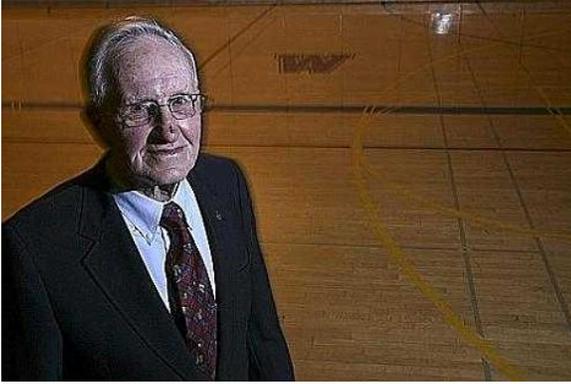


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Dick Dorsey didn't remember the final score, or even if his team won or lost the game. But as coach of West Aurora's freshman-sophomore boys basketball team, he had the distinction of coaching what is thought to be the first competitive game in West High's gym when it opened in 1953.

"I guess, technically, that would be right," Dorsey told The Beacon News early in 2007 before the gym's original floor was replaced. "I can't remember (details), but we weren't very good. We probably lost that one."

Dorsey, who died Tuesday at the age of 86 after battling cancer, actually led the team to victory that night.

While that in itself is an interesting footnote in the storied history of West High's basketball program, it wouldn't be the only mark he left.

A 1941 Elgin High graduate, Dorsey served in the U.S. Air Force during World War II before earning a degree from Illinois State in 1948. He also graduated from the University of Illinois with a master's degree in educational administration in 1951.

Dorsey made teaching stops in Paris and Serena before coming to West Aurora when the new building opened in 1953. It's where he would teach P.E. and biology, serve as a guidance counselor, assistant principal and principal, and coached basketball, football and golf for 30 years.

In 1955, Dorsey took over the helm of the varsity boys basketball team. In his first season the Blackhawks finished 13-13 after posting a 7-17 mark the season before.

In five seasons as the varsity coach, Dorsey's teams won four regional titles, finished fourth in the state in 1958 and finished second in 1959. Dorsey didn't have a losing campaign.

Despite the success, Dorsey chose to step down after a 12-10 season in 1959-60, finishing with an 84-49 record at West. He had also coached four seasons at Serena.

"Emotionally, I wasn't suited to be in it for the long haul," Dorsey said years later. "I was quiet on the bench but it turned me inside out."

But even with such a short tenure, Dorsey still distinguished himself among the list of coaching luminaries at West.

"Dick was one of the all-time great basketball coaches but he never got his due because he didn't coach as long as some of us," said fellow West High coaching great John McDougal early in 2007. "But he has one distinction over all other West High coaches. He never lost a game to East Aurora."