



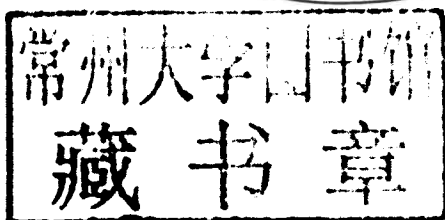
Hoops in

CONNECTICUT

THE NUTMEG STATE'S PASSION FOR BASKETBALL



DON HARRISON



DON HARRISON



Published by The History Press
Charleston, SC 29403
www.historypress.net
Copyright © 2011 by Don Harrison
All rights reserved

Front cover, clockwise from top left: Calvin Murphy, Naismith Basketball Hall of Famer from Norwalk. *Courtesy of Niagara University*; Wes Bialosuknia, UConn's outstanding long-range shooter in the mid-1960s. *Courtesy of University of Connecticut*; Yale's 1956–57 Ivy League championship team coached by Joe Vancisin. *Courtesy of Yale University*.

Back cover, clockwise from top left: Marcus Camby, All-NBA defender and University of Massachusetts All-American from Hartford. *Courtesy of Denver Nuggets*; John Williamson of New Haven, who starred on two ABA championship teams with the New York Nets. *Courtesy of New York Nets*; President Barack Obama seems to be tickled by Coach Jim Calhoun's comment during the 2010–11 national champion Huskies' visit to the White House. *Courtesy of University of Connecticut*.

First published 2011
Second printing 2012

Manufactured in the United States
ISBN 978.1.60949.083.6
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Harrison, Don.
Hoops in Connecticut : the Nutmeg State's passion for basketball / Don Harrison.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-1-60949-083-6
1. Basketball--Connecticut--History. I. Title.
GV885.72.C8H37 2011
796.32309746--dc23
2011039782

Notice: The information in this book is true and complete to the best of our knowledge. It is offered without guarantee on the part of the author or The History Press. The author and The History Press disclaim all liability in connection with the use of this book.
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever without prior written permission from the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

For Lauren, Luke and Patrick. With grandchildren I am thrice blessed.

OTHER BOOKS BY DON HARRISON

Connecticut Baseball: The Best of the Nutmeg State

25 Years Plus One: Recounting the Meteoric Rise of Fairfield Basketball

As Contributing Author

Inside Women's College Basketball: Anatomy of a Season

Inside Women's College Basketball: Anatomy of Two Seasons

Contents

Foreword, by C. Donald Cook	7
Acknowledgements	11
Introduction	13
1. BASKETBALL: IT'S CONNECTICUT'S GAME, TOO	21
2. THE PLAYERS	36
Chuck Aleksinas	36
John Bagley	39
Vin Baker	42
Mike Branch	45
Alvin Clinkscale	48
Johnny Egan	52
Ed Goldstone	55
Tony Hanson	61
Walter Lockett	66
Wes Matthews	68
Calvin Murphy	72
Ralph Paolillo	79
Charles Smith	81

CONTENTS

Chris Smith	84
Porky Vicira	87
John Williamson	94
 3. THE COACHES	 98
Fred Barakat	98
Frank Crisafi	101
Bill Detrick	104
Dec Rowe	107
Harrison Taylor	110
Joe Vancisin	114
Red Verderame	118
 4. THE TEAMS	 123
Bassick High School, 1988–89	123
University of Connecticut, 1975–76	127
Fairfield University, 1977–78	129
Roger Ludlowe High School, 1954–55	133
Sacred Heart University, 1985–86	138
Wilbur Cross High School, 1971–72	144
 5. RAY ANDRADE: THE DEVIL DRIVES	 148
 Appendix. Records	 157
Bibliography	189
About the Author	191



DON HARRISON



Published by The History Press
Charleston, SC 29403
www.historypress.net
Copyright © 2011 by Don Harrison
All rights reserved

Front cover, clockwise from top left: Calvin Murphy, Naismith Basketball Hall of Famer from Norwalk. *Courtesy of Niagara University*; Wes Bialosuknia, UConn's outstanding long-range shooter in the mid-1960s. *Courtesy of University of Connecticut*; Yale's 1956–57 Ivy League championship team coached by Joe Vancisin. *Courtesy of Yale University*.

Back cover, clockwise from top left: Marcus Camby, All-NBA defender and University of Massachusetts All-American from Hartford. *Courtesy of Denver Nuggets*; John Williamson of New Haven, who starred on two ABA championship teams with the New York Nets. *Courtesy of New York Nets*; President Barack Obama seems to be tickled by Coach Jim Calhoun's comment during the 2010–11 national champion Huskies' visit to the White House. *Courtesy of University of Connecticut*.

First published 2011
Second printing 2012

Manufactured in the United States

ISBN 978.1.60949.083.6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Harrison, Don.

Hoops in Connecticut : the Nutmeg State's passion for basketball / Don Harrison.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-60949-083-6

1. Basketball--Connecticut--History. I. Title.

GV885.72.C8H37 2011

796.32309746--dc23

2011039782

Notice: The information in this book is true and complete to the best of our knowledge. It is offered without guarantee on the part of the author or The History Press. The author and

The History Press disclaim all liability in connection with the use of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever without prior written permission from the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

For Lauren, Luke and Patrick. With grandchildren I am thrice blessed.

OTHER BOOKS BY DON HARRISON

Connecticut Baseball: The Best of the Nutmeg State

25 Years Plus One: Recounting the Meteoric Rise of Fairfield Basketball

As Contributing Author

Inside Women's College Basketball: Anatomy of a Season

Inside Women's College Basketball: Anatomy of Two Seasons

Contents

Foreword, by C. Donald Cook	7
Acknowledgements	11
Introduction	13
 1. BASKETBALL: IT'S CONNECTICUT'S GAME, TOO	 21
 2. THE PLAYERS	 36
Chuck Aleksinas	36
John Bagley	39
Vin Baker	42
Mike Branch	45
Alvin Clinkscales	48
Johnny Egan	52
Ed Goldstone	55
Tony Hanson	61
Walter Lockett	66
Wes Matthews	68
Calvin Murphy	72
Ralph Paolillo	79
Charles Smith	81

CONTENTS

Chris Smith	84
Porky Vicira	87
John Williamson	94
3. THE COACHES	98
Fred Barakat	98
Frank Crisafi	101
Bill Detrick	104
Dec Rowe	107
Harrison Taylor	110
Joe Vancisin	114
Red Verderame	118
4. THE TEAMS	123
Bassick High School, 1988–89	123
University of Connecticut, 1975–76	127
Fairfield University, 1977–78	129
Roger Ludlowe High School, 1954–55	133
Sacred Heart University, 1985–86	138
Wilbur Cross High School, 1971–72	144
5. RAY ANDRADE: THE DEVIL DRIVES	148
Appendix. Records	157
Bibliography	189
About the Author	191

Foreword

This book was written by a man who loves sports. I know that better than anyone. Don Harrison is my brother-in-law. We've been connected at the hip through college sports and as brothers-in-law for more than forty years.

For whoever would care to know—probably no one—I've had a connection to intercollegiate athletics in Connecticut for almost fifty years. I was a student athlete at Fairfield University in the early 1960s, followed by a twenty-year career coaching baseball, then as an athletics director at three Connecticut colleges: Fairfield University, the University of Hartford and, most recently, Sacred Heart University, where I'm in my twentieth year.

Obviously, there was no way Don and I wouldn't cross paths, having shared the same footprint, albeit from different vantage points over all those years. As irony would have it, it was during a time when Don was covering Fairfield University's participation in the 1973 NIT that he met my sister, Patti, at a postgame celebration at Mama Leone's Restaurant in New York City. It was a love-at-first-sight encounter. Their love story compared to none.

Back to my charge writing a foreword to this book...

Don remembers more about Connecticut sports than anyone I know, albeit professional sports, college, high school or wherever else he finds a story in the Nutmeg State. For better or for worse, he knows more about my career in intercollegiate athletics than I care to remember.

FOREWORD

Don is like a right-brain artist. He remembers and captures through his God-given gift of writing thoughts, feelings and reflections in real time, much the way an artist does with a paintbrush and canvas. That's the good news. The bad news is that he has the uncanny knack of remembering things I try to forget. His brain is like a trap. Anything that enters that frontal lobe never leaves, even if I wished it would at times. And just when I think there's a stat or an event that he couldn't possibly remember, he shocks me. He remembers every little detail as if it occurred just after breakfast this morning.

What he remembers and has on file about basketball in Connecticut is astounding. But that's not all. The truth be known, he has fervor for Major League baseball as well. His earlier book, *Connecticut Baseball: The Best of the Nutmeg State*, is a testimony to his passion for that game. Upon reading this edition, most people will agree that he has a special place in his heart for basketball in Connecticut, too.

For Don Harrison, most of the attractiveness about sports is derived from the variety of experiences they offer, combined with the encounters he has had covering them. Don caught most of it in a bottle. Hardly a major basketball event took place over a three-decade period that Don hasn't witnessed personally.

And it's not always about glory and the trophy. Fittingly, Don has always had a special place in his heart, which speaks volumes about him, to remember a sad event that on occasion accompanies sport. After all, it's easy to write about the champion or championship trophy.

One such gut-wrenching experience was the story you will read about Ray Andrade, who was shot and killed in an attempted holdup of a small grocery store on Madison Avenue in Bridgeport. Ray was a schoolboy point guard, starred for Tom Penders at Bridgeport Central and led the Hilltoppers to the 1970 Class L state championship game against Hillhouse. He made second team All-State as a sophomore—and never played an organized game again. This piece by Don was cited in *The Best American Sportswriting 1993*.

No one is better qualified to write about some of the most colorful events and personalities associated with basketball in Connecticut than Don. He has a state, a regional and even a nationwide reputation as an award-winning sportswriter with a gifted perspective about the characters and personalities he has covered or otherwise come in contact with in the

FOREWORD

profession. If there ever were a writer who could lift a personality right off the page, it's Don.

Probably no book better captures the spirit and soul of basketball and its influence on the Nutmeg State than this one. Harrison has gathered many of his noteworthy features and columns that appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Sporting News*, *New Haven Register*, *Waterbury Republican-American*, *Fairfield County Advocate*, *Fairfield Citizen-News*, *Bridgeport Light, Fairfield* (University) *Now* and *Sacred Heart* magazine. There is some new material that readers will enjoy, too.

Few books about Connecticut sports feature more greatness than stories about people who made a lasting impression on our state. The book is worthwhile for a wider audience, too, because it so aptly describes the humanness, decency, successes, failures and heart of its characters. Basketball fans will be saddened when the book ends.

Hoops in Connecticut: The Nutmeg State's Passion for Basketball is a superb book, lively and fascinating, and one that entertains and, in some measure, educates. Everyone interested in sports—especially in the rich tradition of college basketball in Connecticut—should read this book.

Over the years, I was privileged to witness and, in some instances, experience firsthand many of the real-life stories about which Don writes. Hardly a basketball story warranting publication eluded Don's attention in this book. No one is more capable of anchoring this material in authenticity and detail.

Don writes about some of the most colorful basketball personalities ever assembled in the Nutmeg State, maybe anywhere. So shut off the television. Turn on a reading lamp. Find a comfortable chair. Settle down for a special trip. And when finished, you'll feel you relived some of the most exciting stories ever written about sports in Connecticut.

C. Donald Cook
Executive Director of Athletics
Sacred Heart University

