



Mighty Webster Wolves

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**THE MIGHTY WEBSTER HIGH WOLVES
1960 - 1961 CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM**

Coach Ozias Johnson came to Webster in 1946 and immediately took the Mighty Webster Wolves to the LIALO Boys State Championship Finals. The Louisiana Interscholastic Athletic & Literary Organization (LIALO) was co-founded by Webster High Principal Joseph L. Jones. Principal Jones saw the organization as a means to promote academic and ...athletic competition among students from schools from various parts of the state of Louisiana. The state of Texas had a counterpart organization known as the Prairie View Interscholastic League (PVIL).

Perhaps it was fitting that by the late fifties an intense arch rivalry had developed between two LIALO

schools - one from South Louisiana and one from North Louisiana - McKinley High of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Webster High of Minden, Louisiana. Starting in 1958, the two rivals would meet in the LIALO Boys State Basketball Championships for four consecutive years. The McKinley High School Panthers won the championship crown in the 1958-1959 season. The Webster High School Wolves won back-to-back state championships for the 1959-1960 and 1960-1961 seasons.

It took an exceptional McKinley High team to stop the Webster High championship run in 1962. That McKinley team was led by South Louisiana's Mr. Basketball - Leslie Scott and future Houston Cougar / Boston Celtic - Don Chaney.

The Webster High teams were so dominant that coach Johnson only played his starters for half of the game in some of the state playoffs. South Louisiana will never forget the matchup of the super high school guards - Elton "Dewey" Hudson vs. Leslie Scott. In an era before the three point line, Dewey Hudson would often dribble just past mid court and let fly a deep jump shot - barely disturbing the nets. Leslie Scott would thrill the crowd by returning the courtesy coming the other way. Combined with the superlative play of Webster's standout star player Wilbur Frazier, this was a display of two of the finest high school basketball programs in the country and this was competitive & disciplined entertainment at it's highest level.

The 1960-61 Mighty Webster Wolves received their second consecutive invitation to the National Interscholastic Athletic Association's National Championship Tournament. The tournament was held at Kean Hall Gymnasium on the campus of Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee. The five starters for the Louisiana Boys State Champion Wolves were Bunny Hudson, Elton "Dewey" Hudson, Wilbur Frazier, Donnie McCoy and John C. Walker.

Excited about their chance to prove that they were the best team in America, the team crammed into Webster High's late 1950's blue & white Ford station wagon. Joe Webster was designated as the driver. Principal W. Leon Hayes gave coach Johnson the team's spending money as they headed North on U.S. Highway 79 through Memphis, Tennessee and on to Nashville.

The national tournament had been dominated by the legendary Pearl High of Nashville, TN who had won three straight championships. The road to the finals would not be easy. But Burt High of Clarksville, Tennessee defeated Pearl High in the semi-finals and the national championship final game would match Burt High vs. the Mighty Webster Wolves.

The two teams traded leads and matched points almost basket for basket for nearly four quarters. Questionable officiating against Webster's star guard - Elton Hudson - seemed to give Burt High the edge late in the game and Burt High edged Webster High 73-70 to become the 1961 National Tournament Champions. It would be a long somber ride back home to Minden, but the 1960-61 National Runner-up Webster High Wolves could hold their heads up high knowing that they left everything they had on the basketball court in a incredible effort to bring the national championship home.

Burt High was coached by future Texas Southern and Alcorn State Men's basketball coach - Davey

Whitney. Of a black history note - Davey Whitney would become the first coach at a Historically Black College or University to win a game in either the NCAA or the NIT post season basketball tournament. I talked to coach Whitney a few years ago on the telephone and he spoke highly of coach Ozias Johnson and the sensational 1961 Webster High team. He also said he had newspaper clippings from the championship game - we need to make an effort to get copies of the newspaper articles for our historical archives.

Coach Ozias Johnson would finish his career at Webster as one of the most successful high school basketball coaches in the nation. He won more games - 889 - than any other high school basketball coach in Louisiana in the major classes of 2A and above. Coach Johnson was posthumously inducted into the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame in 1992.

Webster High & Southern Laboratory High were the first two black high schools from the old LIALO to win state championships in the first year that they joined the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) in 1971.

The Louis Dunbar (MVP) & Con L Flournoy led Webster Wolves defeated Franklinton High of Washington Parish 75 - 68 at the Alexandria Coliseum in 1971. This would be coach Johnson's last state championship team.

Mrs. Mary Autry's 1970 team won the State Girls Championship their last year in the LIALO. This team was led by MVP Patricia McMurray.

The late 1950's and the early 1960's were a grand time for the MIGHTY WEBSTER WOLVES. Of special note the 1960 - 1961 girls team also won the LIALO Girls State Championship in the Spring of 1961.

- RWW

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WEBSTER HIGH BOYS & GIRLS
CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL TEAMS