Note: When rule changes are listed below they are listed when they were approved. Often this was in the spring/summer following the previous season and the application of the change followed in the next school year.

BOYS' BASKETBALL TIMELINE

1891  Game invented by Dr. James Naismith in Springfield, MA
1893  First “game” played in Iowa between State University of Iowa Y.M.C.A. and Cedar Rapids Y.M.C.A. with University winning 12-2. Three points were awarded for a made field goal and one point for each foul by the opponent.
1895  Free throw line moved to 15’ from the basket
1896  Points for a made field goal were reduced from three (1895 from 1) to two and instead of being awarded a point for an opponent foul, the offended team was awarded a free throw – one point if made.
1897  Iowa high schools start out with “Y” teams in larger cities with West Waterloo and Ottumwa being among the first, followed by Boone, Sioux City, Cedar Rapids, et al
1899  Dribbler could alternate hands
1903  Iowa High School Principals’ Club organized a rules committee to draft a uniform code for basketball. This action led to one set of rules for all interscholastic sports and eventually the IHSAA
1908  Double dribble prohibited; dribbler could not shoot
1909  Glass backboards were first used, though not required.
1910  Player with four fouls was disqualified; traveling violations were counted as fouls
1912  Rims could have nylon netting with an opening at the bottom so the ball could go through as opposed to the old peach baskets
1912  The Iowa High School Athletic Council organized its first “State Tournament” (1912). These first tournaments were invitational with usually four or eight teams being invited by the Council to play, usually on college campuses in Iowa City or Ames
1920-22  Two “Invitational State Tournaments” held – one at Iowa City; one at Ames
1922  Game shortened from two 20 minute halves to four eight minute quarters.
1923  IHSAA assumed control of the sport and initiated eligibility rules, season limitations and a tournament qualifying structure leading to the State Tournament. A total of 830 schools had teams; 777 belonged to the IHSAA [not all members played basketball]
1923  Osage defeated Council Bluffs, 21-14 in the finals of round robin tournament at Boone High School in first ever IHSAA State Tournament. Oskaloosa and Spirit Lake also qualified for the tournament. Round robin tournaments continued through 1926 with class A and B tournaments being played in 1925 and 1926.
1927-29  State Tournament at Iowa City, University Field House featured eight qualifying teams in one class.
1930-1940  Start of the “Sweet 16” qualifiers for the State Tournament, held at Drake Field House and Iowa State Teachers’ College, Cedar Falls.
1932  New rule adoptions: (1) Ten second backcourt rule; (2) numbering on the front and back of the uniform; (3) free throw lane spacing’s set; and (4) three-second lane restriction.
1933  Dunkerton becomes the first ever small school state champion, defeating Des Moines Roosevelt, 22-20, in a single class tournament
1935  Fumble not considered part of the dribble
1937  Center jump after each made field goal is eliminated; end-line to backboard could be four feet
1938  Sudden death in overtime to determine the winner of tie game
1940  Fan-shaped backboard was legalized
1941  Three-seconds in lane made to apply to all offensive players; Sub-state Tr. started
1941-44  Due to World War II, State Tournament reduced to eight qualifiers. Games played at Drake Field House.
1944  Players permitted five fouls before disqualification
1944  Due to gas rationing, State Tournament was abbreviated to four teams and returned to University Field House, Iowa City.
1945-1955  State Tournament returned to 16 qualifiers and one class.
1946  Transparent backboards were legalized.
2017
Western Christian won its ninth State Championship, the most of any high school, and

2016
Seedings for 2017 basketball tournaments will have a major change

2015
For the first time since 2006, three schools – Gladbrook-Reinbeck, Treynor and North
Scott - won their first ever State Basketball Championship

2014
Iowa City, West becomes the sixth team and the second large school to win three State
Championships in succession. The Trojans' undefeated seasons in 2012 and 2013
matched Ames’ feat from 2009 and 2010.

2012
The IHSAA salutes 100 years of Boys’ State Basketball Tournaments, by featuring
several of the Great Moments in State Tournament history.

2011
Linn-Mar wins Class 4A with a perfect 26-0 record making it the third straight year an
undefeated team has won the big school class – a first. Bishop Heelan, Sioux City
won the 3A title for the third straight time becoming the fifth school to reach that
achievement. In 1A and 2A St, Mary’s, Storm Lake and West Fork, Sheffield
captured titles in their first ever trip to the Elite Eight.

2010
Board of Control modifies the seeding formula for tournaments based on the class the
opponent

2010
Ames High School becomes the first large school to win back-to-back state titles while
going unbeaten each season.

2009
The IHSAAs salutes 100 years of Boys’ State Basketball Tournaments, by featuring
several of the Great Moments in State Tournament history.

2008
Iowa City, West becomes the sixth team and the second large school to win three State
Championships in succession. The Trojans’ undefeated seasons in 2012 and 2013
matched Ames’ feat from 2009 and 2010.

2007
For the first time since 2006, three schools – Gladbrook-Reinbeck, Treynor and North
Scott - won their first ever State Basketball Championship

2006
Western Christian Coach Jim Eekhoff won his eighth championship to set a
record, eclipsing the seven he shared with the legendary Paul Moon of Davenport.
Seedings for 2017 basketball tournaments will have a major change involving more
Input by the coaches in the respective tournaments.

2005
Western Christian won its ninth State Championship, the most of any high school, and
equaled only by the combination of 8 by Davenport and 1 by Davenport Central
Early Background
Without question during the first 75 years of the Iowa High School Athletic Association basketball was the “gold standard.” The revenue realized from the sport virtually paid the freight for non-revenue sports plus goods and services and operational costs of the Athletic Association.

From 1912 through 1922 the IHSAA did not officially conduct a State Tournament series. A group of educators operating with the approval of the IHSAA and known as the Iowa High School Athletic Council reviewed the records of teams and held “invitational state tournaments” usually in Iowa City and/or Ames. These college communities offered playing facilities and lodging for the teams. In 1920 continuing through the 1922 season two invitational state tournaments, one in each city, were held.

At the 2012 State Tournament, the IHSAA celebrated the first 100 years of State Tournaments. During the 1912-1922 era, the Iowa Athletic Council sponsored a “state tournament.” With limited travel (mostly by rail), those State Tournaments were held at Iowa State College or the State University of Iowa with teams invited to play. In 1920, 1921 and 1923 tournaments were held at both sites. As part of the 100 Year Celebration of State Basketball Tournaments, the IHSAA posted on its website “Great Moments from State Tournament History.” The work in large was through the efforts of a committee, but also incorporated “great moments” and memories of the fans.

IHSAA Takes Over
Starting in 1923 the IHSAA assumed full control of the sport as member schools started to add basketball to their athletic programs. Several changes were implemented by the Board of Control including a qualifying system of tournaments, the length of the season, codification of playing rules, and eligibility rules stipulating a maximum age of players and academic rules that were crafted to place all teams on the same structure. The IHSAA registered and licensed officials to work tournament games as well as regular season contests of member schools.

The first two IHSAA state tournaments were held at Boone High School. From that humble beginning, the sport became increasingly popular with more schools participating and an expanding fan base.

The tournament was divided into two classes, based on enrollment, in 1925 and 1926, before returning to a single class structure in 1927, when a sectional and district qualifying format was put in place. From 1927 to 1955 the State Tournament was usually played at the State University of Iowa Field House or Drake Field House. In 1955, the tournament for the first time was contested in the new Veterans Auditorium (a.k.a. “The Barn”) in Des Moines before moving across the street to the modern Wells Fargo Arena in 2006

In 1930, the magic of the “Sweet 16” was created to respect the 16 State Tournament qualifiers. Except for 1941-45 when the tourney returned to eight qualifiers, the 16 commanded widespread coverage from newspapers and the electronic media. The period of classification from 1956-1960 resulted in a two-class structure but from 1961-1966 there was only one class of eight qualifiers. As competition became more intense, classification was the tool used to equalize competition among schools of like size. Since 1967 the tournament has stayed in multiple classes, increasing to three in 1976 and to four in 1985.

State championship games at the University Field House in Iowa City and Veteran’s Auditorium in Des Moines (first in 1955) drew approximately 14,000-15,000 fans during the period of 1946-1980 even with a larger television audience. In era of 1920 through 1939 the semifinals and finals were often played on the same day.

Perhaps unique to Iowa, starting in 1950 when the tournament stayed as a single champion, schools were classed AA, A and B by enrollment, the schools played within their own class through the sectional, district and sub-state tournaments then were paired for the State Tournament.

Television & Attendance
While radio started broadcasting tournament games as early as 1927, it was in 1953 that the first to be televised and it has continued to the present. In some early years, all games were televised. In recent years both Friday and Saturday sessions have been aired on a network that covers Iowa and parts of six surrounding states with games also being streamed to websites (all three rounds starting in 2013).
The record for paid ticket sales for the state tournament are: 8-sessions, 1968 – 71,131; 10 sessions, 1977 – 95,504; and 12-sessions, 1994 – 95,027.

In a century of competition over a million students have played the game, which has seen many rule changes. Behind all rules changes is a simple philosophy embracing fair play, balance between offense and defense, simplicity, adaptability, and the physical welfare of the participant.

Part of the love affair with basketball stemmed from the fact that nearly every school in the state had a team. From the 33 member schools that competed in 1906 to 775 in 1923, the first year the IHSAA conducted the State Tournament, the number of schools providing basketball increased to an all-time high of 952 in 1947. As school consolidation became more vogue starting in the 1950s and later with sharing programs coming on the scene the number of teams diminished to approximately 385 by the start of the 21st century. With over 11,500 participants, grades 9-12, the sport is second only to football in student participation.

Innovations

The IHSAA has also been the leading innovator for change in the game. In 1964-65 the bench decorum rule was put in place for coaches. Nearly 13 years later a similar rule became part of the national code. Iowa pioneered the three-point field goal starting with the 1982-83 season, five years before it became a national rule. And Iowa, the recognized leader in advocating good sportsmanship, has made it a center piece of the State Tournament.

The school administrators of Iowa have favored the current number of classes (4) since 1985. Iowa has long been a national leader among its sister states led in broadening opportunities for students regardless of the size of school they attend.

Small School Success in One Class Format

While Hollywood has glamorized Indiana basketball with the film “Hoosiers,” Iowa was also the home of a proud and storied past. Nearly 20 years before Milan, IN (Hickory in the movie) won Indiana’s state title, in Iowa the giant-killers was Dunkerton with population a shade over 600 (nearly three times smaller than Milan). The Raiders pulled off a 22-20 upset of one of the largest schools in the state, Des Moines Roosevelt, for the 1933 state championship. The Red and Black clad school used just five players the entire tournament being led by the play of Wally Gladdis and Dean Holdiman. They won over the taller Riders, who were led by Marcellus McMichael, the only four-time, first team all-state player in Iowa history through the 2015 season.

Melrose (1937) and Diagonal (1938) were also small schools who won the single class championship by defeating larger schools, Melrose was a perfect 33-0 in winning it all and in Diagonal’s golden year the Maroons were 24-9, winning their final 13 games. Both communities had populations with less than 700. The three “Giant Killers” were highlighted in the 2011 State Tournament program.

In 1951 tiny Roland thrilled tournament goers and a state-wide media audience and became the tournament darling, by defeating larger opponents -- Hull, Waterloo West, and Des Moines East to gain a title match-up with legendary Davenport, the largest populated school in the state who prevailed 50-40. Roland was led by 5’8” Gary Thompson who was the first Iowa prep to score over 2,000 career points. He was a three-time All-State player, a collegiate All-American, and remains as the only Iowa prep basketball player to be inducted into the National Federation’s Hall of Fame. Davenport was coached by Paul Moon whose teams had 16 tournament appearances and seven state championships, each among Iowa’s all-time bests. Moon began his career in Illinois where he was an assistant coach for the eventual legendary University of Kentucky coach Adolph Rupp.

Palmer’s Dominance

Yet another fabled tale of small school basketball belongs to Palmer, only the third and last team to win three straight championships -- 1986, 1987, and 1988, within the smallest class. The Panthers in 1988 also established an Iowa all-time team scoring average of 103.9 points per game for the season and through the tournaments. Coach Alden Skinner’s team topped the 100-point mark 15 times during that season and continued to win in 1989, eventually losing in the semifinals of the state tournament and breaking a 103-game winning streak, which commanded national television and magazine coverage. Their 3-point shooting accuracy, led by Troy Skinner and Brian Pearson, helped revolutionize offensive strategies in the years to come.
Like former small school giant killers and state champions Dunkerton (1933), Melrose (1936), and Diagonal (1938) and an epic run by Roland (in the early 1950s) before them, Palmer played before packed in crowds during regular season games at home or on the road. Their 103 consecutive victories an Iowa all-time best is also the fifth longest streak all time in the United States. Other notable win-streaks also include Paullina with 80 and Aplington-Parkersburg with 74 straight (52 by Aplington alone), and 53 by Ames (2009 and 2010), a large school Iowa mark.

The larger high schools dominate many of the “team bests” in State Tournament competition. Like their smaller counterparts, they also have great community pride and strong followings. After the 2008 tournament, Wahlert, Dubuque and Marshalltown each have made 24 state tournament appearances, followed by Davenport Central, Mason City and Waterloo East each with 22. Davenport leads with nine state championship trophies with seven under Paul Moon, who was the first coach to direct a school to three consecutive titles (1950-53), a feat equaled only by Paullina (1968-1970) Cedar Rapids Regis (1982-84), Palmer (1986-88), and Bishop Heelan, Sioux City (2009-11). From 1951-53 Moon’s teams never lost to an Iowa team as they won 60 straight.

Three Straight Titles

While 23 schools have won back-to-back titles in the history of the State Tournament, only six have authored three straight championships. No school has won four straight.

The three time champions are Davenport 1950-52 (one class tournament); Paullina, 1968-70 (2 class tournament); Cedar Rapids, Regis, 1982-84 (3 class tournament); Palmer, 1986-89 (4-class tournament); Bishop Heelan Catholic, Sioux City, 2009-11 (4-class tournament); and Iowa City, West, 2012-14 (4-class tournament).

Meanwhile 33 schools won a state championship in the first year they qualified. The most recent to accomplish that feat was West Lyon, Inwood in 2014 and Gladbrook-Reinbeck in 2015.

The Success Continues

Coaches and players, many of whom are featured in the Hall of Fame, achieved a level of excellence that dreams are made of. After the 2015 season 83 coaches had accumulated 400 or more varsity victories and 58 athletes had scored 1,900 career points or more. A total of 298 have scored 700 or more points in a season. Other statistics are just as impressive. As of 2015 over 150 coaches and 221 players have been inducted into the IHSAA Basketball Hall of Fame, which was started in 1969.

The State Tournament has seen 486 schools qualify through 2015. Each school has its own story, but shares with all a common pride in representing their community and the citizens who without fail have supported them. In the process a virtual litany of local folk heroes is made from youngsters in sneakers and shorts each with the same dream.

And when heroes move on to play in college, at any level, or to the National Basketball Association, the community pride adopts yet another team. The names of coaches and players, far too numerous to mention here, revive the magic moments and thrills that linger fresh in the minds of home town folks and those memories never die.

In 2002 three former Iowa preps -- Nick Collison (Iowa Falls) and Kirk Hinrich (Sioux City West) at Kansas and Kyle Korver (Pella) at Creighton -- won All American honors and were drafted into the National Basketball Association. The trio came on the heels of a litany of others who distinguished themselves in the 1990s, namely Ames’ Fred Hoiberg at Iowa State who won numerous Big 8 honors and had a 10 year NBA career; MFL, MarMac’s Raef LaFrentz who went to Kansas and became a two-time consensus First Team All American and an 11-year NBA player; and Ryan Bowen of Fort Madison who excelled at the University of Iowa and played nine seasons in the NBA. By 2003 the number of active Iowans in the NBA was seven - more than any other state in the Midwest. And those seven players hailed from each of the four classes of high school competition and are among 35 former Iowa preps that have played professionally in the NBA, the D-League and in foreign countries.

Moreover, former Iowa preps continue to be among the top high school coaches in Iowa, with others being collegiate and professional head and assistant coaches, as well as being leading forces in in USA Basketball and the expansion of the sport in Canada.
A Final Comment

With declining enrollment and the closing or merger of schools, the number of schools playing basketball has waned, but the sport remains a big attraction each winter.

Boys’ basketball in Iowa is truly a remarkable story dispelling the myth that more games and sports specialization is essential. While it is not a goal of the interscholastic program, Iowa high schools send several players annually to NCAA and NAIA colleges at all levels.

Many modern day Iowa basketball “stars” are multi-sport stars in their high school. Iowans have long respected the rules and limitations that govern each prep sport and perhaps that is the secret why our students become balanced as citizens. Often the students who play basketball are not only in other sports but take part in numerous educational-based activities in their community.