

500 Persons Greet Owls On Return to Hartford

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NEW ENGLAND CHAMPS GET ROYAL WELCOME: Hartford High's Owls returned home Sunday bringing with them the highly coveted New England basketball crown. 500 loyal fans

greeted the players as they arrived in Hartford, and students crowded the bus waving welcome signs as shown in the first photo. Photo No. 2 shows Len Kostek, suitcase in hand, being

greeted by friends as he gets off the bus. A mighty roar went up from the crowd as Ed Griffin, photo No. 3, made his way through the lines. Cheerleaders kept up a steady chant letting

everyone know they were proud of their team. Photo No. 4 shows some of them with souvenirs they brought back from Bean Town (All Courant Photos by Art Warmesley).

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By PAT BOLDDUC
Triumphant Hartford High School, 1961 New England interscholastic basketball champion, returned home Sunday and was enthusiastically greeted by an orderly crowd of 500.

The bus carrying the 13-man squad, head coach Joe Kubachka JV coach Joe Cirone, the comely cheerleaders, Joe Gargan, director of physical education, and faculty members Ralph Worth and Henry Taylor, arrived at the Broad Street entrance of the school at 4:47 Sunday afternoon.

Kubachka led the way as the group marched in a single line up to the auditorium and a standing ovation was accorded the victorious entourage which was led to seats on the stage. Hartford Principal Thomas J. Quirk greeted the players and

coaches with the opening remark that "it took Hartford High 300 years to reach the Kenmore Hotel in Boston."

Speakers who addressed the schoolboy titlists included, Mrs. Madeline Neuman, president of the Hartford Board of Education; Louis Fox, a member of the Board of Education; Dr. Robert Mahoney, associate superintendent of schools; Alexander MacKimmie, former Bulkeley principal and now assistant superintendent of schools; Joe Gargan; Ralph Worth; Hartford vice principal Henry Taylor; Joe Kubachka and Joe Cirone.

Strong Combination
Mrs. Neuman lauded the basketball team for teamwork and fine sportsmanship and added that "excellent coaching, wonderful cheerleading and fine

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school spirit is a strong combination to beat."

"The victory was the result of great leadership and untiring efforts on the part of Thomas J. Quirk and Joe Gargan," said Fox a faithful booster of athletics at Hartford High.

"The name Hartford High never shone so radiantly," Dr. Mahoney pointed out, adding that "the Board of Education in Hartford believes in a sane high school athletic program."

MacKimmie who was on hand for the games at the Boston Garden said he "was overly proud of the conduct of the entire Hartford squad and equally proud of the triumph at Boston."

Gargan also was high in his praise of the Owls' stunning upset of defending champion Wilbur Cross in the championship game. "This marked my fifth trip to Boston and my second with a New England champion," Gargan reflected. "And this Hartford combine is one of the truly great teams in any sport ever to come out of Hartford."

When introducing Gargan principal Quirk remarked, "Nobody is more methodical and impressive working out details. He's our answer to George Weiss and/or Joe Cronin."

"Our boys were champions

throughout the season," said a proud Ralph Worth, head football coach and official scorer for the basketball team, "and it took the trip to Boston to prove it to the rest of the New England area."

"You can't imagine how happy the boys have made me all season," said an elated Kubachka, tabbed by one Wilbur Cross rooter as "the finest gentleman among all of the coaches."

Kubachka added it had been a long season but quickly interjected, "but it was a lot of fun. Even after dropping the decision to Wilbur Cross in the Connecticut final we honestly felt we would win the title in Boston."

The popular Hartford coach thanked the student body and the faculty for excellent support throughout the year and then presented to Mr. Quirk the ball which was used in Saturday's championship game at the Boston Garden.

Hoping To Play Cross

Cirone tabbed the Owls as a team named "desire" and admitted the boys were hoping to get Wilbur Cross as their opponent in the finale.

Captain Stan Poole, voted the tournament's outstanding player, and clever Ed Griffin, a unanimous choice along with Poole for all - tournament honors, shyly stated, "We knew we were going to beat Cross in the final."

Two assemblies are planned for Monday morning at the school, the first at 8:40 for juniors and seniors and the second for sophomores and freshmen. Quirk reported that Governor John N. Dempsey will be present at the early assembly.

Sunday's light snowfall undoubtedly kept Hartford's total of well wishers down to a minimum but it left a neutral on looker with the feeling that Christmas arrived for all of the wonderful people at Hartford High School just three months late.