



## **Johnson City Legacy Teams**

### **1975-77 Girls Basketball**

Year of Induction: **2023**

The Girls Basketball Teams of 1975-76 and 1976-77 have been named the 2023 Legacy Team for induction into the Johnson City Athletic Hall of Fame. The members of this team were not only outstanding athletes in this sport as well as others, but they also were strong students who shone in the classroom.

Led by Coach Michelle Tidick (affectionally nicknamed “Digger” by her players), the 1975-76 team worked to attain an 18-0 record which earned them both STAC and Section IV Championships. Seniors Sally Nachman, Kelly O’Connell, and Barb Ryzcko led this group of exceptional female Wildcat athletes.

Coach Tidick was a first-year basketball coach whose dedication to the program and this group of athletes helped to bring success to this team. She willingly reached out to some great male coaches in the area for their advice. JC’s Bob Lane and Bob Griffiths as well as UE’s Charlie Tarricone shared their knowledge and advice with Coach Tidick.

Title IX was a relatively new law (1972) that helped women’s sports gain respect in the sports world. However, there still were many hurdles to conquer to achieve even a minor movement toward equity let alone equal footing to men’s sports. One of the biggest obstacles was practice schedules. Boys’ teams were given priority for gym use with the girls practicing and playing games around the boys’ schedule. Also, female athletic equipment was not yet prolific in area stores. Most of the girls played in boys’ high-top sneakers and wrapped themselves with ace bandages as sports bras and compression wear were not yet invented. Even the basketball that this team played with was a regulation boys’ basketball. It wasn’t until 1984 that the smaller basketball was implemented for high school and collegiate women’s basketball which would result in higher-scoring games which were faster paced.

The STAC championship game was played in the old Broome Community College gym which was too small to hold the crowd that came to cheer the team on. The crowd spilled out into the hallway for this game. When the Section IV championship game came up the game was moved to a larger gym at SUNY Binghamton to accommodate the crowds. This Wildcat team definitely had a following of loyal fans.

The 1976-77 team enjoyed a 16-2 record that took them to a second Section IV championship. Coach Tidick was able to further develop the skills of her players which was a contributing factor to their success during this season. The team was led by Deb Dekar at point guard. She averaged 20 points and 9 steals a game. Dekar was a 4-year starter and a member of two STAC and Section IV basketball teams at JC. She was joined on the team by other stand-out athletes including Becky Holly, Deb Kennedy, Nancy Kleinsmith, and Tammy Carpenter.

With this lineup, the Wildcats were able to defeat Owego 28-27 in the championship game. They used a slow-down offense as instructed by Coach Tidick. This was prior to the 30-second clock being implemented for basketball games.

The team’s loyal followers gave tremendous support throughout both years to these Lady Wildcats. Parents, teachers, and staff formed an enthusiastic cheering section armed with banners and posters to add to their loud support of the teams. In fact, the Press and Sun-Bulletin dubbed them the “JC Rowdies”. They added to the team spirit that was evident in the stands and on the court.

The Johnson City Athletic Hall of Fame is proud to welcome the 1975-1977 Girls Basketball Teams into the Hall of Fame as the 2023 Legacy Team.

