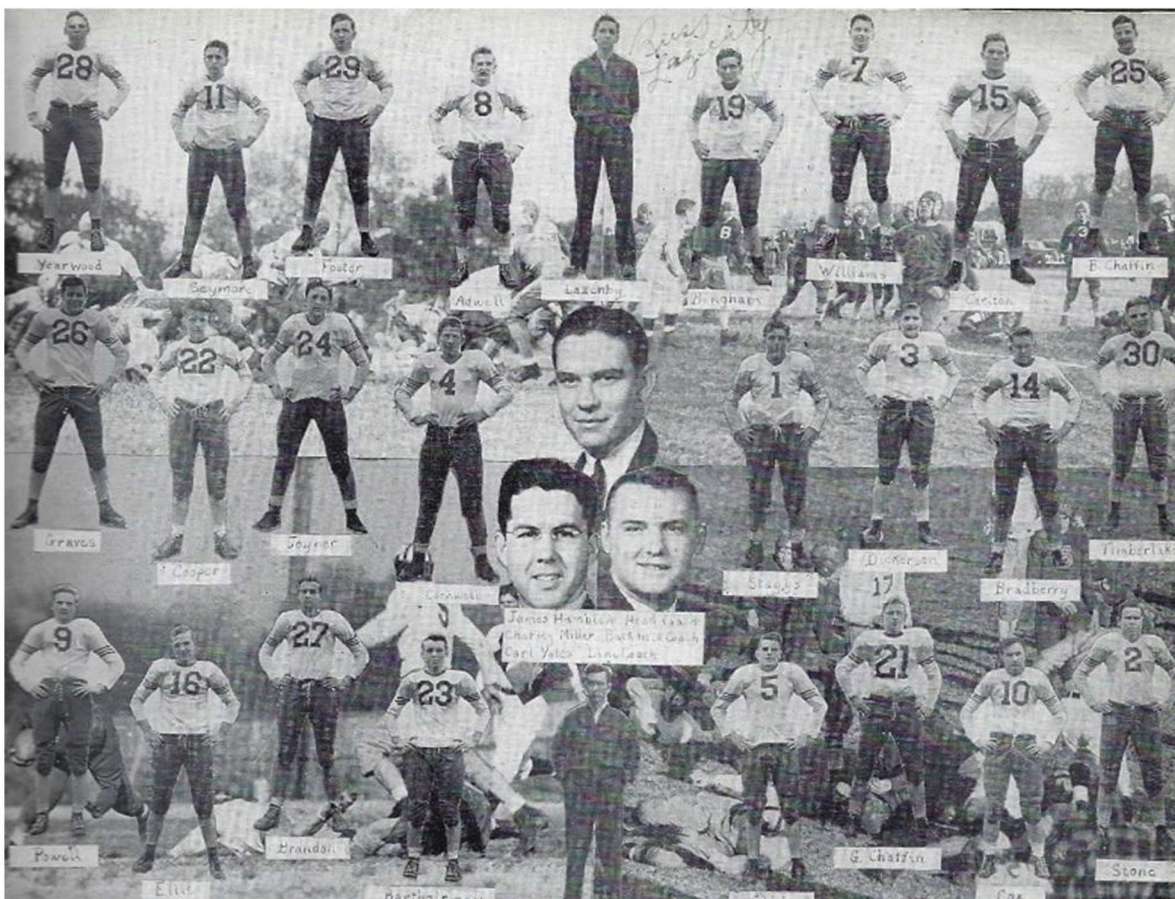


THE HISTORY OF ISAAC LITTON HIGH SCHOOL IN SPORTS

Edited and updated by Larry Collier, class of '69

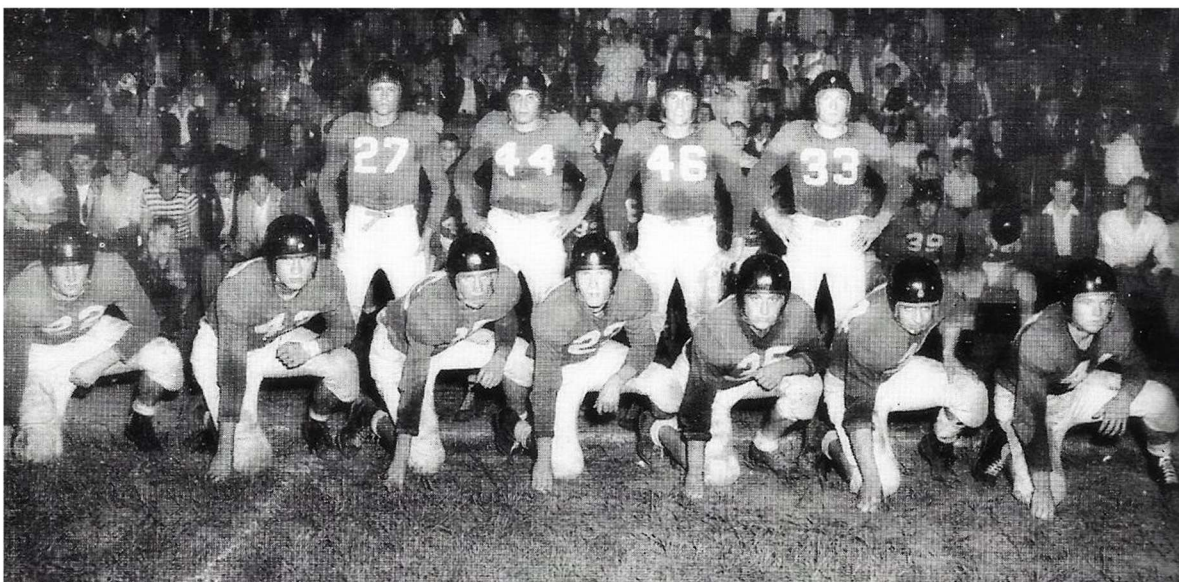
In the realm of athletics, Isaac Litton High School forged a great and honorable name during its history, when the Lions who wore the Red and Blue built a tradition of unequalled spirit and pride. Its first football coach was Mr. James Brandon, ably assisted by Mr. Julian Crocker. With a record of 5 wins, 2 losses and 1 tie in its first season, the team started a winning tradition that would distinguish Litton for years to come. In the second season, Mr. Crocker took the reins as football coach and held this position until 1940 when Mr. James Hamblen was named head coach. During these early years, Mr. Crocker had several assistants: Mr. Carroll Tallent, Mr. Granville Waggoner (a former Litton student), and James Hamblen. Subsequent fine coaches were Mr. Charles Miller (a Litton grad), Mr. Carl Yates, Mr. Charles Rounds, Mr. Marshall Foster, Mr. Bob Cummings, Mr. John Witt, Mr. Bill Harris and Mr. Richard Hewitt.



One of the best teams Litton ever fielded was the undefeated team of 1940-1941. Having completed the regular season unbeaten, they were declared City Champions. They journeyed to Murfreesboro to play Fayetteville in the Mid-State Tournament. In one of the most exciting games Litton has ever played, the Lions finally, in a sudden death playoff, were declared the winners. As a result of this victory, the Litton team played Gallatin at Dudley Field, where in a heartbreaking game, it lost. Leonard Staggs and Bob Bingham were chosen to be on the All-City team and Staggs was voted the most valuable player award in the NIL.

Then there was the exciting team of 1947-48, who roared to an 8 wins, 1 loss, 1 tie season and then defeated powerful MBA in a post-season game at Dudley Field. They were named the champions of the Nashville Interscholastic League and awarded the impressive trophy as such. Kenneth Duke was named on the Banner's All-City team, along with Tommy Patton. Kenneth was also chosen to be a member on the Tennessean and Good News All-City Teams, and brought further glory to Litton and himself by being chosen the MVP in the NIL and by being named to the prestigious All-State squad.

When the 1948-49 season ended, the Litton Lions again had an outstanding record with only one loss. This loss was a heartbreaker, as the Big Red from MBA emerged victorious over the Big Blue from Litton by a single point, 20-19. Several members of the Litton team received special honors. Tommy Patton, Buford Partee, and Kenneth Duke were selected on the All-City team and James Presley was voted the MVP in the NIL.



No one can forget the great team of 1951. Coach Bob Cummings led the Lions to win the AA Division crown with only one league defeat. However, this time, the crowning climax of the season came when the Litton Lions solidly trounced a good MBA team 39-27, a dream come true for any Litton football team! All of the Litton team players were good ones, but among the standouts were Claude Sharp and Willie Castleman, who were All-City selections, along with Tommy Weiss, Billy King, Ralph Sellers and Clarence Carter.

“A season of superlatives” could well describe the great season of 1952. The Litton Lions roared to its greatest football year in the long illustrious history of the school. Season’s play ended with a record of 9 wins and 1 loss – the lone loss being to the top ranked team in the state. The Lions were the proud champions of the NIL AA Division. Then the Big Blue went across town to Dudley Field on Thanksgiving Day and defeated Ryan in the Clinic Bowl, a fitting climax to a tremendous football season! Meriting positions on various All-Star teams were George Volkert (the first player in the history of Nashville high school football to be named on the national All-American team), John Gordy, who went on to become an outstanding player with UT and the Detroit Lions, L.F. McClellan, Gray Potter, Rip Nix and Jerry Kemp.

The Lions’ 1953 season was a tremendous one, also. Going into the first game with a young team, the charges of Coach Bob Cummings again began to roar and completed the regular season with a 9 wins, 1 loss record. Again, the Big Blue were declared NIL AA Division Champions, and for the second year in a row were invited to play in the Clinic Bowl. Bill Kee and Tarzan Adams were among the stars of this team.

Left: Corky Highsmith (24) intercepts pass in Springfield game as George Volkert (52) looks on. Right: George Volkert (52) makes gain around end against Columbia. Bottom: Gray Potter knocks down pass intended for Ryan's Charles Warner.



As the 1954 season rolled around, the Litton Lions had a big name to live up to as the two previous squads had done to the Clinic Bowl. Well, history repeated itself as this team was again crowned AA Division Champs and were headed to the Clinic Bowl for the third time in as many years. Four boys were named All-City. They were Bobby Jones, Lyell Hunter, Rudolph Schmittou and Bill Ward, who was also selected to the All- State squad.

The Big Blue Lions roared once again to the NIL championship in 1955. Led by one of the most decorated athletes ever at Litton, Bobby Tillman was named all-city, all-state, and all-American honorable mention in both Football and Basketball. He went on to play Major League Baseball for the Boston Red Sox. He also was named to the Metro Schools Sports Hall-of-Fame and the Tennessee Sports Hall-of-Fame. Litton Coach Bill Harris called Tillman the best athlete he ever coached.



In 1960, the Lions eleven went undefeated and untied in winning the Associated Press state championship. The Big Blue had a stable of running backs led by bruising Jack Patterson, Richard Cutrer and the speedy Billy Tomlinson. Patterson and Tomlinson would accept scholarships to UT while Cutrer would play for Tulane.

We're Ready for Ya', Big Red

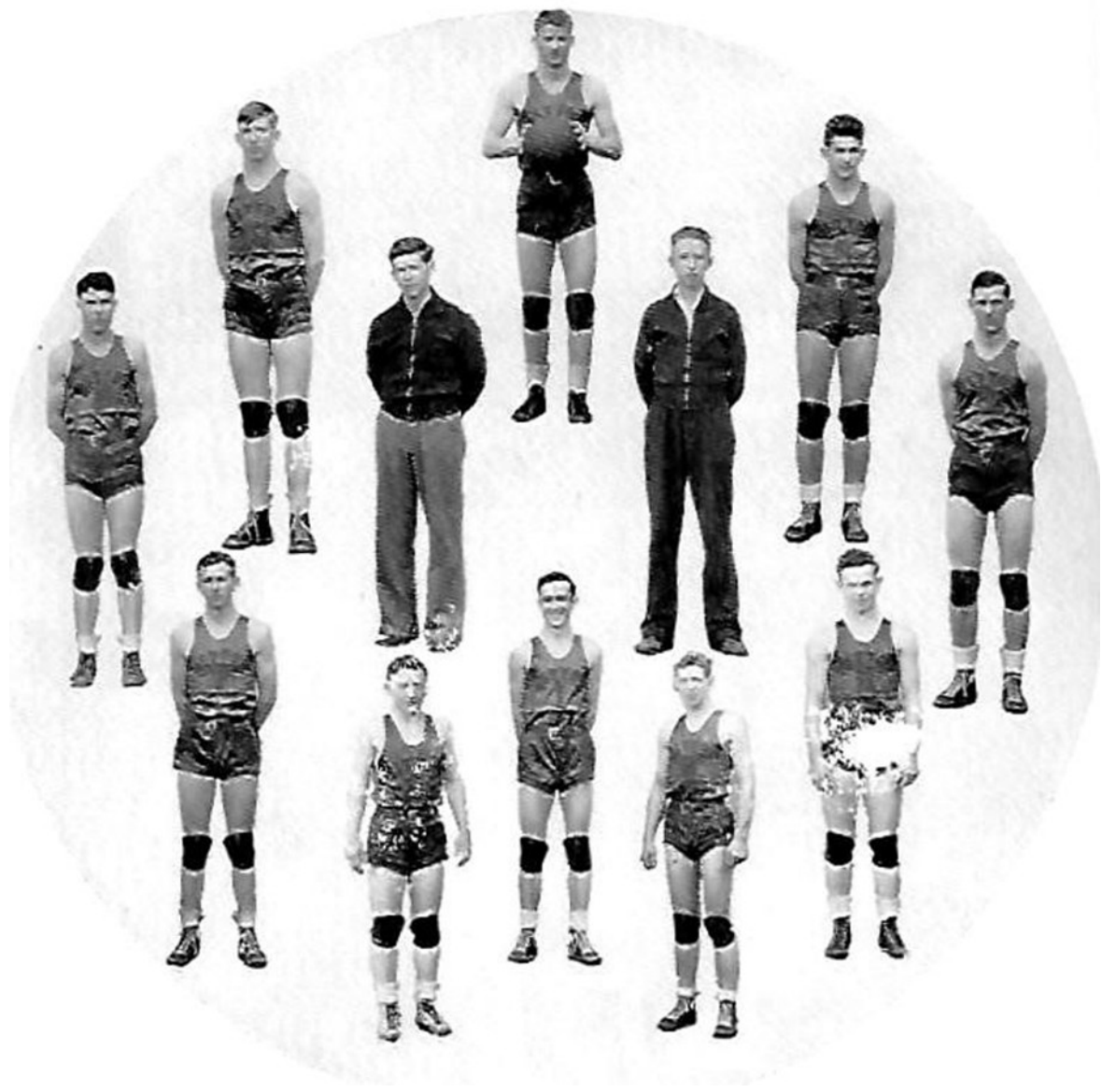


—Courtesy of Tennessee
Halfback Richard Cutrer, fullback Jack Patterson, and halfback Billy Tomlinson don't seem too worried about tonight's encounter with MBA. As a matter of fact, the trio appear very jovial at the thought of another AAAA win.

In 1966, Litton won its last Championship in the AAA Eastern Division and made a final appearance in the Clinic Bowl at Vanderbilt's Dudley Stadium. Herbert and Harold Patterson, Bonnie Sloan and Stuart Byrom were outstanding in their play throughout the season.

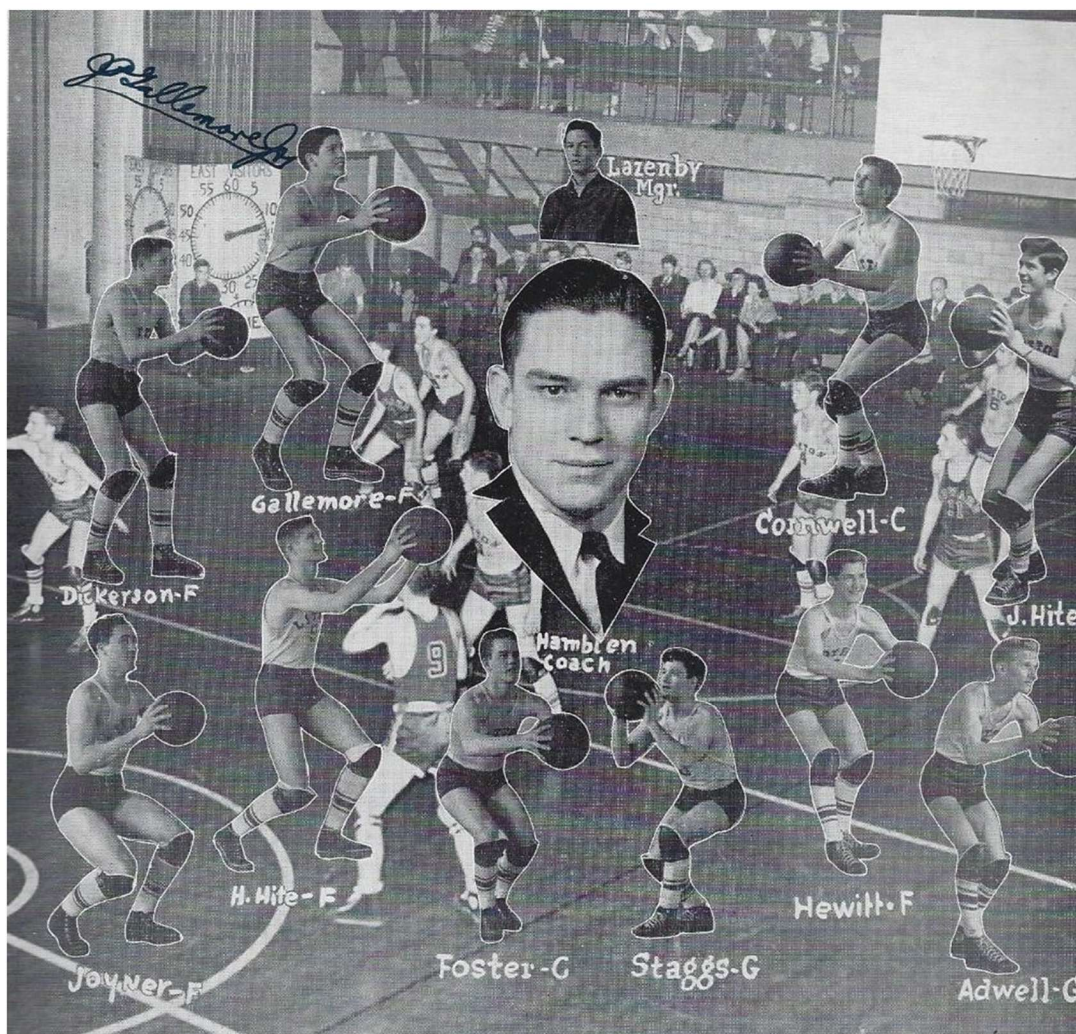
Laurels in athletics have also been garnered by Litton's basketball teams through the years. Among the coaches have been Mr. J.E. (Molly) Malone, Mr. Carroll Tallent, Mr. Granville Waggoner, Mr. James Hamblen, Mr. Carl Yates, Mr. Charles Miller, Miss Ruby Bateman, Mr. Jess Carney, Mr. John Witt, Mr. Marshall Foster and Mrs. Mae Thompson.

One of the most illustrious and best basketball teams to wear the Red and Blue was the squad of 1938. They were the winners of the Seventh District championship, runners-up to Central in the Regional Tournament, and completed in the State Tournament at Kingsport. Talent on this squad was abundant: Walter Wells made All City, All Regional, and All State; Jimmy Harris was All City; and Boonie Simmons was named to the All-Regional team as was Grady Cornwell. Jimmy Jackson, Roscoe Jackson and Paul Fudge were also among this talented group.

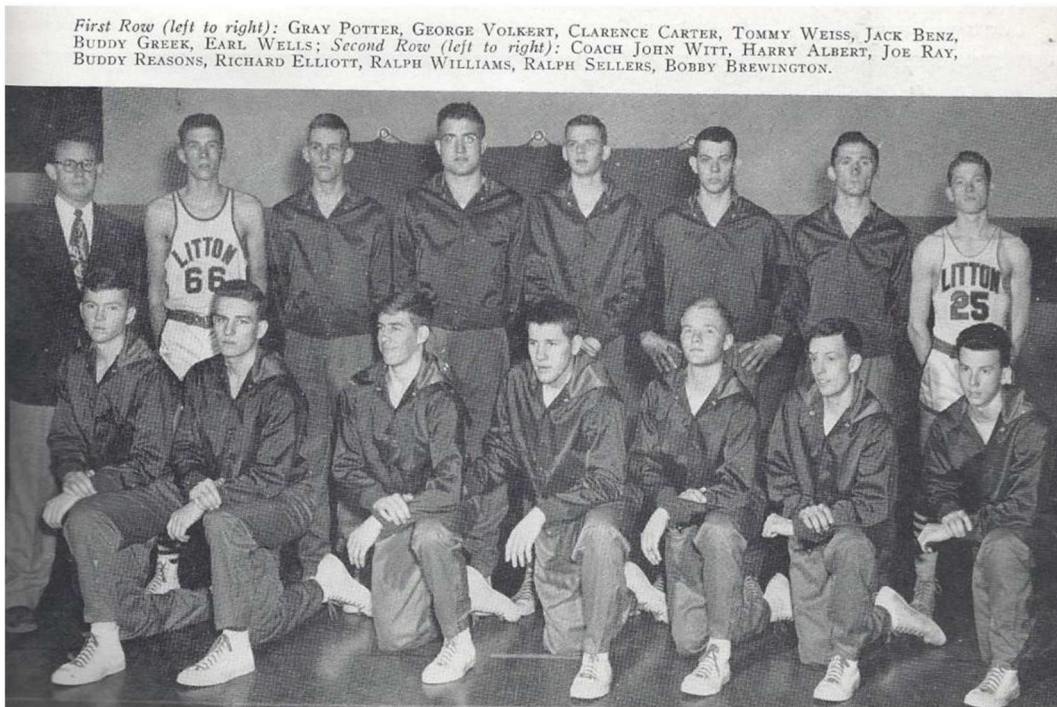


Again in 1939, the Litton Lions went to the State Tournament, only to be downed in the finals. Jimmy Jackson and Boonie Simmons were chosen on the All- District and All-Mid-State teams. Homer Dehoney was picked on the All-State Squad.

During the years of the early forties, the basketball boys brought many glories and honors to Litton High. In 1941 the team won both the Seventh District Tournament and the Second Regional Tournament. It traveled to Maryville to compete in the State Tournament. Among the many stars on this squad were Albert Dickerson, Ned Joyner, Harold Hite, Johnny Hite, Bubber Adwell, Grady Cornwell, Kirby Foster and Leonard Staggs. When the 1942 season rolled around, Litton once again was blessed with experienced ball players. By the time the tournaments were over, the Lions had won the Seventh District and were runners-up in the Second Unit Tournaments. Harold Hite made the All District Team; both Harold and Johnny Hite were selected on the All-Tournament team and Calvin Emery was named "best long distance shooter". Not to be outdone, the boys representing the Red and Blue in 1943 also won the Seventh District championship and went to the Regional Tournament at Murfreesboro. Harold and Johnny Hite, Doug Clifton, Preacher Warren and Enoch Thweatt made up this team.-up" team of 1955-56.



Another championship and trophy were won in 1951 when the Lions won the Nineteenth District Championship. Among the standouts of this group were George Volkert, Clarence Carter, Jack Benz, Ralph Sellers and All-City Richard Elliott.



Then there was the team of 1955-56. It was named runner-up in the District Tournament, Region V Tournament and finally in the State Tournament. Ray Dickerson was chosen All-Nashville.

The girls' basketball team has not been without their great and glorious years either. The very first team representing the Red and Blue won the Seventh District championship in 1932. Verna Mai Ellis, who later became the coach at Litton, was a standout. Also on the squad were Molly Hardy, Katherine Hardigg, Ann Cooper, and Lucile Bland. When the basketball season for 1933 was completed, the Lionesses were Champions of the Seventh District. Ruth Benz, Jo Woodroof, Margaret Hickerson and Lily Crawley were members of this group, which was coached by Mr. Molly Malone. In 1943 the girls claimed the Seventh District championship and went to the Regional Tournament before being defeated. Among the stars of this team were Dorothy Sims, Rae Alessio, Eloise Mumpower, Betty Pippin and Mary Ellen Allen.



Then in the season 1951-52, the Lionesses had one of the most successful seasons in school history. The Litton sextet wound up with a 17 won 2 loss record. That was good enough to gain a tie for the Nashville Interscholastic League championship. Catherine Burrus, Glenda Compton, Wendle Englert, Margie Johnston, Ann Hagewood, Earline and Barbara Climer were the backbone of this fine squad. Perhaps the finest hour for the Litton girls' basketball team came in the 1957-58 season. With three All-District, All-City and All Regional girls on the squad, the Lionesses were winners of the Region V Championship and went to the State Tournament but were defeated in the finals. Gayle Brumbach was chosen Region V's Most Valuable Player. Besides this honor, she, Mary Wherry and Judy Jennings were selected for the All-City and All-Regional teams.

Although football and basketball dominated the sports scene at Litton throughout most of its history, other sports brought much publicity and many honors to the school in the later years, too. Among them are track, baseball, golf and tennis. Perhaps the most outstanding achievements have been in track. In 1965, the Lions track team won the District Championship with Bobby Petty and Jerry Ballou earning the right to compete in the State Track meet. The next year, 1966, was the big year as the “thinclads” from Litton were State Champions. They were also the winners of the Banner track relays. This outstanding team broke 28 records and tied 1 during the season. Among the more notables competing for the Red and Blue were Jerry Ballou, Herbert Patterson, Harold Paterson, Bonnie Sloan, Bobby Petty and Dwain Kirby.



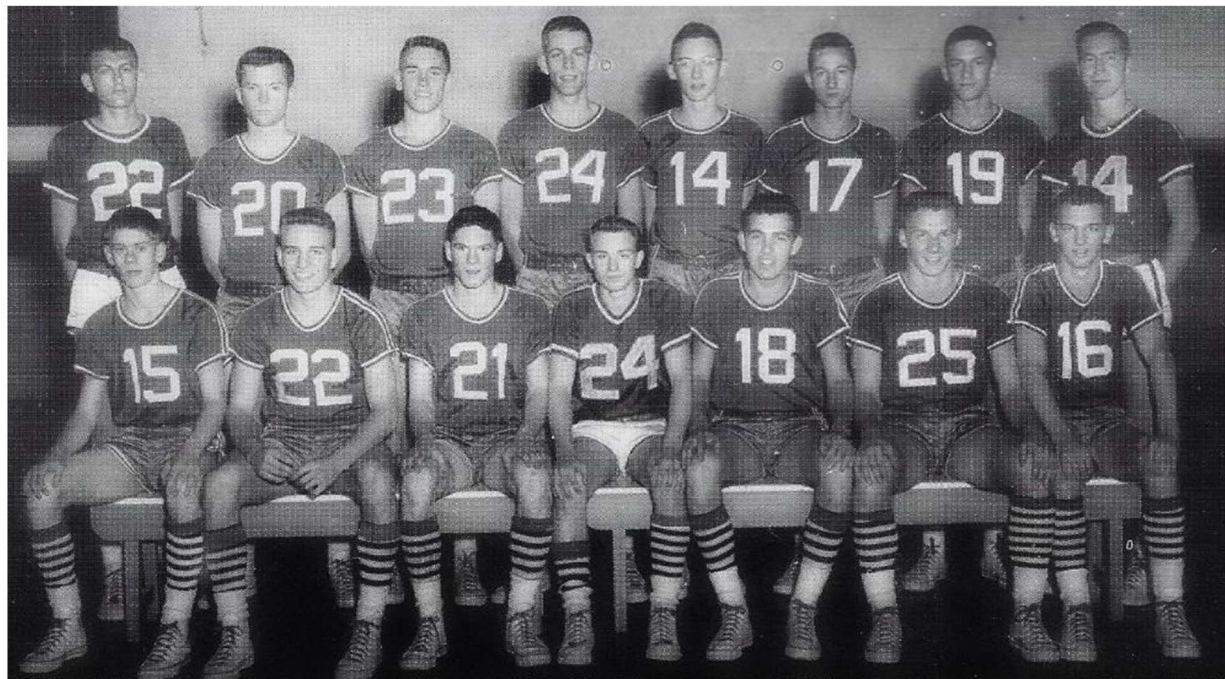
Row 1: Treve Smith, Harry Murphy, Buddy Wade, Billy Owen, Milton Hathcock, Randy Warren. Row 2: Phil Taylor, Eddie Smith, Wayne Parker, Roger Spivey, David Watts, Chris McDonald, Gene Wherry, Stuart Byrom, Alan Copeland. Row 3: Mike Edwards, Ronny Merville, Tommy Irick, Ronny Thompson, Gerry Scandore, Gerald Head, Harold Patterson, Jerry Pinkerton. Row 4: Tammy Watts, Bobby Petty, Eddie Smith, Bill Covington, Herbert Patterson, David Riley.

In golf, Litton has had its champions too. In 1964, the golfers won the NIL Championship with Jimmy Smith leading the way. Sam Young was the winner of the Individual Championship Golfer in the NIL in 1969.



GOLF TEAM
Jimmy Smith, Ronnie Newson, Phil Kelley, Bobby Jarrett, John Kimbrough

The baseball team of 1953 provided a winner for the Red and Blue also, with such players as Joe Ray, Larry Tillman, Tarzan Adams, Bobby Sellers and Sonny Knox. The Lions were proclaimed the captors of the Nashville Interscholastic League crown. Mention must be made of Bobby Tillman as well in this sport. Although he didn't play on a nine at Litton that won a championship, he went on to play in the major leagues. Thus, he became one of the more well-known Litton grads.



There have been many, MANY honors and glories brought to Isaac Litton in the field of sports during its forty-year history, and many worthy coaches and assistant coaches through the years. Isaac Litton High School has an established sports record in the history books of which to be extremely proud.