

1960-61 CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM

In the fall of 1956, Central High School opened its doors to black students from throughout Amherst County, consolidating the former schools in Madison Heights and Amherst. For the first time, these students joined as one, representing the community in extracurricular activities which included sports, music, and other extensions of the academic experience.

Basketball soon became the headliner at Central, a school that existed for fifteen years and never suffered a losing season. Within 5 short years, the boys' basketball team was excelling at the highest level in the state, garnering an invitation to the Virginia Interscholastic Association's state championship tournament at Hampton Institute in 1961.

In their district match-ups, Central played schools similar in make-up and location – small rural county schools. Among their opponents were Nelson Memorial in Nelson County, Carver-Price in Appomattox, Carter G. Woodson in Buckingham, as well as teams from Amelia, Nottoway, Charlotte Courthouse, and Lunenburg.

Carver-Price was considered the biggest rival faced by the green and white clad "Trojans" of Central. The high-scoring offensive team was led by forward and most valuable player Albert Rose, who averaged more than 30 points a game. Another forward, Leon Colmore, and center, Joe Dempsey, also the leading rebounder, joined Rose as primary scorers. Floyd Hamlette and Jessye Parrish exhibited speed at the guard position.

The prolific offense of the 1960-61 team resulted in their breaking the 100-point barrier in each game, and their undefeated season was threatened on only one occasion. Nelson Memorial led by more than 20 points fairly late in the game; Coach Day replaced his starters with a faster team that quickly erased the deficit, keeping the district record unblemished.

Late in the season, that same opponent employed an unusual tactic to hold Central's offense down – to forfeit the game before allowing the Trojans to reach their mark. Forfeiture apparently was deemed less ignominious than actually giving up 100 points.

The supporters and cheerleaders mounted a community effort to attend the state tournament in Hampton. Teams from rural areas had their first taste of the city sports scene, generally facing opponents who possessed greater resources, often a size advantage, and urban basketball experience. All schools were entered into the same tournament, with Central representing the smallest, and their first opponent the largest, both in terms of student body numbers and in physical size.

Central's match was close, but the Trojans lost to Booker T. Washington of Suffolk. The team, however, had established itself as a juggernaut, leading to another trip to the state tournament several years later.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- Undefeated district record
- Central High School's first district championship
- Exceeded 100 points in every game
- Invitation to state VIA tournament at Hampton Institute

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM – 1960-61

Charles Day, Coach

Daniel Braxton
Harry Braxton
Leon Colmore
Joseph Dempsey
Floyd Hamlette
Elmo Jordan

Robert Liggon
Eugene Parrish
Jessye Parrish
Albert Rose
Thomas Russell
Frank Vaughter
John Williams

Robert O. Ford III,
Player/Manager



The 1961 Basketball Trojans - Mr. Charles W. Day, Coach

