

Beating Drum In The Hills

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Rusty rings of steel are plastered on every barn door. A huge olive drab colored building is rising from the vacant skyline. This is Krum, population 350.

It's like one thousand other Texas farm communities except that from here, every other night, there is a mass exodus that leaves the cattle to gaze at windy streets. ...

This is the home of the Krum Bobcats, currently the hottest basketball team in the wilds of North Texas. They have just finished winning the 16-team North Texas Invitational, humiliating two Class AAAA schools on their way to the crown. The week before, they romped through the Northwest tournament without meeting any competition. Their record this season is 15-1, losing only to Pleasant Grove 59-61, one of the also ?? in the Northwest tournament.

FLASH IN THE PAN?

Flash in the pan? Not so, says the record. The Bobcats have been the scourge of North Texas basketball for the past five years. Last year was their poorest record, winning the Whitesboro tournament and finishing in the semi-finals at the Denton Invitational. In 1954 the Bobcats won fourth place in the state in Class B. They lost only two games that year. One at the hands of an upper class ball club and one in the state tournament. Also in '54 they were runners-up in the consolation bracket of the 36-team Dr. Pepper tournament, in '53 they were beaten in the quarters of the regionals after waltzing through their district. A three-way district tie in '52 knocked the

'Cats out of any play-off competition, but in 1951, when Krum started its five-year reign of the hardwoods, Freddie Hopkins, older brother of the current Bobcat center and one of the top scorers in collegiate basketball today, led the small town team to the finals of the regionals.

Even before that, an older Hopkins brother was setting records and –well, that's another story.

Today, the pride of the consolidated school is the brand-spanking new gymnasium. Its olive-drab color hides a shiny regulation college floor, with glass backboards, complete with orange hoops and modern dressing rooms. The gym will be completed this week at a cost of \$60,000 and no more can the big city schools turn down invitations to come and play at Krum because of a small gym.

BOND ISSUE

The gym was built with funds from a bond issue supported by townspeople who have the almost unheard of trait of following their high school team, whether it wins or loses. The roundball fever has naturally spread down into the grade schools, and in a town where here has never been a football team, the rusty rings of steel that hang everywhere, are dusted off regularly by the envisioned midgets. With a free pass until they reach the seventh grade, the starry-eyed youngsters wend their way to the high school to see the favorite sons squelch unfortunate visitors who come seeking in the Bobcat lair.

In opposition to the common saying around the area that Krum ought to have a good ball club every year because the players practice together from the sixth grade until they reach the varsity, Bobcat Coach W. W. Davis explained that the underclassmen learn basketball fundamentals, naturally, but that he discourages too much competition because he believes they burn themselves out before they get to high school.

HEAD MENTOR

Davis, who has been head mentor at Krum for 10 years, believes yhat this year's squad is the strongest club he has ever coached, and his belief is backed up by Assistant Coach Ed McReynolds. The club has two returning starters from the Krum team that went to the state semi-finals in '54. They are two small

guards, Gerald Copp and Bobby Parkey, both 5-10. Davis changed his offense this year for the first time since he has been at Krum to a tandem post.

Doing this he has the advantage of using Ballard Hopkins, 6-4 and Sam Marshall, 6-3. as double pivot men. Filling out the first five is either Billy Masten, 6-2, or Larry Ennis, 6-foot.

Parkey and Marshall were named to the all-tournament team at NTSC. Marshall has been trained by his mother since early childhood in the art of physical fitness. She taught him the exercise of rising up on the tip-toes for minutes at a time to strengthen his ankles. Consequently he is one of the best rebounders on the club and an ankle injury is unheard of. Parkey is to many observers, one of the smartest guards seen on the boards this year. He said something about going to Texas University when the time came. Hopkins, who made Davis remark that "these Hopkins boys don't stop growing until they are seniors in college," is the most prolific scorer on the team with an 18 plus point average. Marshall is next with a 15-point average, and is followed by Masten and Copp with 11. Davis pointed out, however, that their averages might be higher but that most of the time, the first string plays but half of the ball game.

A HUMMING DRUM

While Davis was being interviewed Monday the Krum basketball squad was out on the floor, quietly weaving intricate designs on the new floor.

"They do that every day without a word from me," Davis said, "Those plays they are running will be used in every game. Of course there are options and variations and-Hey! -- watch that passing, that wouldn't work in a close game!

They've had several close games this year but the team is improving with every contest and the Bobcats have already fallen on the drum that is faintly beating out predictions of a state play-off berth and maybe the big pumpkin. That is if someone doesn't burn the town down when the Bobcats play in the Dr. Pepper Tournament next Tuesday. It's understood that the whole town goes wherever the Bobcats go.

The town marshal? They say he goes too.



1955 Boys basketball team