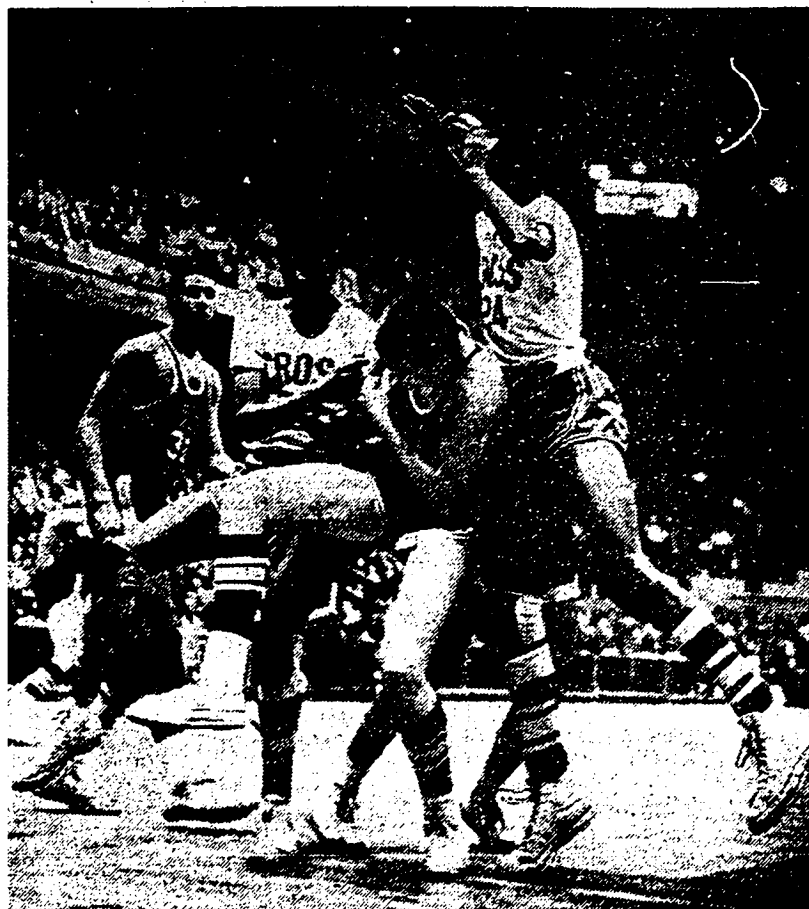


Hartford Wins Hoop Crown



By PAT BOLDUC
 Courant Sports Writer

BOSTON, Mass.—Mighty Hartford High School Saturday night turned in a stunning 68-62 upset victory over defending champion Wilbur Cross of New Haven in the championship game of the 36th annual New England Interscholastic Basketball tournament before an expected small crowd of 8,837 at the Boston Garden.

It was the first New England title ever for Hartford, the second oldest high school in the country and making its maiden visit to the annual schoolboy classic.

It was sweet revenge for the classy Owls who dropped two decisions to the strong Governors in three meetings during the season, including a setback in the recent Connecticut state tourney finale.

Actually, Cross looking for its second consecutive New England crown and third in four years, led only once in the hectic contest and that was 3-1 when Lubie Harper scored the night's first basket with two minutes gone in the opening period.

Press Bothers Owls

But with clever Ed Griffin, Captain Stan Poole, steady Pat Burke and dependable Ken Kostek setting a furious pace at times, Hartford broke from a 3-3 deadlock early in the first period to post quarter leads of 13-8, 31-23 and 51-37. But there were many moments for the fine shooting Owls who were brothered a number of times by the Governors' tenacious full court press, during which time the Hartford ball handler was double and triple teamed.

Hartford's triumph in the finale returned the New England title to the city of Hartford for the first time since Weaver copped the honor in 1957.

All of the victorious Hartford players along with Head Coach Joe Kubachka and JV Coach Joe Cirone were ceremoniously carried off the court on the backs and shoulders of countless Hartford fans in the spacious Garden.

Slow Beginning

Both clubs were slow in warming up to the task at hand, exchanging free throws before Harper broke the scoring famine for Cross. But seconds later Griffin hit to knot the count at 3-all. Two foul shots by Poole, selected by sports writers covering the tournament as the most valuable player, and a fast break basket by Burke moved the Owls out front, 7-3. With Cross finding it difficult to locate the basket, Hartford erected its five-point edge at the first turn.

Poole, who wound up with a total of 18 rebounds, clearly out-fought the taller Governors off the boards in the second quarter, and with Len Kostek and Griffin hitting consistently from long

	HARTFORD			WILBUR CROSS			
	B	F	Pt	B	F	Pt	
Kostek	3	7	13	Brooks	2	2	6
Greene	0	0	0	DiNapoli	5	1	11
Griffin	9	3	21	Jackson	2	1	5
Jenkins	1	0	2	Joiner	0	0	0
Poole	3	0	12	Hicks	7	2	16
Woods	3	0	6	Parks	0	0	0
Maddox	0	0	0	Buccini	7	7	21
Burke	6	2	14	E. Harper	1	1	3
Tarascio	0	0	0				
Totals	25	18	68	Totals	24	14	62
Score at half time, 31-23, Hartford.							

range, the 1961 schoolboy champions raced to a 23-13 advantage midway in the second quarter.

Hicks in Trouble

Cross suffered a tough blow when standout Dave Hicks was forced to the sidelines after being tagged with his fourth personal with still three minutes to go in the second period and the Governors trailing, 25-17. Only three long jump shots by reserve Fred Di Napoli and six points by little Ralph Buccini kept the defending titlists in contention.

DiNapoli and Buccini accounted for 12 of Cross' 15 points in the period.

Griffin, who scored 21 points and grabbed 16 solo rebounds in another sterling performance, hit three times on jumpers as the racy Owls shot into another 10-point lead, 29-19, before settling for their 31-23 bulge at halftime.

Cross harrassed the Owls into costly ball handling mistakes as the clubs resumed play in the third quarter. Two steals were converted into timely baskets by DiNapoli and Buccini and Hartford's lead melted to 33-28 with only 1:35 gone. Hartford wisely requested a time out.

The minute's rest proved to be just what the doctor ordered for the Owls. Poole hit once from the foul line and Buccini duplicated the feat for the Governors. But then the deadly-shooting Owls brought the Garden fans to the edge of their seats with a dazzling string of 10 straight points, seven by Griffin and three by Buroke, which shot the winners into a 44-29 advantage as Cross requested a second time out in the third period, this time with three minutes remaining. Brilliant shooting enabled the Owls to cling to a 14-point turn, 51-37.

Poole Forced Out

Hartford slowed its furious pace at the outset of the fourth quarter and Cross battled back with five straight points to trail, 51-42. A nose bleed forced Poole to leave the game with 1:35 gone in the final quarter and Kostek returned to action promptly converted the two charity tosses awarded to the Hartford captain.

Griffin hit with a one-hander for the Owls' first basket in the final period and it hiked the victor's margin to 55-44 with 2:25 played. Poole returned to the lineup and triggered a run of four points which maintained an 11-point lead for the Owls, 61-48,

before Griffin was rested a second time.

But Kubachka quickly sent Griffin back into the game when the stubborn Governors rallied to slice the Owls' lead to just seven points, 61-54. With Griffin capably directing the offense, the Owls were safely ahead 63-56 when Kostek fouled out with 1:45 to play. It was 66-58 in favor of Hartford when Buccini committed his fifth personal with 1:10 remaining. Hartford was still up 68-61 when Kubachka inserted his reserves with only 30 seconds showing on the huge electric scoreboard clock.

In addition to Griffin, three other Hartford starters scored in double figures. Burke had 14, Kostek 13 and Poole 12. Kostek converted seven straight times before missing his eighth attempt from the foul line. As a unit Hartford was 18-for-36 from the 15-foot line as against Cross' 14-for-24. Hartford led 25-24 in baskets.

Excel Off Boards

But it was off the boards where the smaller Owls excelled, out-rebounding the Governors by a solid 50-38 margin. Hicks hauled in 17 rebounds for the losers but Phil Brooks was held to a surprising low of nine.

Buccini, one of the tourney's most popular players, led the Cross shooters with 21 points. Hicks ended with 16 markers and DiNapoli had 11.

Hartford's victory marked the 25th time in 36 years that Connecticut has produced the New England champion. Actually since 1950 only Durfee of Fall River, Mass., in 1956 managed to break Connecticut's stranglehold on the tournament.

The Owls closed out their greatest season ever with a final 23-2 overall record. The setback was only the fifth (including three forfeit defeats) in 22 games against scholastic competition for Cross.

Orono High School of Orono, Maine defeated Kennett High School of Conway, N.H., 57-47, in the preliminary game which featured Class B champions from the respective states.

TUG OF WAR: George Jackson of Wilbur Cross and Patrick Burke of Hartford High struggle for loose ball in the final game of the New England Schoolboy Basketball Tourna-

ment Saturday night in Boston Garden. Moving in are Stanley Poole (31) of Hartford and Philip Brooks of Wilbur Cross. Hartford took championship with 68-62 victory (AP Wirephoto).