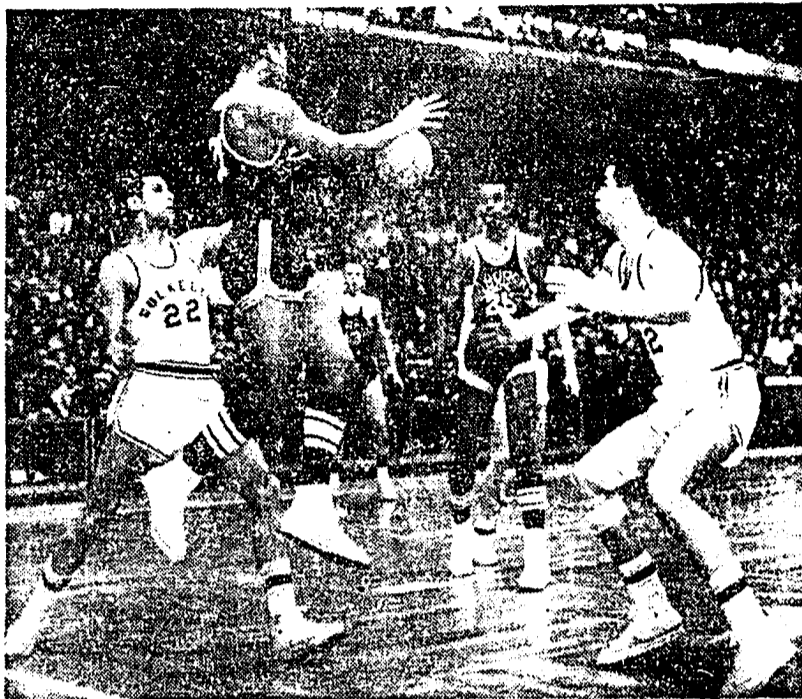


Hartford Wins New England Crown



ANYBODYS BALL: Ball goes free as Eddie Griffin (21) of Hartford High misses a rebound and Edward Kwash (22) and James Belfiore (right), both of Bulkeley High, make move for the ball in early minutes of final game for New

England schoolboy basketball tournament at Boston Garden Saturday. Looking on is William Jones (25) of Hartford High. Owls took title 47-39 (AP Wirephoto).

Owl Quintet in Repeat Beating Bulkeley 47-39

By PAT BOLDUC
 Courant Sports Writer

BOSTON—Hartford High School Saturday night staged a gallant comeback to overtake city rival Bulkeley for a fourth time this season, 47-39, and become only the third school to win the coveted New England Interscholastic Basketball Tournament two straight years.

A small but noisy Boston Garden crowd of 6,112 looked on as the victorious Owls joined Hillhouse of New Haven (1945-46) and Meriden (1935-36) as the only schools ever to capture back-to-back titles in the tourney's 37-year old history. It marked Connecticut's 26th championship and sixth in succession.

Saturday's final also was the first between two schools from the same city.

Stalled from the outset by Bulkeley's smart and deliberate ball-control game, Hartford trailed until a jump shot by the incomparable Ed Griffin knotted the count at 35-35 with only 1:15 gone in the fourth quarter.

But 10 seconds later Bulkeley's Gene Reilly converted twice from the foul line to give the Maroon a slim 37-35 edge.

By this time the Hartford attack really came alive. Reserve Bill Thornton, who hit on his first five field shots, and Griffin threw in successive jumpers to accord the Owls their first lead of the night, 39-37 with just two minutes gone.

Into Semi-Freeze

Then with 4:30 remaining in the final period Hartford went into a semi-freeze offense. Griffin, fouled on a drive, converted twice to make it 41-37 with 3:20 to go. The Hartford ace, who accounted for nine of his team's final 10 points, followed with another free throw with 2:55 left and a driving layup which practically insured the triumph with 1:30 remaining. Hartford led 44-37 at that point.

Bulkeley failed to score a basket in the fourth period until Ted Kwash finally threw in a rebound hoop with only 20 seconds to play.

Griffin wound up with 2 points and his tournament total of 80 was just two shy of the record of 82 points held by Al Attar of Durfee High of Fall River, Mass.

Thornton, who kept the Owls in contention with his deadly shooting in the third quarter, had 12 tallies.

Jim Belfiore topped the Bulkeley shooters with 16 points. Kwash had 13. Reilly was held to just nine points but continued his brilliant foul shooting with a perfect 5-for-5 performance.

Reilly scored a total of 58 points in three tourney games and missed only three of 35 charity tosses, including four games in the Connecticut tournament. Reilly had a glittering 82-for-66 at the foul line.

Hartford, in closing a highly successful campaign with a 21-4 record, went most of the way with a man-for-man defense. The Owls were forced to switch to a 3-2 zone early in the fourth quarter when Griffin was tagged with his fourth personal.

Bulkeley employed a 3-2 zone which proved very successful until the fatal fourth period when the Maroon could not buy a basket and Hartford began to exercise its strength off the boards.

Maroons Lead 9-2

Belfiore hit on the game's first shot and smartly played for the good shot. After Griffin threw in two foul shots Belfiore and Reilly led a Bulkeley surge which produced a 9-2 margin until Bruce Maddox came through with the Owls' first basket with 45 seconds left in the opening quarter. A free throw by Reilly made it 10-4 at the buzzer.

With Kwash and Belfiore limiting the Hartford shooters to a solitary attempt, Bulkeley fashioned leads of 13-4, 15-6 and 18-11 in the second period.

It looked bad for Hartford when Maddox was rested after picking up his third personal with 2:55 left in the first half. But John Joiner hit from the foul line, Griffin tapped in a basket and Thornton fired in a jumper to cut the Maroon edge to 18-16. But Kwash, who time and again sneaked in for easy layups, hit from underneath to give Bulkeley a 22-18 bulge at intermission.

Thornton's shooting from the corner reduced Bulkeley's lead to 26-24 early in the third quarter and a jumper by Griffin left the Owls trailing, 29-27. But the Maroon fought back with an easy

layup by Belfiore and two charity tosses by Kwash to go out front, 32-27 with 3:55 left. It was at this point Maddox was benched again after picking up his fourth personal.

Griffin hit once from the foul line and followed with a jump as the Owls trailed, 35-32 at the third turn.

Griffin was voted the tournament's most valuable player, and was joined by teammates Len Kostek, Reilly, Belfiore and Mark Belanger, Pittsfield, Mass., on the all-tournament team selected by the sports writers in attendance.

For the second straight time Hartford outshot Bulkeley from the field. The Owls were 17 for 39 (44.1 per cent) and the Maroon 13 for 33 (39.3 per cent). Hartford also led in rebounds, 17-14, making up a 7-1 deficit in the first half. From the foul line Bulkeley was 1 for 16 and Hartford 13 for 19.

Bulkeley, a finalist for the first time, ended a successful season with 20 victories as against four setbacks. All four losses were to Hartford and by a combined 13 points.

HARTFORD			BULKELEY					
B	F	Pt	B	F	Pt			
Joiner	1	2	4	Hourihan	0	1	1	
Maddox	1	1	3	Belfiore	7	2	16	
Thornton	6	0	12	McGrath	0	0	0	
Jones	1	2	4	Kwash	4	5	13	
Kostek	0	0	0	Reilly	2	5	9	
Griffin	6	8	24					
Totals			17	13	47	13	13	39
Hartford			4	14	15	4	27	
Bulkeley			10	12	13	4	39	