

# The Time Machine's "Legends of the Games"

## 1920's Stars Basketball Induction #2

In our first "Legends of the Games" story, published February 27, 2025, Wayne Zimmerman (WHS '16) was our only star player inductee for the 1900-19 era. As I may have mentioned, details of the first two decades of the twentieth century are limited.

For the 1920's it gets better, but not by much, except in the 1921-23 seasons. I assume that is due to their great success. The 1921 season, the first for coach Kuefler, had the locals finish undefeated in the regular season. That claim is made in the WPJ December 10, 1970, edition. The actual record is not mentioned. The 1922 and 1923 seasons saw back-to-back state tournament appearances.

### **Basketball Players Induction #2:**

Maurice Merickel and Joe Rice were the clear leaders on the court in the early 1920s.

#### **Maurice Merickel**

A three-year varsity team member from 1920-22. He may have been on the varsity prior to 1920.

1921 Undefeated regular season

1922 District 6 Championship

1922 Minnesota High School State Tournament semifinals

1925 University of Minnesota basketball letter awarded

NOTE: WPJ Time Machine Arts. #10 (5/18/23) & #11(6/15/23) tell the tragic story of this Merickel family.

#### **Joe Rice**

A four-year varsity team member from 1920-23.

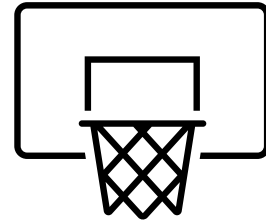
1921 Undefeated regular season

1922 District 6 Championship

1922 Minnesota High School State Tournament semifinals

1923 District 6 Championship

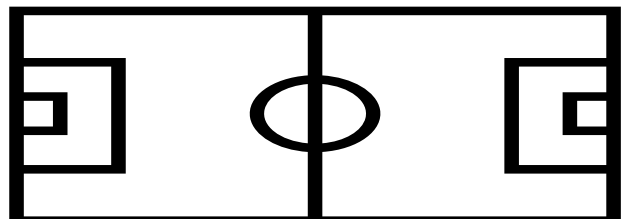
1923 Minnesota High School State Tournament quarterfinal



Freshman Joe Rice and sophomore Maurice Merickel are in this **1919-20** team picture.

Merickel is in the back row, second in from the right.

Joe Rice is in the front row, far right, next to coach Otte.



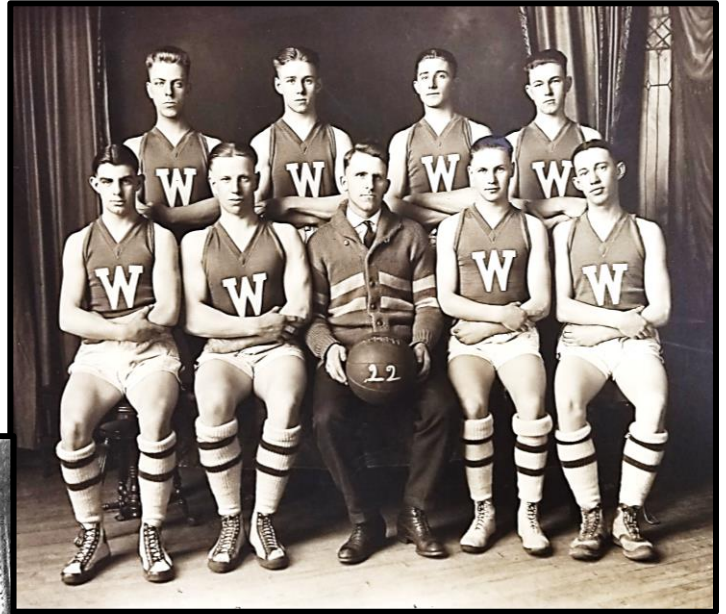
Neither Rice nor Merickel is in the 1920-21 team picture (not included). I assume they were unavailable for that picture. The WHS team record that season is unknown, however they were undefeated. The earliest team records discovered were for the 1925 and 1926 seasons when both teams went 5-7 in the regular season.

### 1921-22 WHS Team

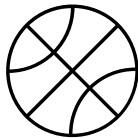
Rice (Jr) and Merickel (Sr) are in the **1921-22** team picture to the right. Back row, Merickel is second in from the right. Front row, Rice is on the far right.

The district 6 championship resulted in an invitation to the 1922 Minnesota State High School State Tournament. WHS lost in OT in the semifinals.

Quarterfinal: Wadena 27 New Ulm 17  
 Semifinal: Wadena 34 Madison 35 (OT)



**1922-23 WHS Team**  
 Captain Joe Rice  
 (front row holding ball)



If you think you have read about these teams before, you are correct. In the WPJ Nov 2, 2023, edition is "Time Machine" article #16, "WHS Top Teams to 1940."

In the next "Legends of the Games" (induction #3) we will delve into the 1921-23 teams and their coach, Mr. Kuefler.

The 1923 WHS team (**left**) was beaten by Hopkins 17-16, in the quarterfinals.

From the 1923 MN High School State Tournament program (**below**) is Wadena's roster.

Note:

"District No. 2" s/b "No. 6"  
 Uniform Colors: Blue and Red  
 Joe Rice is the team captain.

## WADENA HIGH SCHOOL

*Champions of District No. 2*

*Colors of Uniforms: Blue with Red letters*

Position	No.	Names of Players
R. F.	8	Joe Rice (Capt.)
L. F.	2	Donald McKinnon
C.	3	Merritt Dodds
R. G.	4	Edward Lehmann
L. G.	5	Kenneth Hezzelwood
Sub.	6	Carroll Parker
Sub.	1	Milton Gaslin
Sub.	7	Carl Spooner
Coach		H. Kuefler
Faculty Mgr.		E. B. Bothe
Superintendent		E. B. Bothe