



RIVAL HIGH SCORERS RECONNECT

Paula Klindt (left), of Sioux Rapids, and Helene Ducas (right), of Des Moines, met once again in Sioux Rapids on Monday to recall their basketball careers and to remember the rivalry that drove them both to play hard and drop in points.

Ducas is a 1963 graduate of Rembrandt Consolidated Schools. She was a starter, first team, all four years of high school and both years of junior high school. She also played shortstop on the softball team but the last two years in high school Rembrandt didn't compete in softball because of a lack of a pitcher. By the time star pitcher, Val Mosbo, came along, Ducas had already chosen to play more basketball. There was no track sports at that time either, so involvement in sports was limited to just two choices for women.

Ducas has never let her abilities go by the wayside. A resident of the Des Moines area, she worked as a substitute teacher in Roosevelt School and challenged kids to games at the hoop, often beating the kids but earning their respect.

"I always shot the ball on the left side, even though I am right-handed" Ducas said. "There was a feed bunk on the right side of the basket in the barn which made practicing baseline right-handed layups difficult."

Ducas scored 32 points in the semifinal games; then went on to score 42 points in the district tournament.

Klindt graduated in 1965 from Sioux Rapids Schools. Klindt started playing basketball in fifth grade and played first team all four years of high school. After graduation, she played for a year in Minneapolis.

Klindt was the point for the team. In the 1962-63 season she scored a whopping 563 points averaging 30 points per game.



She also held first place in rebounds, 11 per game, and made 123 free throws.

Klindt rarely shot under 30 points per game. In fact, her highest scoring game which the Sioux Rapids Maidens won was 68 points in a game against Mallard. She earned the state's top scoring honor for that week. In her entire basketball career, she scored 2,655 points.

"We lived for basketball," Klindt said. "If only we could have played in the state tournament."

Klindt was the reason that Sioux Rapids nosed out Mallard in a girls sectional tournament.

"We were down by one point with four seconds remaining," Klindt said. "A guard rebounded off of a missed shot, threw the ball to me at center court, and I shot it and it scored. I asked the coach later how I did that and his reply was 'I don't know, I couldn't look.'"

Those memories and the 60th anniversary of the sectional championship game brought both ladies back to the place where it was played, the "new" Sioux Rapids gym, built in 1958. This was the place where both teams met for conference games, county and sectional titles.

Both ladies remembered the sectional championship game to a standing-room only filled gymnasium and just being back in the gym brought back some happy times. Both of the ladies played in the forward position and could shoot the lights out of the baskets. And they were both high scorers for their teams their last three seasons.

It was only appropriate then that they meet in the gym where they competed against each other and both dressed in school colors to recognize their careers in basketball 60 years later.

"Playing basketball was my happy place," Ducas said.