

## **Bossier High stands head and shoulders above the crowd in District 1-3A**

Written by Jerry Byrd

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Bossier High is obviously the team to beat in District 1-3A boys' basketball this season. Coach Jeremiah Williams' team hasn't opened district play yet, but the Bearkats are 19-3 after Friday's 73-37 victory over Pleasant Hill and Glen Oaks (10-9) is the only other team in the district that has a winning record.

Deorvion Robinson led the Kats in the romp past Pleasant Hill with 23 points as Bossier took a commanding 22-4 lead in the first quarter coasted to the blowout win.

Meanwhile, Haughton was scoring a 79-71 victory over Airline in the District 1-5A opener for both teams. Nakia Devereaux and Tiler Grigsby led the Bucs with 26 and 25 points, respectively, while Hayden Hildebrand and Demetrius Early had 25 and 20, respectively, for the Vikings.

Byrd has an impressive 17-4 record, but the Yellow Jackets lost their first District 1-5A game to Captain Shreve (10-13) by 70-64 Friday night.

Benton (7-12) fell to Fair Park 54-36 in District 1-3A play and Plain Dealing (5-9) chalked up a 55-48 non-district win over Arcadia in other games involving Bossier Parish teams Friday.

Bossier got off to a 3-2 start with early losses to Ouachita and St. Thomas More, but the Bearkats have won 16 of their last 17 games — all except a one-point loss to Ouachita. One of the 16 wins was a 63-62 win over Ouachita, a team Bossier High won't face again this season. With only eight games remaining in regular-season play, the Bearkats would have to win all of them (and three more in the playoffs) to extend their streak of four straight 30-win seasons.

The most impressive record among their remaining regular-season opponents belongs to Winnfield (19-4), which plays the Bearkats at Bossier's E.L. Reding Memorial Gymnasium next Friday. Winnfield's only losses have been to 4A Tioga (twice), 3A Farmerville and 2A Lakeview. District 1-3A rival Green Oaks (10-9) has the second best record among the Bearkats' remaining regular-season opponents.

The Reding gym did not exist when a Bossier High team coached by John McConathy became the first Bossier Parish school to win a state championship in 1960, setting a Caddo-Bossier record for total wins that still stands with a 41-4 record. The championship game was played in the tiny gym at the end of the school building that is now known as the girls' gym.

McConathy could've made a lot more money by moving the game to Shreveport's Hirsch Youth Center, but he chose to keep the game in the Bearkats' home gym. "It wouldn't take us long to spend that money," he said. "But there is no guarantee we will ever have another chance to win the state championship."

That was more than 50 years ago, and the 1960 trophy is still one of only two state basketball championship trophies in the Bossier High trophy case.

Haughton is the only other Bossier Parish school that has two, as the Bucs won back-to-back Class A titles in 1968 and 1969 with teams coached by Billy Montgomery.

When Converse set a national record with 70 wins in the 1944-45 basketball season, the Sabine Parish school didn't play the championship game or any other game in its home gym — because it didn't have a gym.

The Converse team, coached by James Norred, practiced on an outdoor dirt court, and played all of its 72 games away from home. Two members of that team, Pete Latham and R.C. Looney were four-year standouts at Louisiana Tech.

Jerry Byrd is the former sports editor of the Bossier Press-Tribune and an award-winning

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