotten.

Looking back after all these years have flown by, it is obvious that finishing second in the state was not a disgrace, but rather, a unique accomplishment. This team that was counted out, played its way to a place in history. All of Lee County, including the Bobcat and opposing Lee County high players, coaches and fans were a part of this incredible run at a state championship. What a great season! Being involved made winners of us all!!



I'm Glad To Meet You!

By Lowell Lawson

It's been nine short months since I met Dave Audia. Neither of us can explain it, but God must have had a reason. I had been recommended to Dave as someone who might help him in a Cherokee County, Georgia cemetery project. A phone call from Dave led to our first let's get acquainted meeting. Five minutes into our conversation the cemeteries were forgotten. You will not be long around Dave before you are going to talk baseball. Turns out baseball is high on both of our priorities list.

Hard to believe, but right behind baseball for Dave and me comes history. To make a long and exciting story short, we soon began to envision a sports history newsletter of Lee County.

Two months ago the Lee County Legend was born and now you are reading our third issue.

Last year I published a history of sports in our county in Georgia. The Lee County Legend marks the beginning of a sports history for Lee County.

Nine months ago Dave began my Lee County education. Almost daily we have talked about this place you call home. He is an excellent teacher. Before I knew it, Dryden, Jonesville, Pennington Gap, Keokee, Blackwater, Flatwoods, and St. Charles were much more than names on the Lee County map. I spent this Fourth of July weekend in Lee County. Terry Pope, Louis and Sam Audia, Cecil Sumpter, and Earl Johnston are new friends.

I will admit I am a little jealous of all you guys that grew up in Lee County. Dave gave me a tour. On every corner and most every hill he remembered that "a pretty girl lived there".

I've been to the Cumberland Gap many times. We always turned north to Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly. Now I've been to Lee County! It's

THE COACHES

This issue of The Lee County Legend is focused on 2 Lee County teams that finished 2nd in the State. Ikey Joe Chadwell coached one. Don Williams coached the other. Below are some observations made during periods of closeness with two great guys. It was my good fortune to play for Coach Chadwell and to play against Coach Williams' teams. In addition, I came along at just the right time to get to be a team mate of Coach Williams on a summer coal field baseball team.

Winning 2nd place in the entire state of Virginia is a great accomplishment. If most coaches in the state were asked "Would you take a 2nd place finish in the state this year?", most would accept in a heartbeat.

Coach Chadwell with 1963/64 Pennington High Bobcats boys basketball and Coach Williams with 1976 Pennington High Bobcats football, took teams to this level most coaches only dream of reaching.

Coach Williams coached more than 30 seasons. Coach Chadwell coached for 4 years. At the time of the state championship runs, Coach Williams had been coaching several years, Coach Chadwell was in his 3rd.

Both Coaches graduated from Lee County High Schools, Williams from Jonesville and Chadwell from Thomas Walker.

Athletically, both coaches stood out. Ikey Joe was an outstanding basketball player for Ron Skeen at Thomas Walker. He still had that speed, quickness and agility while he coached.

Don, an all around athlete, really stood out on the baseball field. He played a great shortstop

when Lee County was a hotbed of coal field baseball. Don could hit, field and run as one to the stars of the day. He even got his glove in front of a Spot Johnson line drive one day. Don's glove got knocked off. The ball just kept going into the gap for another double by Spot. Don says "Some days when you stick your glove out there, you catch the ball, some days you don't".

Coaching advice from Coach Williams and Coach Chadwell worked because both studied their games. Their coaching minds seemed to be working in the future because they had the present situation figured out and always knew what to do next.

It is one thing to have the game plan figured out; another to get young athletes to execute that plan. Coach Ikey Joe Chadwell and Coach Don Williams got that done, too, because of the people they are beyond their records.

Both men were very likeable on and off the court and field. Players believed in them because of a heartfelt friendship and trust. They said, "Coaches, we wanted to make you happy with our effort and our play."

. . . Dave Audia

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Bobcats Fail In Bid For State Title

In a hard fought game the state championship title went to Madison High School. The Bobcats came out second best. Now the season has gone into the history books.

Madison, despite the predictions of many, did not walk off with the title in an overwhelming manner.

Until the last minutes of the final quarter when the Bobcats were forced to play catch-up football, the game was in question. In no area did the Madison team dominate the game. Statistics show that the teams were very evenly matched on the field regardless of the difference in the size of the players and the squads.

It was late in the third period that the Mountaineers finally went ahead 14-7. But this lead was short-lived. A steady straight-at-them drive took the Bobcats 64 yards for a touchdown when Pendergraft went over from the three. The kick went wide and the Mountaineers had a one point lead. Pennington's next drive failed to maintain the football. It was after this that Madison was able to score again, making the score 21-13.

Over reaction in a desperate effort to catch up cost the Cats in penalties. The Bobcats were penalized 65 yards. Madison drew five yards in penalties.

There are many "If's" and "Could be's" after every game. Pendergraft was lame. Haynes had been under a doctor's care the night before. Had they both been 100 percent the outcome could have been different. But there were no alibis from the team. Madison had won the game and gained the title of Class A Virginia High School Football Champions for the 1976 season.

STATISTICS

	Penn	Madison
Firsrt downs	12	11
Yards Rushing	192	229
Yards Passing	38	27
TOTAL OFFENSE	230	256
Passes	3-12	3-4
Passes Intercepted By	0	1
Fumbles Lost	1	0
Punts/Avg	4-37.2	2-31.0
Penalties/Yds	5-65	1-5

Score by quarters:

Pennington	7	0	0	6	—13
Madison	0	7	7	7	—21

Bobcats Get Additional Honors; Coach Williams, Pendergraft Gain Top Spots

Additional honors continue to heap upon the Pennington Bobcats and Coach Don Williams. In addition to dominating nominations for the Cumberland District team, Lynn Pendergraft has been named Southwest Virginia Back of the Year while Coach Williams has been named Coach of the Year,

Pendergraft, a 5' 10", 175 pounder, was southwest Virginia's leading scorer with 149 points. He rushed for over 1,000 yards and averaged 7.3 yards per carry during the regular seasobn. He also did an outstanding job as line-backer for the Bobcats. His outstanding job as a kicker added much to the offensive punch of the Bobcats.

Williams gained his honors by taking his team all the way to the state finals. An accomplishment that no other Lee County football coach had ever reached.

Clay Williams, linebacker, and John Haynes, a back, were both named to the all Southwest Virginia team. Both of these PHS seniors were strong factors in the Bobcats' success for the season just completed in which they placed as runner-up for the State Championship.

POWELL VALLEY NEWS NOVEMBER 1976

Bobcats Road To The Finals

Pennington 28 Lebanon 22

Lebanon stopped on Pennington four yard line with two seconds remaining in game

Pennington 16 Clintwood 13

Pennington defeated the two-time defending Class A Champions. Clintwood had won 36 straight games

Pennington 23 Parry McCluer 12

Ninety yard kickoff return with fifteen seconds left in first half is springboard to victory.

‘Cats Get 2nd Spot In State Tournament

1963/1964 Pennington Basketball Record 25-5—One Win Short!

Roster: Billy Vaughn, Jake Doss, Ronnie Robbins, Jackie Carroll, Bobby Newman, Jimmy Creech, Bill Parsons, Terry Pope, David Audia, Claude Allen, Bruce Salley, Lynn Parsons, Mike Olinger. Coach Ikey Joe Chadwell mgrs: Bill Parsons, Lonnie Evans.

Lee County Tournament

Semis—PHS 60 - TW 51

Keokee 49—St Charles

Finals—PHS 51—Keokee 44

District 8 Tournament

Semi—PHS 89—Keokee 85

Nickelsville 50—St Charles 48

Finals—PHS 60—N'ville 42

Southern Regional Finals

Pennington 60—Floyd Co 40

Mike Olinger was the big reason that Pennington High rolled to a 60-40 win over Floyd County Saturday night. The big 6'7", 184 pound District 8 ace scored 21 and led the Bobcats to a 51 -23 edge in rebounds.

Bristol Herald Courier March 1964

Final Four: Pennington 66—Brunswick 59

Pennington broke a close game apart in the last 3 minutes to pull away from stubborn Brunswick. The Bobcats led 19-18 after one, 31-30 at halftime, then 43-42 after 3 before a well rounded team production helped them pull away in the 4th.

PHS—L Parsons 16, Salley 12, Olinger 15, Allen 3, B Parsons 3, Audia 17.

Brunswick—Stembridge 12, Samford 4, Rodgers 32, Fleshood 3, Crane 6, Baise 2.

Ikey Joe Chadwell's Pennington Gap Bobcats ended their fabulous season last Saturday night in the Group II State Finals at Blacksburg. A thriller, it went to Lebanon to the tune of 56-52.

After a hard fought game on Friday night when Pennington defeated Brunswick, the Bobcats couldn't seem to get rolling. In the first 2 minutes of play, the 'Cats found themselves trailing 12-0. Not giving up, the team fought back to within 8 points at the first rest stop.

With a fine second quarter, the Bobcats took the lead at half, 30-29. It looked like things had settled down as the Pennington boys went ahead by 5 during the 3rd period. However, with mistakes and violations, Lebanon took advantage and closed the gap to 1 at the end of the 3rd.

In the final period, both teams swapped baskets until 3 minutes to go. It was then that the Pioneers took the lead and never gave up. Final Score Lebanon 56- PHS 52

Lebanon: Taylor 8, Hanson 8, Valley 21, Robinson 5, Farmer 10, Pucket 1, Fuller 3.

Pennington: L Parsons 9, Salley 14, Olinger 14, Audia 6, Allen, B Parsons 9.

Even in defeat, the team members gained honor and distinction in that they were awarded the Virginia High School League Sportsmanship Trophy for the tournament.

Honorable Mention All American—Mike Olinger

Honorable Mention All State—Mike Olinger

All District- Mike Olinger, Lynn Parsons, Dave Audia

All Tournament -State—Bucky Salley



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TO;

KEEPING THE MEMORIES ALIVE