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# Champions

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# Champions

By Bonnie Timms

Through all the years I was in school at Hammon, the community had considered basketball a sport just for fun. When I became a sophomore, the attitude of the town began to change. Everyone realized our boys' basketball team could be great if only it had a little support. For the next three years, the boys' team **was** great, and the boys had many qualities that helped them achieve success.

No one can deny that the boys on the team had tremendous talent. Never again will five boys come together to play on the same team as they did the last two years I was in high school. All five had great shooting ability; and although not all of them achieved great dribbling ability, there were enough who could dribble well to fill the void. We have a small Class B school, which made absolutely no difference to the boys. The way they played those big schools would have convinced anyone that our school was the biggest in Oklahoma. In size it wasn't, but in spirit it definitely was. Although talent played a definite role in the team's success, without the players' inner qualities they would never have made it.

The five starters on the team--Steven and Kevin Walker, Jeff Morton, Chad Newcomb, and Ricky (Bull) Candy--were all very good friends of mine. I grew up with the latter three. I often went to see them after school, and I always knew where to find them. They were in the gym everyday. Often on weekends when I wanted to go out, they were more than happy to scrimmage one another or a nearby bunch of boys. They were friends, and they were dedicated to one another

and to themselves. Without this dedication, their many fans would have soon quit supporting them. After all, who wants to follow a team if the members don't want to practice and make themselves better? Even after high school, all of them are attending college. Four of the five are rooming together and attending Southwestern.

The boys liked to brag about how much talent they had and about how outstanding they were, but I knew that they never would have become winners if they hadn't had such an incredible desire to win. That desire was evident when after two hours of practice they got on the line to run suicides and still gave it their all. It would have been easy just to lag behind in what resembled a jog as the other boys did, but those five pushed on. In the two games they lost the last year, I have seen them kick and fight with everything they had, and I have seen tears in their eyes when there was nothing to do but shake hands, get dressed, and get on the bus for home. It took so much for them to go through that, but the next game they got out there and did it all over again but walked off with a smile of victory.

The year 1984 was a great one because Hammon started to come out of its shell, but it couldn't compare with the 1985-1986 back-to-back state championships our boys received. Those five boys had rare qualities; and their efforts and successes will never be forgotten by their families, friends, and fans. ■

*BONNIE TIMMS is a sophomore English major at SOSU fom Hammon.*

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