

Bossier Bearkats still have a chance for another 30-win season

Written by Jerry Byrd

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After a 3-2 start in the 2012-13 basketball season, Coach Jeremiah Williams' Bossier High Bearkats have won 18 of their last 19 games — a streak marred only by a one-point loss to Class 5A Ouachita (21-4). The Kats were ranked No. 1 in Class 3A in last week's Louisiana Sports Writers Assn. poll.

Two of the three losses are to Ouachita (Monroe), which is ranked No. 2 in Class 5A. Bossier High has beaten Ouachita once.

Two Monroe schools, Richwood and Carroll, are 2-3 behind Bossier High in the Class 3A poll. It is the only class in which North Louisiana teams own all of the top three positions. But still another North Louisiana school, Farmerville, gives North Louisiana a sweep of the top four spots in the Class 3A poll.

None of the Bearkats' District 1-3A opponents have won more than half of their games, but Bossier High would have to win all six remaining regular-season games — and three more in the state playoffs — to extend its streak of 30-win seasons to five.

Bossier High hasn't been scoring a lot of points lately, but the Bearkats are getting the job done on defense. Only one of their last 11 opponents has managed to score more than 45 points — Captain Shreve, in a 60-51 loss to the Bearkats.

The Bearkats open district play against North DeSoto (5-14) Tuesday night, and then play Loyola (9-12) and Green Oaks (10-9), the only other 1-3A team that is over .500 for the season. If Bossier High is as good as the sports writers think they are and win the state championship, it will be the only school in Bossier Parish with three state basketball championship trophies. Haughton is the only other school with two, as teams coached by Billy Montgomery won Class A titles in 1968 and 1969.

Kenny Covington was the All-State Most Valuable Player on both of those Haughton teams, with Benny DePrang also making All-State in 1969.

Bossier High won its first state basketball title in 1960, when a team coached by John McConathy posted a 41-4 record --- setting a Caddo-Bossier record for total wins that still stands. Cecil Upshaw and Dennis Kile were All-Staters on that team, which won the state title with a 39-35 win over DeLaSalle in the little gym at the end of the Bossier High school building that is now known as the girls' gym. The E.L. Reding Memorial Gym was built several years later..

Williams' 2010-11 team won the school's second state title, wrapping up a 33-2 season with a 59-48 victory over Peabody (Alexandria) in the 4A championship game.

Before Williams took over the coaching reins, a Bossier High team coached by Chris White reached the 2005 Class 4A finals before falling to Glen Oaks of Baton Rouge, which wrapped up a perfect 36-0 season with a 64-40 victory over the Bearkats. That Bossier High team didn't have any All-State first-teamers, but White was selected Coach of the Year by the sports writers.

Bossier High made its first appearance in a state championship basketball game in 1949, at the end of Frank Lampkin's first season as the Bearkats' coach. A Bearkat team led by All-Staters Bobby Ray McHalfey and Tommy Woodall reached the Class A finals (then the second highest class) before falling to Many, 46-27, to finish the season with a 28-12 record. A few months earlier, Woodall was an All-State end on a Bearkat football team coached by Loy Camp that won the Class A state championship with a 21-0 victory over Reserve.

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