

Mount Vernon High School — 1978 New York State Basketball Champions



Those Knights of cage glory

They went 26-0 and won the first New York State High School basketball championship in 49 years. They were the Mount Vernon High Knights, a blend of speed, agility, and superior ballhandling skills.

They ravaged Westchester basketball teams during the regular season, and managed to handily beat the No. 2 ranked team in New York State, Hicksville's Holy Trinity, at the Long Island Lutheran Tournament. Upstate Lackawanna fell to the Knights in that tournament's championship game.

After taking hold of the top spot in the New York State Sportswriters Association poll during the season's second week, Coach Rick Shore's Mount Vernon team never relinquished its position. Four 100-point efforts solidified the Knights' status, and no squad got closer than 14 points to Mount Vernon until the Capital Conference playoffs in Albany.

The Knights shook off the loss of big rebounder Rodney McCray to win the Capital Conference crown in tough games with Clarkstown South and Troy Catholic Central. Without 6-foot-6 Rodney to pick off rebounds, the Knights had trouble under the boards and were in danger of being knocked out of contention for the state crown.

But Mount Vernon had depth and showed what it was made of during that crisis time, employing Lonnie McDonald to fill in for McCray. Rodney's 6-8 older brother Scooter also showed why he is one of the most highly recruited players in the country this year, as he played super defense and gave brilliant clutch-shooting performances.

Once past the regional playoffs, it was on to Rochester and a return to double-figure victories. An 18-point win against Long Island's Freeport High put Mount Vernon into the final against Buffalo's Kenmore West. Once there, the Knights reverted back to regular season ways, blowing out the Blue Devils by a 25-6 first quarter count. The rest of the game was easy as the Knights coasted to the state Class AAA title.

On their return to Mount Vernon, they were met with a hero's welcome. Politicians made speeches, a band played, a luncheon was given, and the players were treated quite royally. It was a fitting end to a great season.

—ERNIE PALLADINO

That championship season

MOUNT VERNON 81	New Rochelle 53	MOUNT VERNON 77	Scarsdale 37
MOUNT VERNON 121	Mahopac 58	MOUNT VERNON 74	Newburgh 39
MOUNT VERNON 101	Ossining 50	MOUNT VERNON 77	Lincoln 57
MOUNT VERNON 81	Newburgh 56	MOUNT VERNON 77	Yonkers 63
MOUNT VERNON 88	Mamaroneck 41	MOUNT VERNON 78	White Plains 63
MOUNT VERNON 79	Mamaroneck 38	MOUNT VERNON 78	Roosevelt 43
MOUNT VERNON 98	Kingston 50	MOUNT VERNON 84	New Rochelle 43
MOUNT VERNON 97	Lincoln 55	MOUNT VERNON 100	Yonkers 75
MOUNT VERNON 83	Port Chester 55	MOUNT VERNON 81	Holy Trinity 66
MOUNT VERNON 59	Clarkstown So. 50	MOUNT VERNON 65	Lackawanna 49
MOUNT VERNON 70	Troy Catholic 63	MOUNT VERNON 77	White Plains 61
MOUNT VERNON 92	Freeport 74	MOUNT VERNON 85	Mamaroneck 53
MOUNT VERNON 82	Kenmore West 52	MOUNT VERNON 101	Roosevelt 42

Lonnie Webb

Asst. Coach
Tony Fiorentino

Head Coach
Rick Shore

