

## Peoria Athletics in the 1940s

- The highlight of the 1940s was the 1944 Six-Man State Football Championship, led by All-State players Cody Mothershed and Walden Hopper. This was a mythical championship since they didn't have playoffs at the time. The second highlight was the state runner-up in basketball in 1942. The basketball team lost to Miami in Tucson in the state finals by a score of 44-40. There were 1,800 people there watching the game and many more listening back in Peoria on the radio. These two events were of great pride to the community of Peoria.

### **1945 All-State Football Players:**



**Cody Mothershed**



**Walden Hopper**

- Peoria was a small high school that competed against a combination of bigger and smaller schools such as Tempe, Ajo, Tolleson, Scottsdale, Glendale, North Phoenix, Buckeye, Wickenburg, Phoenix Union, and the Litchfield Owls (Litchfield was where Agua Fria kids went then).
- Dysart did not have a high school until the 1960's so kids from that area either went to Litchfield or Peoria.
- The football team played under the lights at PHS for the first time in 1946.
- The school had its first track meet at Peoria under the lights on April 8, 1947.
- The boys competed in all the sports including football, basketball, baseball, and track.
- The boys were not big in school with the average lineman in football, only being in the 150 to 170-pound range.
- In basketball, the school competed well, but not to the level of the big schools. There were very few young men over the height of 5'10". Every once in a while the kids had some great shooters that allowed them to compete against the much larger schools. Such was the case in 1942.
- In baseball, the Panthers were competitive but didn't have the athletes that were available to the bigger schools.
- There were no girls' sports offered in the 1940s, only in the form of the Girls' Athletic Association which was intramurals.

Top Athletes of the 1940s:

Cody Mothershed  
 Walden Hopper  
 Ralph Basket  
 John Padelford  
 Karl Wacker

Kenneth Carroll  
 Bill Watson  
 Ed Senseman  
 Ed Watson  
 Ed Carson

Travis Sharp  
 Richard Montoya  
 Ed Forney  
 Ralph Wacker  
 Howard Cook

Many athletes competed in multiple sports since the numbers were small at the school.