

HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA
INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION
SOUTHERN SECTION
(CIFSS)

16th historical “tidbit.”

FIRST CIFSS BASKETBALL CHAMPION

WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL

Defeats Covina High School 38 to 32 – February 27, 1915
(First half played inside – second half played outdoors)



(Early Southern Californian
basket ball team)



Whittier High School

Basketball, or “basket ball” as it was called at the beginning of the 1900’s, was a very popular sport in the Southern California area. It could be played indoors at the numerous athletic clubs and outdoors on courts than ranged from hard packed dirt to concrete. Next to track, it was the most organized interscholastic sport prior to the creation of the CIFSS in 1913. Basket ball was first mentioned in the November 19, 1914, CIFSS Council Meeting minutes with this comment, “Basket ball semifinals will be played second week in February (1915)...and 5% of finals proceeds goes to the Council.” A.B. Clayton, Manual Arts High School, was named the manager of the championship. Mr. Clayton was a representative of the Los Angeles City League which was one of the four leagues when CIFSS was founded. The City League included Pasadena, Long Beach, Santa Monica and Whittier High Schools. In the March, 11, 1915, Council minutes, “Mr. Clayton

reported upon the basket-ball Championship series...Whittier was declared the winner.” Later in the May 20, 1915, minutes Mr. Clayton stated, “...that some provision should be made to settle disputes in reference to the kind of a court that Championship games should be played on...a motion was made and carried that all Championship games be played on outside courts except by mutual agreement between parties concerned.”



Town of Whittier – 1900



Manual Arts High School

The first game CIFSS Championship Basketball game was played at Manual Arts High School on February 27, 1915, and Whittier High School was the victor by a score of 38 to 32 over Covina High School. The first half of the game was played indoors as Whittier played on that surface during the regular season and the second half was played outside as Covina was accustomed to an outdoor court. Covina was led by “*a fat boy*” named Dalin, according to the “Los Angeles Times,” and Whittier stars were Beam and Benton. Whittier had defeated Manual Arts and Redondo to get to the finals. The Whittier team was coached by John Wilson who would go on to win the first three CIFSS Basketball Championships...40 to 19 over Azusa High School held at the Los Angeles YMCA in 1916 and 34 to 16 over Hollywood High School held at the Pasadena YMCA in 1917. Total receipts turned over to the Council from the first Championship game were \$20.65.

Whittier High School would also go on to defeat Berkeley High School 31 to 20 in 1916, for the first California State CIF Basketball Championship game held which was played at Whittier High School...this atoned for the unofficial State Championship three years earlier played in Berkeley with the northerners winning.

(Special thanks to Morris E. Sawyer, Historian and Archivist for Whittier High School, for providing many of the attachments from Whittier High School yearbooks, school newspapers and for his true dedication to the preservation of the community of Whittier and Whittier High School.)