



50TH ANNIVERSARY

NEENAH ROCKETS

N

1975 – STATE CHAMPIONS / FVA Conference Champions

Friday, Nov 22, 1974	(NC)	W	Neenah 86	Milwaukee Custer	60	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Tuesday, Nov 26, 1974		W	Neenah 87	Oshkosh North	56	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Saturday, Nov 30, 1974	(NC)	L	Neenah 51	Eau Claire Memorial	60	Eau Claire Memorial HS
Friday, Dec 6, 1974		W	Neenah 62	Appleton East	56	Appleton East HS
Friday, Dec 13, 1974		W	Neenah 66	Kaukauna	54	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Friday, Dec 20, 1974		L (2OT)	Neenah 60	Oshkosh West	62	Oshkosh West HS
Friday, Dec 27, 1974	(NC)	W	Neenah 85	Racine Case	67	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Friday, Jan 3, 1975		W	Neenah 76	Menasha	57	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Friday, Jan 10, 1975		W	Neenah 59	Appleton West	51	Appleton West (Seims Gym)
Saturday, Jan 11, 1975	(NC)	W	Neenah 78	Two Rivers	51	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Friday, Jan 17, 1975		L	Neenah 56	Kimberly	61	Kimberly HS
Friday, Jan 24, 1975		W	Neenah 86	Oshkosh North	66	Oshkosh North HS
Friday, Jan 31, 1975		W	Neenah 74	Appleton East	59	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Friday, Feb 7, 1975		W	Neenah 44	Kaukauna	40	Kaukauna HS
Friday, Feb 14, 1975		W	Neenah 75	Oshkosh West	54	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Friday, Feb 21, 1975		W	Neenah 82	Menasha	59	Menasha HS
Saturday, Feb 22, 1975		W	Neenah 79	Appleton West	61	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Friday, Feb 28, 1975		W	Neenah 80	Kimberly	52	Armstrong Fieldhouse

Neenah Regional

Friday, March 7, 1975		W	Neenah 62	New London	38	Armstrong Fieldhouse
Saturday, March 8, 1975		W	Neenah 67	Oshkosh West	64	Armstrong Fieldhouse

Oshkosh Sectional

Friday, March 14, 1975		W (OT)	Neenah 68	Sheboygan North	64	Kolf Sports Center
Saturday, March 15, 1975		W	Neenah 61	Fond du Lac	55	Kolf Sports Center

W.I.A.A. Class A State Tournament

Thursday, March 20, 1975		W	Neenah 65	Pulaski	54	UW Fieldhouse
Friday, March 21, 1975		W	Neenah 77	Racine Horlick	72	UW Fieldhouse
Saturday, March 22, 1975		W	Neenah 64	Milwaukee Marshall	55	UW Fieldhouse

1975 – STATE CHAMPIONS / FVA Conference Champions

Overall Record: 22-3 overall (12-2 conference)

Head Coach: Ron Einerson (7th Season)

With state tournament appearances in five of the last six seasons, perennial basketball powerhouse Neenah had earned considerable respect throughout the state. However, the Rockets had not yet secured the ultimate prize of a state championship under Coach Ron Einerson. Entering the 1974-75 season, his seventh year at the helm, the Rockets were picked to win the Fox Valley Association Conference. This was partly due to the program's rich tradition but also due to the two returning letterwinners from the previous season's 19-4 team that had finished their season in the state quarterfinals. Those letterwinners were two of the state's best senior guards: Wayne Kreklow and Paul Perry. "Our guards are our strength, our experience, and our leadership," Einerson told the newspapers in the preseason.

While Neenah had strength at the guard position, the rest of the roster was filled with players short on varsity experience but who had been part of last year's state tournament roster and had been a part of successful junior reserve and junior varsity teams. Seniors Dan Varberg, Rick Rank, Marty Suechting, Jim Korth, John Wagner, Kurt Zimmerman, and Tim Schaefer, along with juniors Todd Herreid and Tom Crist, rounded out the 11-man roster.

The '74-75 Rockets opened their season with a non-conference game against Milwaukee Custer. The Rockets exploded for 49 points in the first half, and their press forced 20 first-half turnovers, leading to an 86-60 victory. Neenah forced 34 turnovers for the game. Four nights later, their zone press caused all kinds of problems for Oshkosh North as Neenah took an early 12-0 lead en route to an 87-56 win in the Fox Valley Association opener. Neenah dropped to 2-1 on the season, though, when they couldn't hold a fourth-quarter lead and lost to Dick Bennett-led Eau Claire Memorial (60-51), despite a 30-point performance from Kreklow.

Neenah returned to conference action with a win at Appleton East (62-56), where they shot 45.8% for the game behind a 28-point performance from Kreklow. The following week, Neenah outrebounded Kaukauna and forced 27 turnovers to defeat the Ghosts (66-54). Kreklow scored 18 points, and Perry added 16 in the win. The Rockets were on the road at Oshkosh West the next week and had opportunities but couldn't capitalize, losing to the Indians in double overtime (62-60). Neenah rounded out the 1974 calendar year by scoring 24 points in each of the first three quarters, comfortably defeating Racine Case in a non-conference game at the Armstrong Fieldhouse. Case committed seven turnovers before they got off their first shot. Kreklow and Herreid led Neenah with 15 points apiece, while Varberg and Perry had 12 each.

Neenah opened their next game against Menasha with a full-court press in front of the home crowd, taking a 9-0 lead out of the gates and a commanding 23-9 lead after the first quarter. They maintained their lead for a dominant 76-57 win over the Blue Jays. The Rockets' balanced scoring was led by Kreklow with 17 points, while Rick Rank added 15. The next weekend, Paul Perry finished with a game-high 20 points as Neenah knocked off the Terrors in a packed Seims Gym at Appleton West. The following night, Neenah took a 38-22 advantage into halftime and cruised to a win at home in their final regular-season non-conference game against Two Rivers (78-51). Top scoring honors were shared by Kreklow and Marty Suechting with 16 points each. Neenah shot 36-69 from the field (52%) and held a 45-30 rebounding edge for the game. Kimberly halted Neenah's momentum, though, stunning the Rockets the following week in front of a large crowd at Kimberly High School (61-56).

Neenah quickly got back on track, starting the second round of conference play by opening up a 24-point lead early in the third quarter and dominating Oshkosh North to the tune of an 86-66 victory. Neenah dominated the boards, outrebounding the Spartans 44-18. Kreklow finished with 21 points, Varberg added 20, and Perry and Rank had 14 each. Kreklow's superb play against Appleton East, where he went 11 of 16 from the field and 8 of 8 from the free-throw line, resulted in 30 points for the game in a home win over the Patriots (74-59). It was Paul Perry's turn in the next game, as he went 8 of 10 from the field and led Neenah to a 44-40 win at Kaukauna.

Neenah's next game was on February 14th, and a sign inside the entrance to the Armstrong Fieldhouse read "Welcome to the Rockets' St. Valentine's Massacre." It may have felt like that for Oshkosh West after they left the gym. In the rematch with the Indians, Neenah outrebounded, outhustled, and outshot the Indians, defeating them 75-54. The Rockets posted a 33-24 rebounding edge and shot 32 of 54 (just under 60%) from the field. Perry and Kreklow led the offensive scoring with 22 and 21 points, respectively. At Menasha, Neenah jumped out to a 23-4 first-quarter lead and used the early cushion to knock off the Blue Jays (82-59). The win clinched at least a share of the FVA crown and was also the 23rd consecutive victory for the Rockets over crosstown rival Menasha. Neenah then captured the outright FVA conference championship the following night, riding a 26-point second quarter to a commanding 79-61 win at home over Appleton West. It was the Rockets' first conference crown since 1971. The Red and White finished their regular season by avenging the earlier loss to Kimberly with an 80-52 win over the Papermakers. Kreklow wrapped up the FVA scoring title, making his first ten shots from the field and finishing with 22 points on the night. Herreid collected 16 points, and Perry had 15. Neenah finished the conference season with a 12-2 record.

The highly favored Rockets opened the WIAA postseason with a 62-38 win over New London in the regional semifinal, played in the Armstrong Fieldhouse. The following night, Neenah jumped out to a 17-3 lead over Oshkosh West. The Indians battled back, and with the game tied at 64-64, Rick Rank hit a free throw, and Herreid converted two more free throws with two seconds left after a West turnover to clinch the regional title on their home court with a 67-64 win.

Riding a nine-game winning streak, Neenah faced Sheboygan North in sectional play in Oshkosh. In one of the all-time thrilling games in Neenah basketball history, the Rockets found themselves down 62-59 with four seconds left and Paul Perry at the free-throw line. Perry made the first and, after Neenah took their final timeout, intentionally missed the second shot. The ball bounced back into his hands and North's Stu Hopfensperger's hands, which forced a jump ball. Now down two with two seconds remaining, 6'0" Perry won the jump over 6'3" Hopfensperger, tipping the ball to Kreklow, who shot from somewhere between 20 and 25 feet out without touching the rim, sending the game into overtime tied at 62-62 and sending the Neenah faithful into a frenzy. A scoreboard malfunction at the end of regulation delayed the start of overtime almost 15 minutes, which meant the extra period's time was kept on a stopwatch at the scorer's table. North won the tip and stalled most of the extra period before missing from the floor. Kreklow followed with two free throws, Todd Herreid blocked a shot, and Jim Korth controlled the loose ball. With 16 seconds left, Herreid sank two free throws to extend the lead to four. North scored with five seconds left, but Tom Crist took a length-of-the-court pass and drew a goaltending call as time expired for the final points of the game. Neenah won in a fairy-tale finish, 68-64, in front of approximately 6,000 fans at the Kolf Sports Center. Kreklow and Perry scored in double figures, finishing with 24 and 12 points, respectively. Neenah took an early lead the following night in the sectional final and held on late to defeat Fond du Lac (61-55), earning the school's sixth state tournament trip in seven years under Einerson and 19th overall. Kreklow scored 22 points, Perry dropped 13, and Herreid had 10 points and 13 rebounds in the win.

After a Wednesday morning school sendoff in the Armstrong Fieldhouse, Neenah practiced in the University of Wisconsin Field House before their Thursday quarterfinal game against Pulaski. Neenah never trailed against the Red Raiders, controlling the pace with their defense to win (65-54). Kreklow finished with 22 points, while Rank had 15, and Herreid finished with 12 points and led the team with seven rebounds. Neenah rode another fast start in the state semifinal to finish off Racine Horlick (77-72). The fast-paced Rockets took an 18-2 lead to start the game and finished the first quarter leading 31-13. Kreklow again finished with a game-high 28 points and led Neenah with 9 rebounds. Rank added 19 points, and Perry had 12, including going six for six from the free-throw line in the fourth quarter. Neenah was back in the state championship game for the fourth time in seven seasons.

Milwaukee Marshall awaited the Rockets in the state championship. They scored first and led 4-2 and 6-4, which were the only times the Rockets trailed in all three state tournament games. Marty Suechting scored a basket to put Neenah up 8-6, and they never trailed again. Even a blown fuse at the UW Fieldhouse that briefly delayed the game in the first half couldn't quiet the Rockets' attack. Kreklow scored 19 points, Perry had 12 points, and the Rockets defeated Milwaukee Marshall 64-55, winning the WIAA Class A finals. After multiple recent state tournament heartbreaks, Neenah was crowned basketball state champions for the first time since 1930.

"I want to make sure that everybody knows that we want to share this win with all the players who have suffered so much here in the past years," said Coach Einerson to reporters after the game. "We wanted this for them and for the whole city of Neenah, for everyone who has suffered through the heartbreak." The team returned to Neenah to a hero's welcome, greeted by more than 5,000 fans and supporters in the Armstrong Fieldhouse.

Neenah finished the gold-ball season with a 22-3 record. Kreklow and Perry were honored as co-captains. Herreid won the team rebounding award, and Suechting received the team spirit award. Perry earned the assist award, eclipsing the school's single-season assist record with 153 on the season. Kreklow was named team MVP and won the scoring honors. His three-year varsity career concluded with a new all-time school record of 916 points.

Kreklow and Perry were named to the first-team All-Fox Valley Association, while Herreid and Rank earned honorable mention. Kreklow was named FVA Player of the Year and Coach Einerson earned FVA Coach of the Year. The Associated Press (AP) also named Kreklow to its first team All-State and Perry as honorable mention. United Press International (UPI) All-State honors went to Kreklow, who was named to the first team and recognized as the state's Player of the Year, while Perry was named fourth team All-State. UPI named Coach Einerson as state Coach of the Year.

1975 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

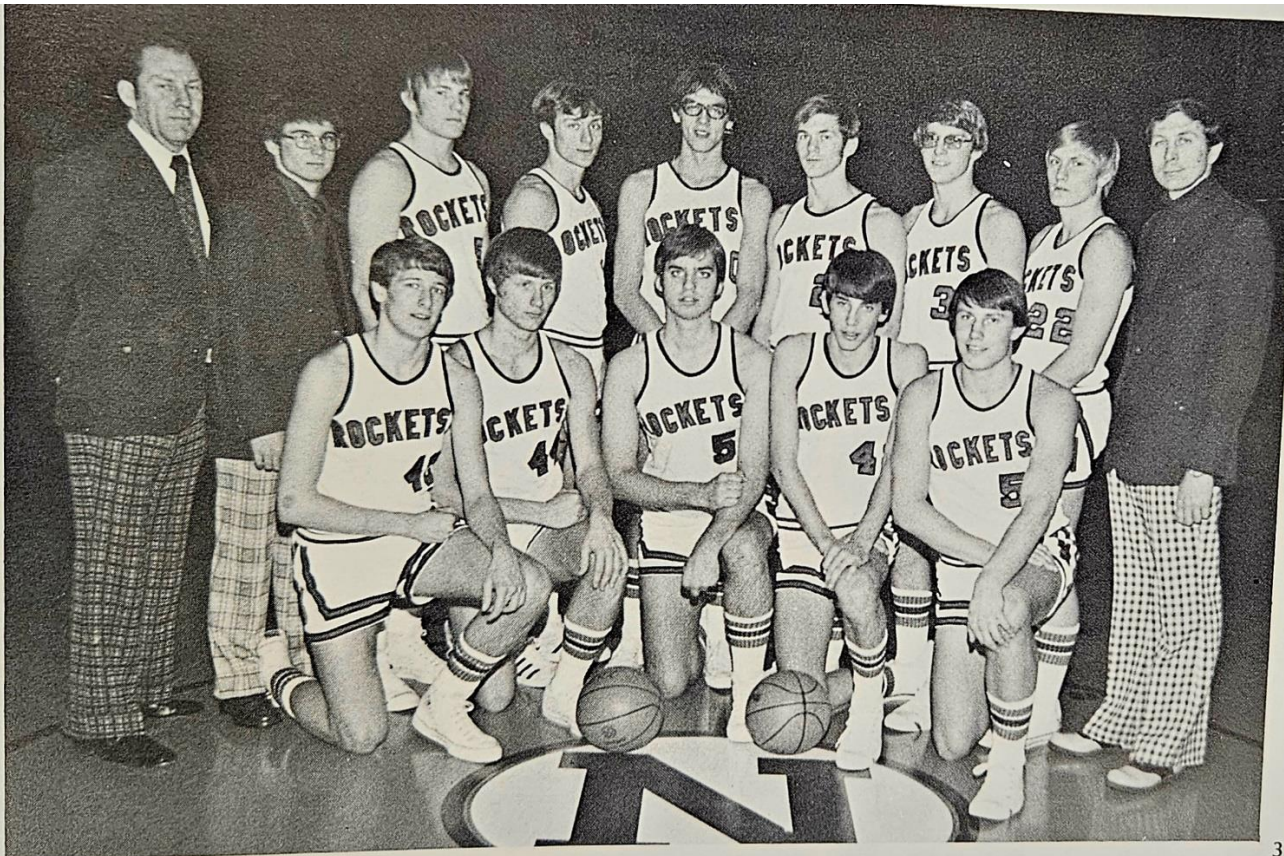
Seniors: Wayne Kreklow, Paul Perry, Rick Rank, Marty Suechting, Dan Varberg, Tim Schafer, John Wagner, Jim Korth, Kurt Zimmerman

Juniors: Todd Herreid, Tom Crist

Head Coach: Ron Einerson

Assistant Coaches: Rich Paske, Tom Berven

Manager: Fred Schaefer



3
VARSITY BASKETBALL — FIRST ROW: T. Herreid, M. Suechting, J. Wagner, R. Rank, D. Varberg. SECOND ROW: Coach Einerson, F. Schafer, J. Korth, K. Zimmerman, W. Kreklow, P. Perry, T. Crist, T. Schaefer, Coach Paske.



Two for Kreklow

Neenah's Wayne Kreklow (30) glides in for a layup basket during first half action in Friday's non-conference game against Racine Case on the Armstrong Fieldhouse court.

Teammates looking on include Rick Rank (42), Dan Varberg (50), Paul Perry (20) and Marty Suechting (44). The Rockets had little trouble with the visiting Eagles, chalking up an 85-67 triumph. (Post-Crescent photo).



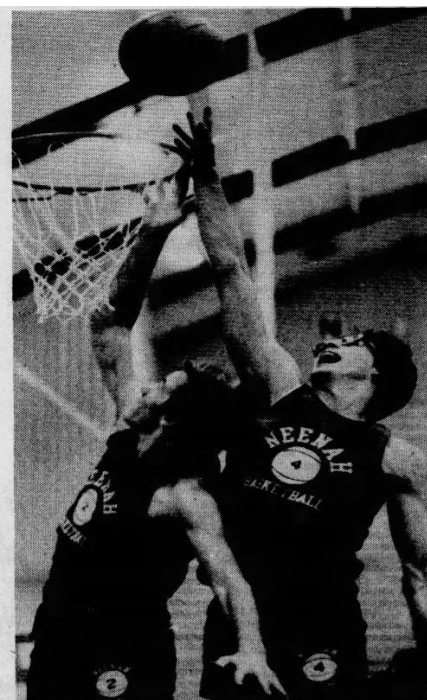
Midair collision

Wayne Kreklow, left, of Neenah and Oshkosh West's Bill Dehn seemed destined for a midair crackup during the above action in Friday's Fox Valley Association game on the Armstrong Fieldhouse court. Kreklow scored 21 points in helping the Rockets to a 75-54 triumph. The 6-7 Dehn had 15 for the Indians. (News-Record photo)



Soccer?

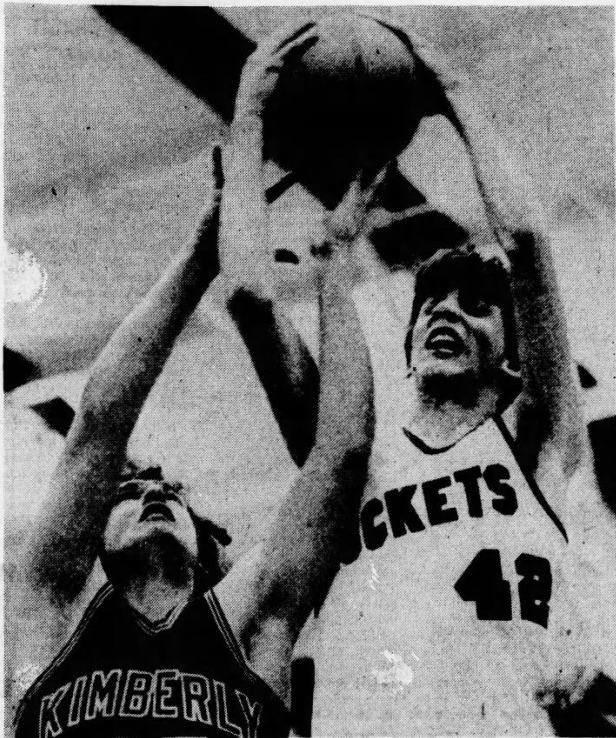
Appleton West's Mark Wiese (55) and Jon Wildenberg (41) and Marty Suechting (44), Neenah, appear intent on booting the basketball ball during first half action in Saturday play on the Armstrong Fieldhouse court. The Rockets chalked up a 79-61 victory and with it clinched undisputed Fox Valley Association championship honors. (News-Record photo).



The wild blue yonder?

For guards, Neenah's Paul Perry (left) and Wayne Kreklow can get up pretty high when the need arises. Here, the battle for ball control between the only two Rocket lettermen takes place at and above rim level.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo



Fighting for the ball

Battling for possession of the basketball during Friday night's Fox Valley Association game in Neenah are Neenah's Rick Rank (42) and Kimberly's Tim Peerenboom

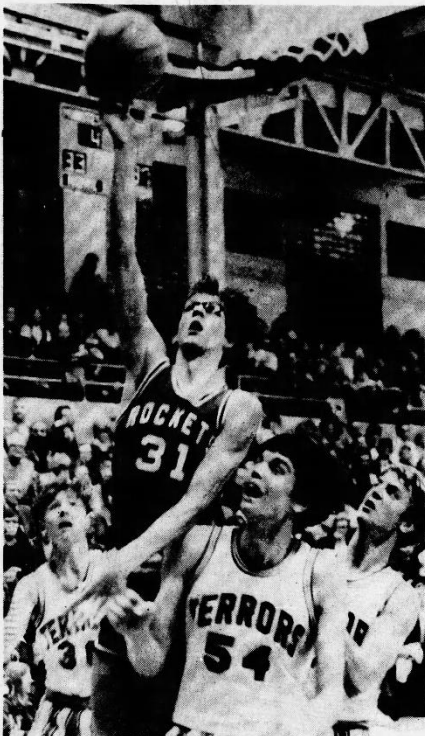
(45). Neenah scored an 80-52 win over Kimberly in the final league game of the season.
—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo by Dick Meyer



One of many

Marty Suechting (44) of Neenah gives the Rockets one of their 40 baskets during Friday evening's game against Racine Case at the

Armstrong Fieldhouse in Neenah. Alex Jennings is the defender for Case. The Rockets won, 85-67.
—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo



Shooting Rocket

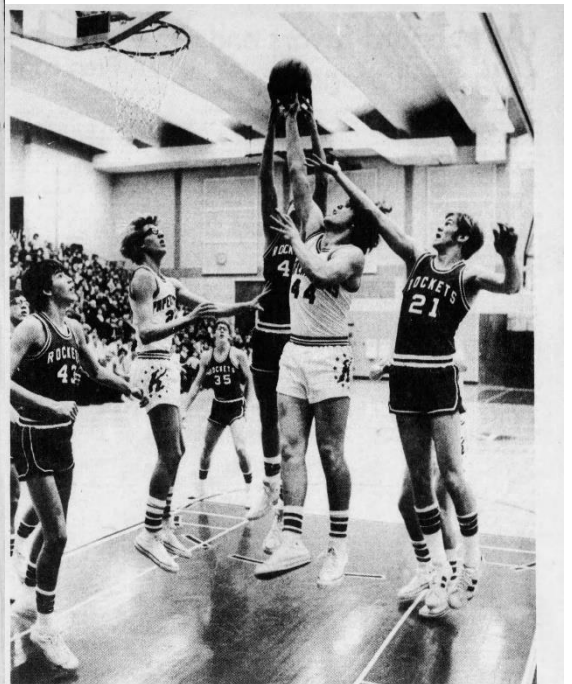
Neenah's Wayne Kreklow (31) drives against Appleton West's Mark Wisse (54) during Friday night's Fox Valley Association basketball game in Appleton. Greg Reitzner (left) and Dave Thiel

(right) are the other players shown. Neenah beat West 59-51 to claim sole possession of first place in the FVA.
—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo



High barrier

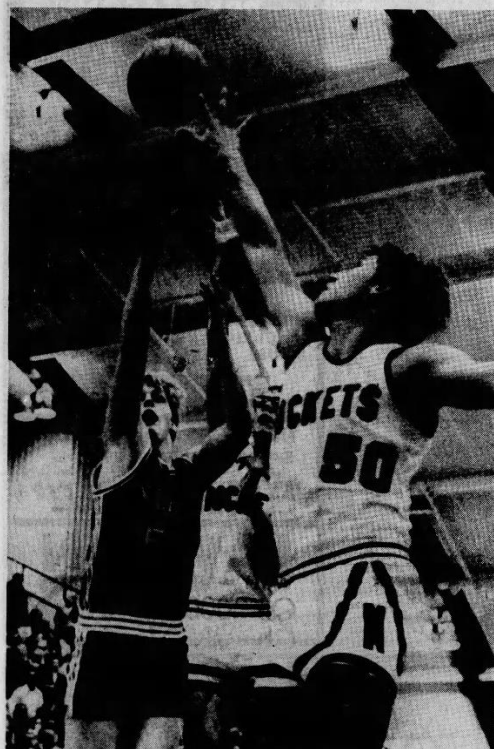
Racine Case's Pete Shalbrack goes high in the air as he block the view of Neenah's Tim Schafer (22). The action occurs during the first quarter of the non-league game in the Armstrong Gym Friday night. (Post-Crescent photo by Coppe Vander Walker)



Eyes toward ceiling

Kimberly's Tim Peerenboom (44) battles with a Neenah player for the ball during their Fox Valley Association in the Papermakers' gym

Friday night. Watching the action is Kimberly's John Miron (20) and Neenah's Rick Rank (43), Tom Crist (35) and Paul Perry (21). (Post-Crescent photo by Rich Vande Weghe)

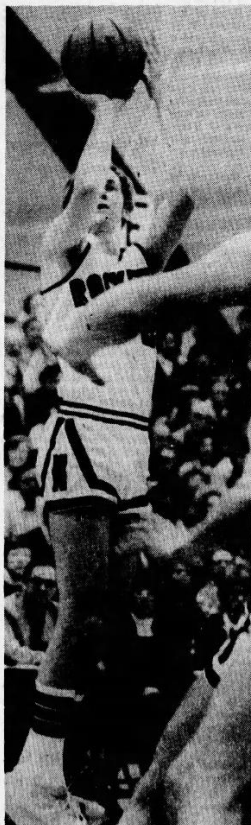


Shooting Spartan

Steve Erickson (55) of Oshkosh North's Spartans gets off a shot over the outstretched arm of Neenah's Dan Varber (50) during Tuesday's game in Neenah. The

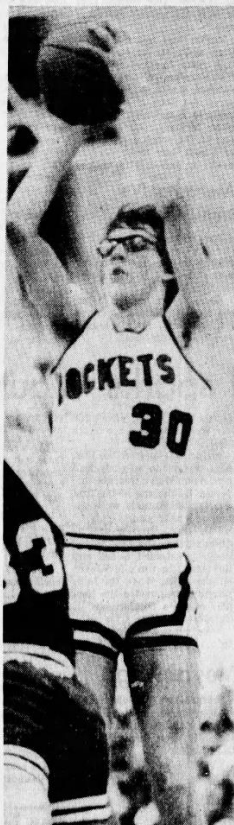
Fox Valley Association season opener was won by Neenah, 87-56.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo



Thunder and lightning

Paul Perry (left) and Wayne Kreklow (right) provided the Neenah Rockets with a double barreled attack against Oshkosh West Friday night. Perry's high arching bombs



and Kreklow's fast-breaking thrusts kept the Indians reeling as the Rockets posted a 75-54 victory.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo

Neenah rips North in FVA inaugural

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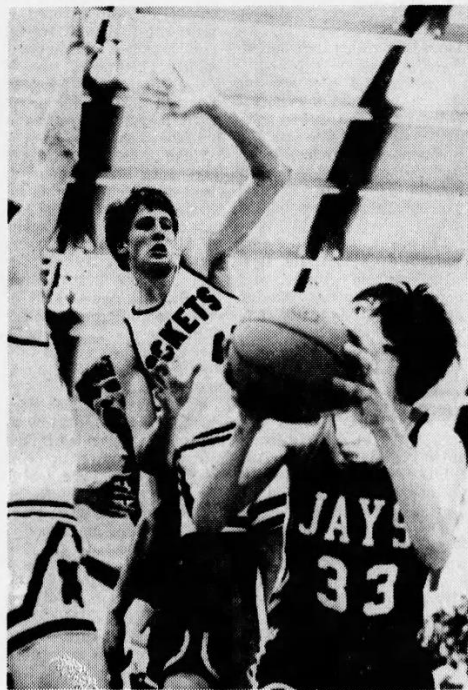
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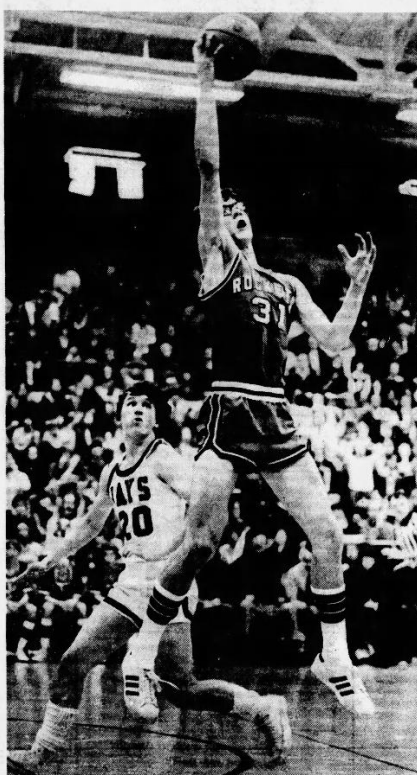
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Too tall

Neenah's Todd Herreid (40) and Dan Varberg (left) were too big a deterrent to the shooting instincts of Menasha's Kendall Rasmussen (33) as the Rockets used their height advantage for a 76-57 victory Friday night.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo

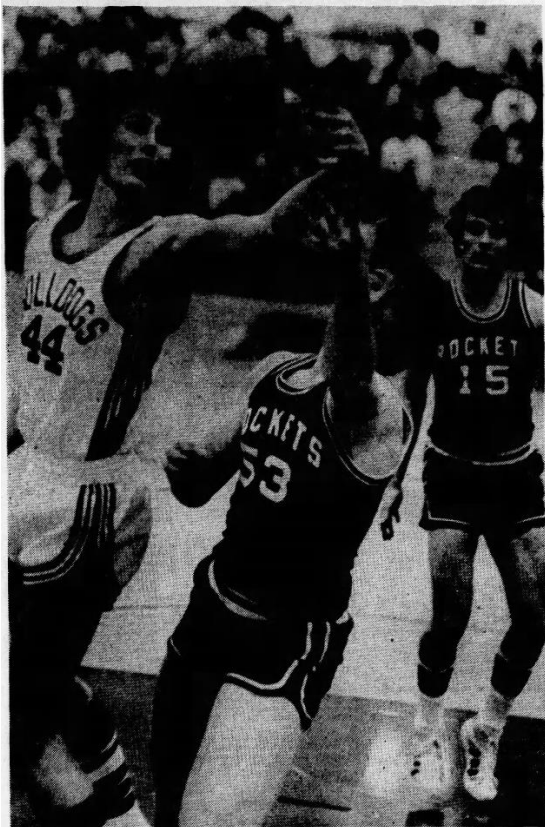


High-flying Rocket

Neenah's Wayne Kreklow (31) takes a shot during Friday's game in Menasha against the Menasha Bluejays. Mike Langenhuizen (20) of Menasha watches Kreklow on the way to the basket. The Rockets

won, 82-59, to earn at least one share of the Fox Valley Association Basketball championship.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo by Dick Meyer



Basketball battle

Jeff Courchaine of New London (44) and Jim Korth of Neenah (53) reach for the basketball during Friday's Neenah Regional game at the Neenah Armstrong Fieldhouse.

Kurt Zimmerman (15) of Neenah is in the background. Neenah won, 62-38.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo by Dick Meyer



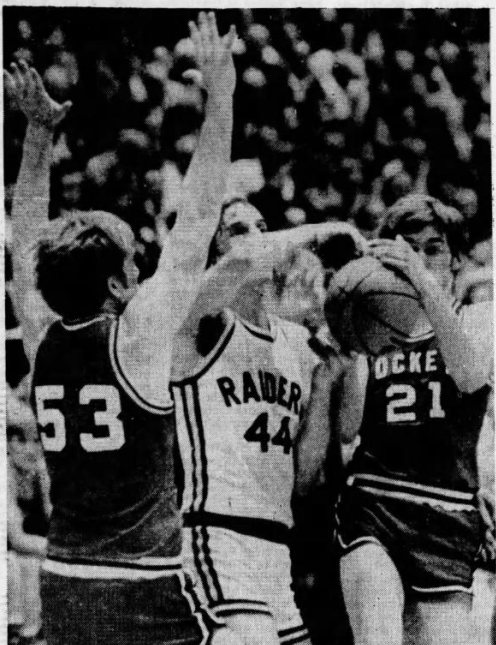
Unstoppable

Neenah Rocket guard Wayne Kreklow (30) drives around Oshkosh West's Bill Dehn towards the Neenah basket in WIAA Regional action Saturday night at Armstrong Fieldhouse. Kreklow was a tower of power for the Rockets, scoring 24 points to lead Neenah to a 57-54 win over the Indians for the regional championship.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo by Dick Meyer

Rockets regional champions again

By MIKE BATES, Northwestern Sportswriter. Erickson talked of a "crucial, crucial call" made late in the game. Paul Perry, fouled with 37 seconds left, made two free shots.



Rockets steal ball

Neenah's Paul Perry (21) takes ball away from Sheboygan North's Jim Zill (44) as Jim Korth (53) puts pressure on Zill, during WIAA Sectional basketball game

at the Kolf Sports Center Friday night. Neenah won in overtime, 68-64.

—Northwestern photo by Carl Plotz

Rockets tip Raiders with fairy tale finish

By MIKE BATES, Northwestern Sportswriter. Neenah's Paul Perry (21) made two free shots to give the Rockets a believable finish to gain a session for the victory.



Jubilation

A leaping Wayne Kreklow (30) is surrounded by his joyful teammates after the Neenah Rockets defeated Fond du Lac, 61-55, for the championship of the Oshkosh Class A sectional Saturday night. An official heads for the

locker room with the basketball at the left. The Rockets, who gained the finals on a stunning overtime victory over Sheboygan North Friday night, will meet Pulaski at 2:45 p.m. Thursday at Madison in their first state tournament game. (News-Record Photo).



State meet bound

Neenah's basketball Rockets conclude home practice today for Thursday's appearance in the WIAA State High School Basketball Tournament against Pulaski. Kneeling, from the left, are Assistant Coach Dick Paske, Paul Perry, Wayne Kreklow, Coach Ron Einerson

and John Wagner. Standing, same order, are Jim Korth, Randy DeMarco, Mark Langdon, Dan Varberg, Rick Rank, Tim Schafer, Marty Suechting, Todd Herreid, Kurt Zimmerman, Tom Crist and manager Fred Schaefer. (News-Record photo).

sports

The Post-Crescent
Tuesday, March 18, 1975

B-8



Rockets have shot at title, says Einerson

BY GEORGE MANCOSKY

NEENAH — Neenah High School Coach Ron Einerson picks Eau Claire Memorial as the favorite in the state high school basketball tournament but doesn't discount his own team's chances.

"I think we've got a shot at winning. I don't know any reason why we can't," the veteran of five previous state tournaments said Monday afternoon before sending his club through a short practice.

The Rockets will hold their final drill at home today and embark for Madison after an 8 a.m. Wednesday sendoff.

They open play in the 6th annual meet against Pulaski at 3:05 p.m. Thursday, taking a 19-3 record with them.

Einerson said he is impressed by Eau Claire's defensive statistics. The Old Abes are giving up an average of only 45.8 points per game. Included among their victories is a 60-51 decision over the Rockets last November.

Raiders resembled any team his club had met but explained they do some of the same things that Sheboygan North did against them.

He added that 6-6 Ron Ripley is somewhat like Oshkosh West's Bill Dehn but that the latter probably has an edge in weight.

Einerson believes last year's state meet experience will help the Rockets, specially because of Wayne Kreklow and Paul Perry, who started against Green Bay Southwest in the 61-59 loss.

"It's important to have good experience at the guards down there because they handle the ball so much," Neenah's coach pointed out. Kreklow scored 23 points and Perry had five in the heart-breaking loss. Dan Varberg, Jim Korth and Marty Suechting were on the tournament roster but didn't get into the game.

When asked what he learned through the years of tourney experience, Einerson said keeping the poise and cool was the most important.

"I concentrate on it because we know



'Go, Rockets!'

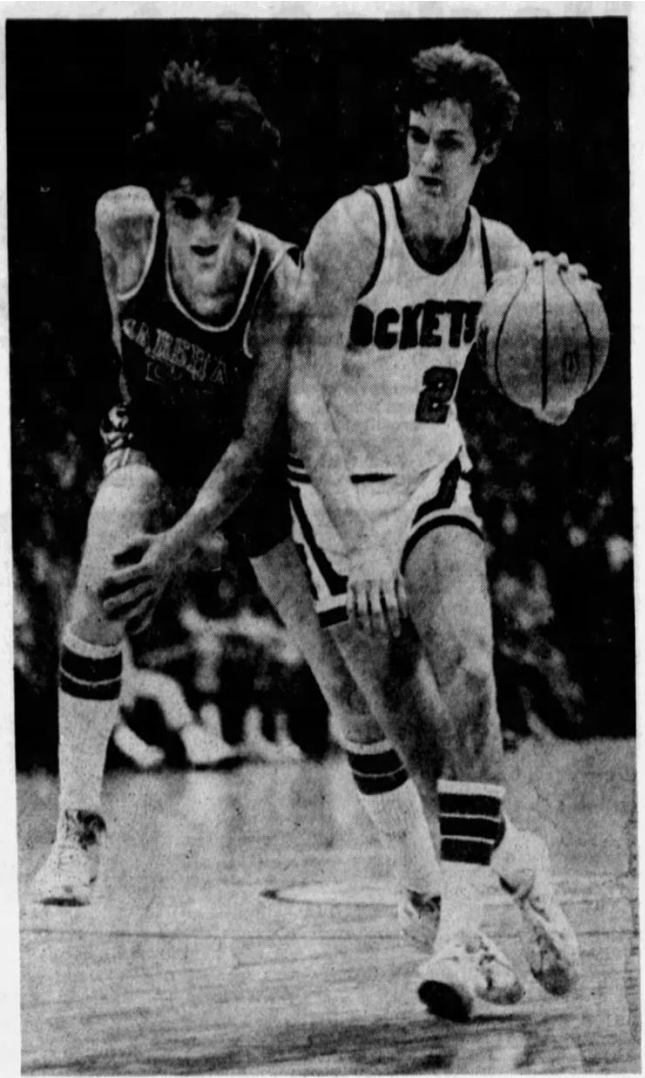
If enthusiasm is any criterion, the Neenah High School basketball team will wrap up the state WIAA basketball championship Saturday night in Madison. A pep assembly at the Armstrong Campus fieldhouse this morning brought the student body to its feet under the exhortations of

the cheerleaders. After the assembly, the Rocket cagers left for Madison and a noon practice session at the UW fieldhouse. The fans will be off to Madison Thursday for the Rockets' game at 3:05 p.m. against Pulaski.

—Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo

Cheers send Rockets off to state tourney

By JOANNE FLEMMING boeing when players from The fans were confident of rally by pointing out that he



Neenah's Paul Perry drives past Marshall's Bruce Rzentkowski.

—State Journal Photo by J. D. Patrick

"Yeah Neenah!" "Yeah Neenah!"

GO NEENAH WIN THIS GAME
KEEP YOUR SPOTLESS FAME
WE WILL CHEER YOU ALL THE WHILE
AS YOU FIGHT AND FIGHT, RA! RA!
WE'LL CHEER TILL ECHOES LOUD RESOUND
FOR JOYS ARE ALL PROFOUND
THEN WILL SING TO ALMA MATER NEENAH HIGH!

neenah
ROCKETS

RON EINERSON, YOU ARE GREAT, YOU GOT THE ROCKET!
PROUD OF YOU ROCKETS WERE LUCKY TO HAVE A G...
...TKE YOU!



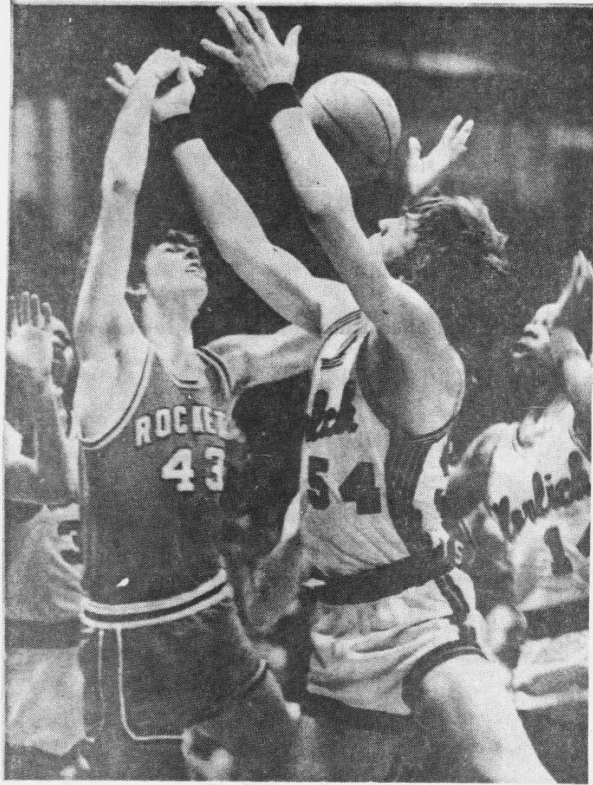
THE NEENAH-MENASHA DAILY NORTHWESTERN

"The Paper Where Your Ad is Dynamite in Both Editions"



Neenah coach Ron Einerson stares down the referee during a low point for the Rockets. Neenah held onto their lead despite a Racine Horlick rally Friday to gain the Class A state tournament finals for the fourth time in the last seven years.

Daily Register Staff Photo



Battle for rebound

Neenah's Rick Rank (43) and Racine Horlick's Bob Wittke (54) battle for the ball during Class A semifinal basketball competition in the WIAA state tournament Friday afternoon at Madison. Horlick's Keith Driver (14) looks on from behind. Rank scored 19 points in helping Neenah to a 77-72 victory. (AP Wirephoto)

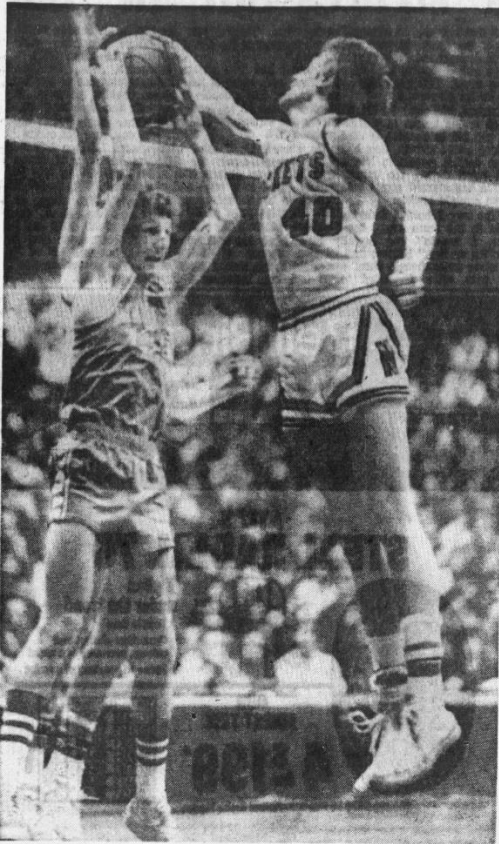
Neenah's Rick Rank (43) and Racine Horlick's Bob Wittke (54) battle for the ball during Class A semifinal basketball competition in the WIAA state tournament Friday afternoon at Madison. Horlick's Keith Driver (14) looks on from behind. Rank scored 19 points in helping Neenah to a 77-72 victory. (AP Wirephoto)



Baseline patrol

Neenah's Marty Suechting (45) closely covers Pulaski's Steve Wiesman on an out-of-bounds play during Thursday's WIAA Class A state basketball tournament game in Madison. (Post-Crescent photo).

Neenah's Marty Suechting (45) closely covers Pulaski's Steve Wiesman on an out-of-bounds play during Thursday's WIAA Class A state basketball tournament game in Madison. (Post-Crescent photo).



Shot stopped by Herreid

Todd Herreid (40) of Neenah blocks this attempt by Steve Kowalkowski of Milwaukee Marshall during Saturday night's Class A championship game at Madison. Neenah, beaten in the finals three times in

the last seven years, finally made it all the way, defeating Marshall, 64-55, for the second state title in its history. The first one came in 1930. (AP Wirephoto)



High for rebound

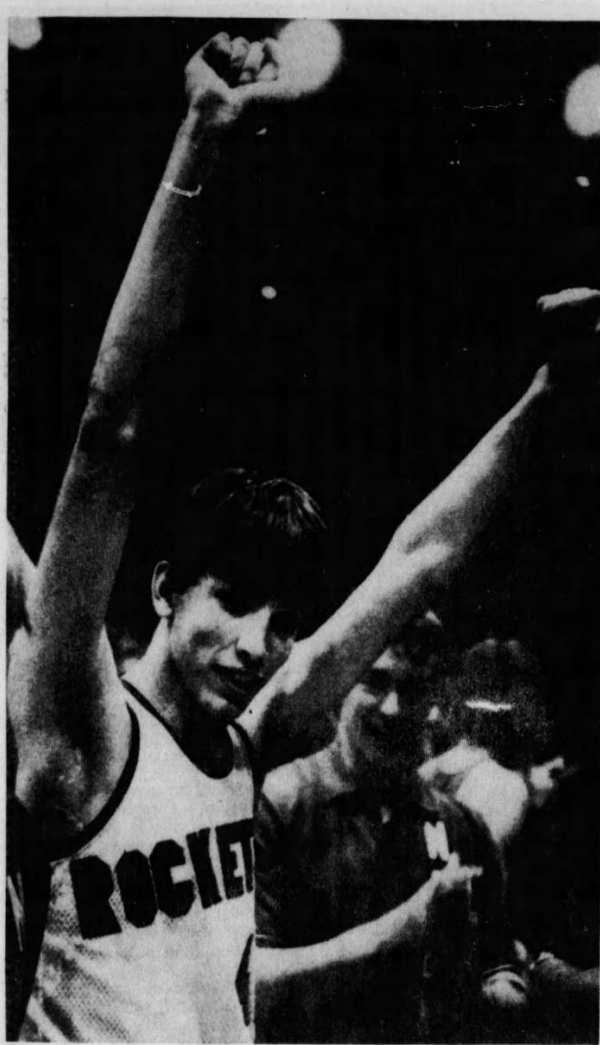
Rick Rank (43) of Neenah High School went high in the air to come down with this rebound in Friday's semi-final game of the Class A WIAA state tournament at Madison. At the left is Wayne Kreklow (31) while at the right is Dan Varberg (51), both of the Rockets.

Trying to reach the ball is Dan DeRose of Racine Horlick. Neenah scored a 77-72 victory to move into tonight's championship game. (Post-Crescent photo by Copper Vander Walker)



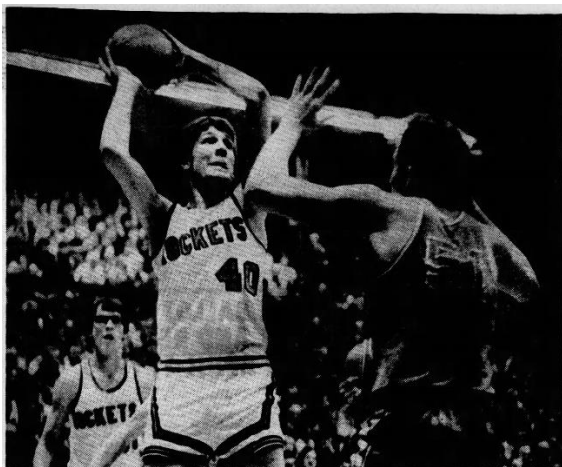
Fruits of victory

Rocket Paul Perry wears the net around his neck and accepts congratulations from a fan Saturday night after Armstrong High defeated Milwaukee Marshall for the state high school basketball championship, 64-55. Perry played a key role in the triumph, scoring 12 points. (News-Record photo)



Joyous occasion

Neenah's Rick Rank raises his arms in a salute to the Rockets after their victory over Milwaukee Marshall for the WIAA class A championship in Madison Saturday night. (AP Wire-photo)



Neenah's Todd Herreid gets off jump shot for two points



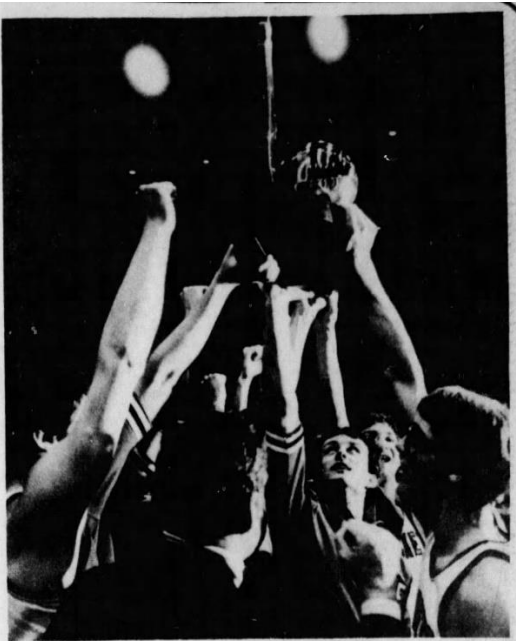
Ron Einerson calls out play



Wayne Krelow of Neenah, left, and Steve Peterson of Marshall battle for a loose basketball.

—Steve Journal Photo by J. D. Patrick

Northwestern photos by Dick Meyer, Dan Rau



State champs

The Neenah High School Rockets, newly crowned state basketball champions, hoist their trophy for all to see in Madison Saturday night. (Post-Crescent photo by Tom Running)



Neenah cheerleaders count down seconds



Rocket rebound

Neenah's Dan Varberg (50) goes high in the air to pull down a rebound during the Rockets' WIAA class A tourney title game against

Marshall Saturday night. Other Neenah players around the action are Wayne Krelow (30), Marty Suechting (44) and Paul Perry (20). (Post-Crescent photo)

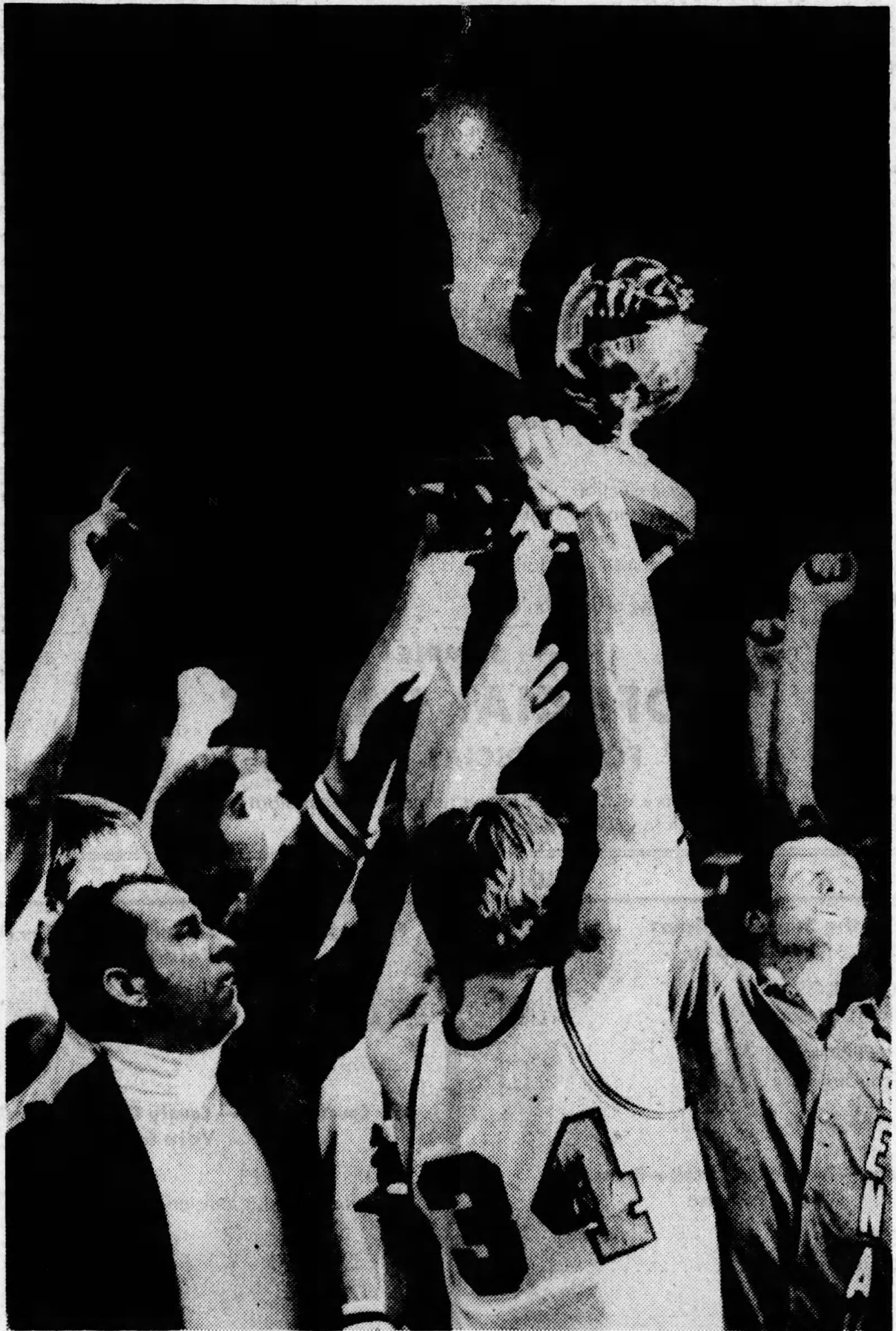
8—La Crosse Tribune, Monday, March 24, 1975



ROCKETS COME HOME — Neenah High School basketball fans welcomed home coach Ron Einerson (center) and his Wisconsin state public school champions at a

high school rally Sunday. The Rockets downed Milwaukee Marshall, 64-55, Saturday night in Madison to win their first state title since 1930.

AP Wirephoto



Rockets display championship trophy

Neenah Finally Wins State Title

Rockets Down Marshall To End Tournament Jinx

BY JIM PICKETT
Tribune Sports Editor

MADISON, Wis. — "We like to feel this win is shared with all townspeople and players who suffered through those tough times with us," said Neenah coach Ron Emerson after his team won the class A state basketball championship here last night.

The Rockets, who were in the state meet for the sixth time in the last seven years but had suffered nothing but heartbreak with three second-place finishes and one third-place finish, defeated surprising Milwaukee Marshall, 64-55, at the University of Wisconsin Field House in the finals of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Association (WIAA) state tournament.

"We have never been ashamed of finishing second here and we wouldn't have if that would have happened again," said Emerson, who formerly coached at Cashton.

Neenah grabbed the lead midway in the first quarter and held it the rest of the way, although Marshall, which had lost seven games during the regular season, gave the Rockets a couple of scares by closing to within two points a couple of times in the third quarter.

Neenah's lead never dipped below six points in the first quarter and most of the time the Rockets were up by 10 or more. But Emerson said he didn't feel that they ever had it won until the final three seconds.

"We've had it happen to us too many times down here. You just never know. With three seconds to go is when I knew we had it for sure," he said. He was recalling his double overtime loss to Beloit Memorial after the game appeared in the bag until

Beloit's Lamont Weaver tossed in about a 60-foot shot to force the first overtime in 1969.

Emerson was swarmed by former players and members of his coaching profession with well-wishes and Marshall coach Paul Sherry probably said what many felt immediately after the game.

"Ron is one of the finest coaches and personalities I've ever known. If I had a son, I would want Ron to be his coach. It is the best-coached team we have faced all year," said Sherry.

Emerson almost saw the bubble burst when ace Wayne Kreklow sprained his ankle with 2:52 remaining in the first half and his team in front by just six points. "It would have been a blow to us, but those three happen. We are not a one-man team. We would have missed him if he wouldn't have been able to come back, but we are a team," he said.

Kreklow had 10 points at the time, came back for the second half and added nine more for a

game-high 19 points.

Marshall's Sherry continually praised Emerson and Neenah after the game. And he also said he was happy that Kreklow could come back and play. "He's a great kid and a great ballplayer. I'm happy for him that it wasn't serious."

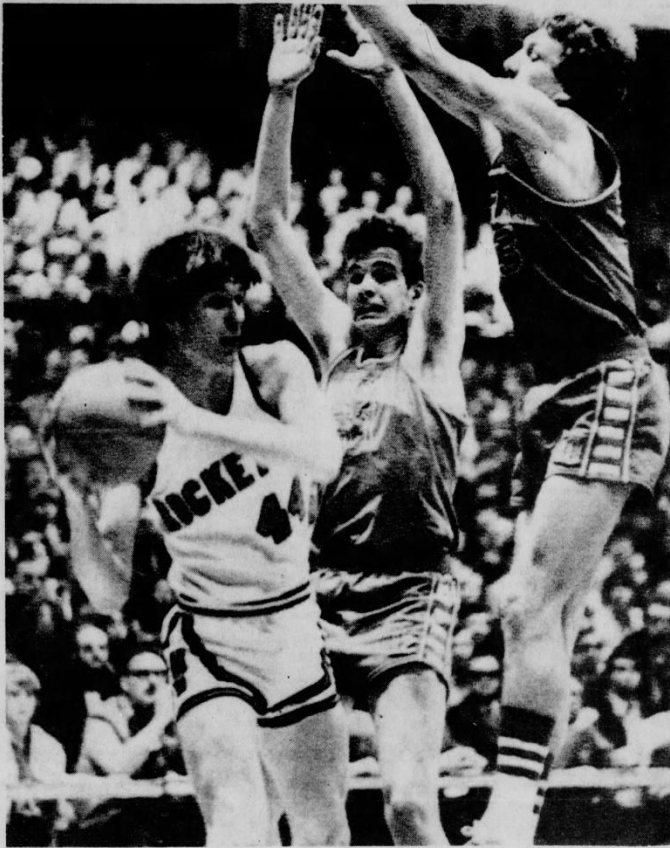
About his own ball club, Sherry could just say, "I'm a proud man. They did a great job. I thought we played about as well as we could play. They just are an excellent club."

Neenah displayed a devastating fast break and pressing defense in its first two wins of the tournament, but Marshall slowed them down considerably and only lost the ball once against the Rocket press.

"We felt we set the tempo of the game. They didn't run on us very much," said Sherry. Emerson agreed. "They did a good job making us slow up. Maybe we weren't aggressive enough in the first half, but they had something to do with that. Our press didn't bother them at all."

Emerson said the big thing he told his players was to keep their cool and think positive. "And every time they came back to the bench they kept saying, 'Keep cool.'"

The veteran coach, who saw his team finish with a 22-3 record, said rooming across the hall from last year's state champion Superior team really helped his club this year. "Superior's attitude helped us a great deal. All they were thinking about was winning it all," said Emerson. Emerson wouldn't compare



CORNERED—Milwaukee Marshall's Dave Ziesmann and Steve Kowalkowski, right, corner Neenah's Marty Suchting (44) in first half action during last night's class

A championship game at the WIAA state basketball championships in Madison. Neenah, however, went on to victory, 64-55, to avenge several near misses at state.

Basketball Scores

- WIAA STATE TOURNAMENT**
- CLASS C**
Marathon 45, Pardeeville 57
- CLASS B**
Shioogan Falls 78, Writtenberg
Birmansworth 60
- CLASS A**
- CLASS AA**
Championship
Little Falls 54, Robbinsdale 49
- CLASS A**
Championship
Chudson 41, St. Pauli Mechanic Arts 33
Consolation
Culdes 20, Minneapolis De La Salle 43
- CLASS AA**
Championship
Consolation
Bloomington Jefferson 59, Hibbing 25
- COLLEGE**
- NCAA TOURNAMENT**
- MIDWEST REGIONAL**
Championship
Kentucky 92, Indiana 90
Consolation
Central Michigan 88, Oregon State 87
- MIDWEST REGIONAL**
Championship
Louisville 84, Maryland 82
Consolation
Cincinnati 95, Notre Dame 87 OT
- EAST REGIONAL**
Championship
Syracuse 95, Kansas State 87 OT
Consolation
North Carolina 110, Boston College 90
- WEST REGIONAL**
Championship
UCLA 89, Arizona State 75
Consolation
Newcastle 75, Montana 67
- MIT TOURNAMENT**
- SEMIFINALS**
Providence 85, St. John's 72
Princeton 58, Oregon 57

Jipcho Wins Dual Victory

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Amazing Ben Jipcho won the two-mile, then came back 56 minutes later Saturday to win the mile in one of history's greatest doubles at the International Track Association's fourth 1975 meet.

The 32-year-old Kenyan won a fast two-mile from Tracy Smith in 8:27.0 and then stunned a small crowd at the Los Angeles Sports Arena with a 3:56.2 time in the 11-lap mile. It was the third fastest indoor mile in history.

It was the 10th time Jipcho had attempted a double on the ITA tour, and he's won all 20 of those races. Saturday's two times were considered the fastest double in history. Smith, former world indoor three-mile record holder, was second in a lifetime best 8:29.4.

THE CAPITAL TIMES SPORTS

Late Scores WIBA 238-2601 MADISON, WIS., Monday, March 24, 1975—13



On top, the coaches Neenah High School's first state basketball championship team in 1975, including Neenah coach Ron Emerson, who has won the title over Milwaukee Marshall 64-55, after basketball victory at a homecoming rally for the team in Neenah Sunday afternoon. At left is the present Neenah coach, Ron Emerson, who has won the title over Milwaukee Marshall 64-55, after basketball victory at a homecoming rally for the team in Neenah Sunday afternoon. At right is the present Neenah coach, Ron Emerson, who has won the title over Milwaukee Marshall 64-55, after basketball victory at a homecoming rally for the team in Neenah Sunday afternoon. (AP Wirephoto)

State Tournament Champs Receive Warm Homecoming

The Neenah team, which won the WIAA state basketball championship, was honored at a homecoming rally at Neenah High School Sunday afternoon. The team, coached by Ron Emerson, was greeted by a large crowd of fans and family members. The team members, including players and coaches, were seen posing for a group photo. The atmosphere was festive and celebratory. The team's victory was a significant achievement for the school and the community.

Neenah High School's first state basketball championship team in 1975, including Neenah coach Ron Emerson, who has won the title over Milwaukee Marshall 64-55, after basketball victory at a homecoming rally for the team in Neenah Sunday afternoon. At left is the present Neenah coach, Ron Emerson, who has won the title over Milwaukee Marshall 64-55, after basketball victory at a homecoming rally for the team in Neenah Sunday afternoon. At right is the present Neenah coach, Ron Emerson, who has won the title over Milwaukee Marshall 64-55, after basketball victory at a homecoming rally for the team in Neenah Sunday afternoon. (AP Wirephoto)



A happy Mrs. Ron Emerson greets her husband as the Neenah coach emerges from the locker room after the championship game in the state basketball tournament. —Neenah-Menasha Northwestern photo

Coach's wife shares team's struggle, joy

NEENAH — Saturday night Delores Emerson was a very happy coach's wife, sharing with him the joy — almost sense of relief — when Neenah took its place as the No. 1 basketball team in the state.

Ronald Emerson has taken his Neenah Rockets to Madison five times in the last six years. The Rockets have finished second three times, third once and were eliminated in the first game in the trip to Madison in 1974. Delores Emerson attended all these games, in fact "almost every game since my husband has been a basketball coach."

"I was glad for all the coaches and all the boys who had worked so hard to achieve this. Those boys really pull for each other and work as a team."

"I've gone to the state tournament each time. We watch the other teams play. We saw four of the tournament games that first day, and then watched teams in the other classes." Mrs. Emerson added. "I suppose if I weren't a coach's wife I wouldn't watch quite so many, but I really do like to see basketball played well and they really play well in tournament games."

The two older daughters, Andrea, 15, and Laura, 13, accompanied their parents to Madison this year, but Leslie, 8, a second grader, watched on television at home. "It's a little long for her to sit through all those games," her mother said.

The girls like to play tennis and swim, but, like their mother, they also enjoy watching basketball.

"I'm really very athletic so I'd just as soon watch. I watch Monday night football and if I get a chance to see the Packers play, I enjoy that too."

But it's time to take a break — to breathe deeply and relax.

"This week is spring vacation for the Neenah schools and the Emerson family is going to relax and just enjoy being together," said Delores Emerson.



Clyde Cliche

In Class A

At Long Last It's Neenah

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Certainly, Paul Perry admitted, he wanted to win it for himself.

He wanted to savor what he had been told was that special feeling, something only a teenage boy on a state champion high school basketball team can appreciate.

But the brilliant, if often overlooked, playmaking guard of Neenah's newly crowned Rockets wanted it much more for his teammates, his coach, the townspeople and the alumni.

He knew it would erase at least a seven-year stigma started by Lamont Weaver. "It was here that night, up in the second balcony. I guess I was 11 years old," Perry said.

"I remember Weaver made that shot, but I didn't know what it meant then," he said. "But ever since, we've been labeled as a team that couldn't win the big one. Even though each year it has been a different team with different players, I think the whole town has that image."

Not anymore. The Rockets, led by Perry, Wayne Kreklow and superstar Todd Herred, pulled away in the fourth quarter to whip Milwaukee Marshall 64-55 at the University of Wisconsin fieldhouse Saturday for the state public school Class A championship.

Perry, after two subpar tournament games, scored 12 points to back Kreklow's 19 as the Rockets won their second championship in 19 years and first since 1920.

"He had lost three title games since 1969, when the legendary 55-foot shot by Weaver enabled Iola's Memorial to tie Neenah at the end of regulation time and finally win in two overtimes.

"Neenah coach Ron Einerson wept that night, as he did in 1970 when a last-second shot by Appleton West's Scott Hansen beat Neenah by a point.

He wept for his players when they narrowly lost to Milwaukee Hamilton in the 1972 finals.

He wept unashamedly again Saturday, as did several of his former players who were here as spectators. But this time the feeling was different.

"All those other years I would be driving home, wondering how it would feel if we had won," Einerson said. "Now I know. Yes, it matches my expectations. I feel tremendous elation and deep inner satisfaction."

Kreklow, who topped Class A individual scorers with 69 points in three games, fell to the floor and grimaced in pain with what appeared to be a serious ankle injury late in the first half.

However, he said he merely aggravated a minor injury suffered in regional play and returned in the second half with no ill effects.

"We didn't want him out of there, if you want to know the truth," Marshall guard Dan Elmer said. "Neenah is tough, fundamentally sound and very well coached. We wanted to play them at their best with our best."

Kreklow, whose seven field goals in 12 attempts helped Neenah to a 69.0 shooting average to the Eagles' 40.9, said he once resented incessant retelling by news media of the Rockets' tournament failures.

"I used to think too much was made of it. But I realized people weren't just writing stories," he said. "I mean, it had been about that. There was a lot to write about."

"Now I guess there is something different to write about," he said.

"I felt if ever we did win, the other kids that have been here before would be a part of it," he said.

"The Neenah people have been great to us. We wanted to win to share it with the people and the players who have suffered with us before," he said.

Until midway through the fourth quarter, it appeared Neenah might be set up for yet another heartbreaking loss. Marshall, as the capacity crowd of 12,204 was fully aware, had upset Janesville Craig in the semifinals on a last-second shot by Dave Ziesmann.

The 6-foot-6 Ziesmann grabbed a game high 14 rebounds against Neenah, and his two successive tip-ins late in the third period helped Marshall slice an early 10-point deficit to two points.

But a three-point play by Dan Varberg and a layup by Herred gave Neenah breathing room at 43-36 going into the final quarter. Moments later, a jump shot by Kreklow triggered a run of eight consecutive points that made it 55-41 with 4:04 to play.

Giards Kreklow and Perry had no trouble with Marshall's press the rest of the way, and the tears of Einerson, the cheerleaders, the parents and the former players flowed as soon as the buzzer sounded. They continued flowing when Marshall coach Paul Sherry took the microphone during the awards presentation and told the crowd: "It couldn't happen to a finer gentleman than Ron Einerson."

"To hear that from him, well, it is just all the more wonderful," Einerson said. "We've known each other a long time and his team has a lot to be proud of."

Sherry, whose team had lost seven regular season games, agreed. "Heck, I picked Neenah to win when I left Milwaukee," he said. "I figured they would come out of the No. 1 bracket. You can only be nursmaids so many years."

He and Einerson have become good friends while coaching and counseling at summer youth camps sponsored by the Milwaukee Bucks.

"Ron has a fantastic program and their success has to be the coaching," Sherry said. "You don't get ballplayers like that by opening the hall in the fall and just let the players come out. 'You have to work at it.'"

"Look, I've worked hard," he said. "I've worked awful hard all these years. I'm really thrilled just finally getting here, and there is nothing wrong with being No. 2 in the great state of Wisconsin, especially to Ron."

NEENAH 64
 Kreklow 3 2-4, Bass 3 2-4, Varberg 2 2-5, Herred 7 4-10, Perry 12 2-10, Elmer 11 2-19, Totals 51 29-51.

MILWAUKEE 55
 Peterson 3 2-10, Rzewkowski 1 2-1, Ziesmann 4 0-8, Herredlow 0 0-0, Elmer 0 0-0, Wittenberg 0 0-0, Sauer 0 0-0, Barnes 0 0-0, Liederbach 1 0-2, Sherry 0 0-0, Brown 0 0-0, Kowalski 0 0-0, Totals 25 5-24.

Milwaukee Marshall 18 11 31-48
Total fouls, Neenah 18. **Fouled out:** Ziesmann, Marshall A-12,304.

Ziegler Pock

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Larry Ziegler peered at the check in his hand.

"It looks okay," he said, then wiped the smile from his face and, in mock-seriousness, observed:

"But I ain't got it to the bank yet."

The last time he had won a golf tournament, in the 1969 Michigan Classic, he didn't get to the bank. He didn't even get a check. When the tournament was over and Ziegler was a winner, the sponsors discovered they didn't have enough money to pay off.

He got it eventually. The Tournament Players Division of the PGA paid him from their funds in two delayed installments. It won him the nickname "Half-Pay Ziegler."

But it was full pay this time, \$30,000 for

Neenah Finally Finishes No. 1

By DON LANGENKAMP

Press-Graphic Sports Writer

MADISON — Finally, in an emotion-packed pressure cooker, Neenah has won the state basketball championship.

Finally Neenah can wipe away tears and hold its head high.

And, finally, Ron Einerson can stand in front of anyone and hold one finger high and say, "We're Number One."

The long wait for the gold trophy ended for the Neenah Rockets Saturday night when they simply outhammered Milwaukee Marshall 64-55 for the WIAA Class A title.

Most of the emotion came after the game, not during it.

Neenah performed a workmanlike job on Marshall which was making its first state tournament appearance.

The Rockets, bolstered by the sentimental backing of all but the hardest Marshall fans, threw up nearly impenetrable zone defense and owned the backboards.

Marshall was rarely afforded the luxury of a second shot and Neenah's offense, led by the splendid play of Wayne Kreklow and the shooting of fellow guard Paul Perry, steadily pulled away from the Eagles in the second half.

Kreklow injected most of the excitement into the game in three ways: first with his sparkling play, second with the injury to his ankle in the second quarter that immediately silenced the Neenah fans, and finally with his recuperative powers when he returned to play a solid second half.

Neenah started off in its

customary fashion — fast — and then cooled off in the second quarter.

Kreklow hit a pair of 12-footers and several Marshall turnovers fueled Neenah's opening burst, which ended with an 18-10 first quarter lead.

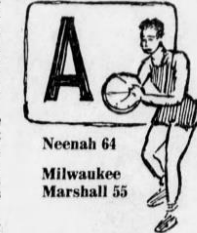
Marshall fought back in the second quarter as Rockets lost some of their aggressiveness. Bruce Rzewkowski and Steve Peterson took turns hitting on baseline shots as the Eagles started to tighten it up.

Then Kreklow, racing downcourt, suddenly fell and lay writhing on the floor in pain grasping his left ankle. With 2:52 left in the first half, over 12,000 fans were thinking the same thing — here it comes again for Neenah.

Kreklow, however, altered the script Neenah had followed three times in previous championship games. With his ankle heavily taped, he returned to the floor in the second half and appeared to be hampered just slightly with the sprain.

He reaffirmed this by ramming home an 18-foot jump shot to open the second half scoring. He underlined it by playing wide open, leaping, intimidating defense. And he put an exclamation point after it by making key free throws in the late going when the Rockets have had shaky times before.

Not that he didn't have help.



Neenah 64 Milwaukee Marshall 55

Some of it came in the way of foul trouble on Marshall's Dave Ziesmann, the 6-6 junior center who fouled out in the fourth quarter. And more help came from Paul Perry who kept the Eagles reasonably honest on defense with 12 points — 10 of them coming on outside jump shots.

"It was great to have Kreklow back," admitted Einerson, who met with reporters in a swirling backdrop of ex-players hugging him. "But I told the others at halftime that I had confidence in them."

The tempo of the game was nowhere near the frenetic pace Neenah set in the semifinal win over Racine Horlick. "I figured Marshall would try to slow the game down some," Einerson said. "That's one reason I didn't substitute as much... it didn't really

give them much trouble."

Marshall Coach Paul Sherry pointed to Neenah's rebounding and zone defense as the main obstacles between his team and the title.

"Their zone was really tough to penetrate," he said. "I think we played as well as we could tonight and for awhile, the game could have gone either way with a few bounces."

"But I feel this is the best coached team I've played all year and Kreklow is the toughest player we've been up against. Neenah is a good rebounding team and they must have outrebounced us two to one."

Actually, Neenah had just one more at 37-36, but the Rockets kept Marshall off the offensive boards. Kreklow's 19 points led Neenah as he hit seven of 12 from the floor and five of six free throw tries.

For Marshall, Rzewkowski was high with 16 points and Dan Elmer added 14. The Eagles' inside game was slowed as Ziesmann finished with just eight points. Neenah also had a shooting edge — 49 percent to Marshall's 40.9 percent.

Falls

MADISON — Wittenberg-Birnwood fell victim to its own emotional flatness and the five motorized pogo sticks wearing Shetoyogan Falls uniforms Saturday.

Falls, the team with perpetual motion and a shoot-from-

Bobcats Win Brebner Cup



Crying for Joy

Neenah Coach Ron Einerson wipes his eyes as the school's basketball team captures the WIAA Class A state championship title Saturday. Einerson has led the team to the state tournament six of the last seven years, but this was its first championship in 45 years.

(AP Wirephoto)

That other state crown

BY PETER BACH
News-Record staff writer

NEENAH — Ole Jorgensen recalls one of the key ingredients of that fateful 1930 championship and the games leading up to the title match.

"We held all the high scorers down in each game," the dean of Neenah basketball-coaching says. A dogged defense paid off as a Rocket squad, described by a writer as being "considerably smaller than the 'tall pines' of the previous two years but faster and a bit more clever," downed Racine Horlick in the big one, 28-5.

The low score was typical of high school basketball 45 years ago, which was a curious blend of laced, out-of-round basketballs that sometimes bounced crooked; two-handed set shots as the rule and time clocks that ticked off the seconds virtually without stop.

For Jorgensen, then 26, the title victory carried a special thrill. His Rockets were one of 16 teams to go to state in the two previous seasons and in 1930, were not even mentioned among the tournament favorites. Neenah faced Horlick after surviving contests against defending champion Wausau, and Oconto and Monroe.

"Then we had 16 teams there and we had to play four games instead of three to win the title," Jorgensen recalls.

According to an account of the victory in 1930, nearly 400 Rocket fans traveled to Madison for the title match and nearly as many jammed around the Neenah telegraph office waiting for word.

"When word came, there was cheering, whistles were blown, the city hall bell was sounded and, at the request of then Mayor George E. Sande, a bonfire was ignited at the E. Washington-Commercial Street intersection.

Jorgensen, who coached Neenah basketball squads from 1926 until 1964, says shooting, rules and equipment has radically changed the game over the years.

Officials didn't stop the clock then. "Actually, you were playing less time then," he says. He remembers one game when Neenah took advantage of that aspect.

"Jump balls were taken right where the players were and in one game we were near the line. Our center just kept knocking the ball out of bounds. We stalled one game out that way."

The defense had the advantage with the two-handed set shot.

"A guard could stand three or four feet away from



his man and block his shot. They blocked most of the shots."

And then there was the basketball itself, which wasn't perfectly round. "If you dribbled it on the lacing the ball would go crooked."

"The big change in basketball between then and now, of course, is the way they shoot." First, Jorgensen says, it was the one-handed shot that gave defenders headaches. But the jump shot — taken for granted by prep players today — forever changed the outlook of the game.

Back in those days too, Jorgensen remembers,

Continued on Page 3



'We're No. 1'

Students and other backers of Neenah's Armstrong High School show their excitement Saturday night at being the best high school basketball team in the state. This photo was taken in the UW Fieldhouse moments after the Rockets defeated Milwaukee Marshall for the state title. (News-Record photo by Tom Ranning)



News-Record

Neenah-Menasha Edition of The Post-Crescent

Monday, March 24, 1975

Neenah wins it all!

MADISON — Neenah's Armstrong High School reigned as the king of high school basketball in Wisconsin Saturday night after it pulled away from Milwaukee Marshall in the fourth quarter for a 64-55 victory and the state Class A championship.

The triumph ended nearly a decade of jinx for the Rockets, who appeared here five times in the previous six years but never finished better than second.

It was the second championship in 19 tries and first since 1930 for Neenah, which capped a 22-3 sea-

Wittenberg-Birnamwood loses in title game

Details in sports section

son with a 14-game winning streak. Marshall finished the year at 15-8.

Wayne Kreklow and Paul Perry, both first team Fox Valley Association guards, led the Rockets with 19 and 12 points, respectively. The brilliant 6-foot-3 Kreklow shook off what had appeared to be a serious ankle injury in the second quarter to keep the Rockets in front.

The victors, six points aheads midway in the fourth quarter, wrapped it up by scoring eight points in a row for a 55-41 spread with just four minutes left in the game.



Neenah Coach Ron Einerson wipes tears of joy from his eyes. (AP wirephoto)

Neenah Coach Ron Einerson said that despite the Rockets' commanding lead down the stretch, he didn't relax until the final seconds were ticking away on the clock. "No way was I going to count on anything too early," he told reporters after the game.

"I'm happy for all the boys that played here before and for all the people in Neenah who stayed with us through our heartbreaks," said Einerson.

Marshall Coach Paul Sherry congratulated Einerson after the game, saying the title "couldn't happen to a nicer guy than Ron Einerson."

The city of Neenah, meanwhile, planned a huge homecoming celebration for the new state champs.

A parade will begin between 1 and 1:30 p.m. at Shattuck High School and wend its way to Armstrong High. The parade route will be west on Division to Oak, north on Oak to Forest, west on Forest to Commercial, south on Commercial to Main, west on Main to Lake, south on Lake to Winneconne, west on Winneconne to Green Bay, south on Green Bay to Cecil, west on Cecil to Gillingham, south on Gillingham to Byrd and west on Byrd to the Armstrong gym.

Featured speakers at the assembly will be Neenah Mayor Roman Hauser and other school, civic and student representatives. An autograph session will follow.

Finally—Rockets win elusive title

By MIKE BATES
Northwestern Sports Editor
MADISON — Finally... After finishing second three times in three tries during the previous six years, Neenah High School finally won a state public high school basketball championship.

The Rockets defeated Milwaukee Marshall 64-55 in the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Class A basketball tournament finals Saturday at the University of Wisconsin Fieldhouse for the championship.

"I want to make sure that everybody knows that we want to share this win with all the players who have suffered so much here in past years," said Ron Einerson, Neenah's head coach, after

the game. "We wanted this for them and for the whole city of Neenah, for everyone who has suffered through the heartbreak.

Paul Sherry, Marshall's head coach, said to the capacity crowd of 12,204 right after accepting the second place trophy, "We're very happy to come in here and be runnerup. It couldn't have happened to a finer gentleman than Ron Einerson."

"I said Neenah would come out of their bracket and win," said Sherry, after reaching the locker room. "You can come out a bridesmaid just so many years."

"We beat a superb basketball team," commented Einerson, while accepting congratulations from former

players and numerous coaches from throughout the state who had worked their way into the Neenah locker room.

"They have to be superb, they beat Janesville Craig," he added, referring to Marshall's 59-57 win Friday in the semi-final round over favored Craig.

"The thing that's fun about being down here is we're all good friends, no matter who we play," said Einerson.

Einerson, when asked if it felt any different being the first place team rather than the second place team, said, "To be perfectly honest, we've never been ashamed to be second."

"I never really liked the tag 'bridesmaid' and it's

not really a fair tag. People just don't know what it's like to play in the championship game, even if you do finish only second."

Sherry, relaxed and casual as usual, said his team would go out for a steak dinner after showering, and he added, "We'll enjoy it. There's nothing wrong with being the number two team in the state of Wisconsin."

The Rockets conclude their season with a 22-3 record while the Raiders finish at 15-8. Neenah is 35-23 in its 19 tourney appearances while Marshall was in its first trip to the tourney.

Marshall scored first and led 4-2 and 6-4 — the only time the Rockets trailed in all three state tournament games. Neenah took a lead

which lasted the rest of the game when Marty Suechting went down the lane for a basket to put the Rockets ahead 8-6.

Wayne Kreklow — the game's leading scorer with 19 points — fired in three long baskets and a lay-up, Paul Perry drilled home two long shots and Rick Rank scored a layup and a long-range basket as Neenah held an 18-10 lead by the end of the first quarter.

After a short delay during which the lights to the Fieldhouse went partially, then completely, out, Neenah bolted to a 24-14 lead.

Marshall hit two baskets to make it 24-18 and then Kreklow collapsed to the floor with 2:52 remaining in

the second quarter, and Neenah backers felt that the Rockets' jinx was still around.

Neenah held a 28-22 half-time lead and Kreklow, who returned to start the second half, funneled in the first basket on a long jumper.

A few minutes later, Dave Ziesmann came up with two rebound baskets to bring Marshall within 32-30.

Todd Herried connected on three field goals, Dan Varberg had a three-point play and Perry added another 20-footer as Neenah moved to a 43-36 lead at the end of the third quarter.

The Eagles chopped the margin to 47-41 but Ziesmann, the game's tallest player at 6-foot-8, picked up

his fifth foul and Neenah slowly opened up a 14 point, 55-41 lead.

After only one free throw had been attempted by either team during the first three quarters, the Rockets made 11 of 18 shots from the line in the fourth quarter to help insure Neenah a happy ending after three previous disappointing and heart-breaking championship games.

Perry totaled 12 points and Herried hit nine for Neenah.

Bruce Rzentkowski led Marshall with 16 points. Dan Elmer and Steve Peterson added 14 and 10 points respectively.

Kreklow was the high scorer for the tournament with 69 total points. Zies-

mann, who played with a slipped disc, was the top rebounder for the tournament with 34 rebounds.

NEENAH (64)					MILWAUKEE MARSHALL (55)				
Player	pts	reb	ast	blk	Player	pts	reb	ast	blk
Suechting	7	3	1	0	Peterson	12	5	2	0
Rank	11	3	1	0	Rzentkowski	16	4	2	0
Varberg	3	2	1	0	Ziesmann	8	4	0	1
Kreklow	12	7	4	2	Elmer	14	6	2	1
Perry	10	5	2	4	Wierpoo	0	0	0	1
Herried	3	4	1	1	Stonczyk	0	0	0	1
Crist	2	2	2	1	Liederbach	1	1	0	0
Sherry	0	0	0	0	Sherry	0	0	0	0
Schofer	0	0	0	0	Breines	0	0	0	0
Totals	53	26	19	12	Totals	41	25	8	18

First Neenah title since 1930

BY JOHN PAUSTIAN
Staff Writer
MADISON — At 8:57 p.m. Saturday night Neenah High School's basketball team threw off the yoke of overwhelming frustrations, as the Rockets climaxed one of the most emotional and most popular victories in the 60-year history of the WIAA state tournament.

The Ron Einerson-coached Rockets blasted a 44-year old jinx and destroyed all vestiges of the myth that they couldn't win the big one when they whipped Milwaukee Marshall 64-55 to annex the state Class A title.

In producing the historic breakthrough and returning the state crown to the Fox Cities for the first time since 1970 when Appleton West won over Neenah (in one of the Rocket's last-second heartbreakers) Einerson's 1975 forces led for the final 28 minutes, 50 seconds and controlled the tempo of the game. Their excellent shooting, relentless rebounding and efficient defense were reinforced by super poise and determination. Though the Rockets saw Marshall melt a 10-point lead to two in the third quarter, they regained complete control and saved their best ball for the home stretch.

The Rockets weren't about to flunk their date with destiny. This final and greatest chapter in the 1975 Rocket story had a somewhat familiar ring as Wayne Kreklow, one of the all-time tournament greats, set the pace with 19 points. His teammates came up with some of their all-time best performances to form a perfect blend. Seven different Rockets scored two or more buckets in a shoot-out that, for a pleasant change, was decided on field goals rather than free throws.

Paul Perry threw in a number of clutch long shots and totalled 12 points. Marty Suechting led Rocket rebounders with seven while Rick

Rank and Perry pulled down six rebounds apiece. Dan Varberg and junior reserves Todd Herried and Tom Crist also produced some big baskets and key rebounds.

The Rockets came through under severe pressure to put Neenah in championship orbit after 13 misfirings in the last 44 years. It was the sixth try by Einerson for the big prize and his narrow losses in mind-boggling tourney games have become legends. Last night though a capacity University of Wisconsin fieldhouse crowd saw heartbreak turn to elation for the veteran coach and thousands of Neenah fans.

Neenah and Marshall traded baskets for the first three minutes of play and then Suechting threw in a 2-point shot off a drive and the Rockets were ahead 8-6. They were to stay ahead the rest of the way. In the first period Kreklow was red hot as he tossed in three long shots. Perry and Rank each contributed a pair of baskets as the Rockets zoomed to a 18-10 lead at the end of the quarter.

A few moments of darkness due to a blown fieldhouse fuse failed to dim the Rocket shooting eyes as Kreklow and Perry sank 20-footers and Rank buried a rebound and it was a 24-14 game. Marshall got two field

goals back quickly and then Kreklow crumpled to the floor at the 2:52 mark and Neenah fans were ready to believe that the state tourney jinx was still on. He sat out the rest of the half and the Rockets took a 28-22 intermission lead.

Kreklow came back in the third quarter and immediately showed that his injury wasn't serious as he banged in a 20-footer. The Eagles were soon to commence an offensive drive of their own as they closed the gap to 32-30. Perry responded with a long jumper, but Marshall came right back with a pair of long shots over Neenah's zone defense to cut the margin to two.

Neenah's explosive offense got busy and pushed the lead to nine, 45-36, early in the fourth quarter. Varberg scored on a 3-point play, Herried put one home after a long pass from Perry and Perry notched a pair of free throws. The Rockets kept pouring it on, brushing aside Marshall's desperation press and twice padded the lead to 14.

Mike Liederbach's tip-in with 35 seconds to go enabled Marshall to escape a double-figure loss. The Rockets then ran out the clock to the accompaniment of a wild ovation from the spectators. Their 14 straight win was official, as was their 21st victory in 24 starts. Late-blooming Marshall which entered the game with an 8-game winning streak closed its campaign at 15-8.

Kreklow won the tourney's scoring championship with 69 points and also received the most votes on the all-tourney team.

Marshall's scoring was led by Bruce Rzentkowski who had 16 points. Dan Elmer ran in 14. The Rockets outshot the Eagles with 49 per cent to 40.9 on 25 of 61. Neenah defenders were so adept that Marshall was kept off the free throw line for the first three quarters.

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Rockets share title with city, ex-players

By DAVE GREY
Northwestern Sports Editor
MADISON — For the majority of the fans in attend-

how great they were, so it was really a challenge to win this game, not only for us now, but for those other

former coach, "You're just too much."
"This one was for all you guys too," Einerson said

back three times in those championship losses and now he finally has the big one."



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CHAMPIONS

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