

RICHARD SUMMERS

Drive by Richard Summers' home on Route 18 just outside Sistersville during the 1970s, and you'd notice an outdoor basketball hoop. The grass stopped about 20 feet from the goal, and the rest was simply dirt.

The grass was long gone, worn away by hour after hour after hour of shooting, mostly from the outside.

This is where Richard Summers became Radar Richard, the nickname given to him by Charleston Daily Mail sports writer Chuck Landon.

Richard Summers wasn't just the greatest scorer in Sistersville High School history, he was one of the greatest in West Virginia history. His 38.2 points per game scoring average in 1977-78 remains the highest ***in the last 63 years*** or since Mick Cooper of Harman averaged 41.3 in 1963.

(Note: Josh Delawder of Paw Paw is the state's all-time leader in total points, but his highest single season average was 37.8 in 1999-2000.)

Summers arrived at just the right time for Sistersville High, too, just before the Tigers began a stretch of three 20-win seasons in four years, ***all under coach Ray***

Barnhart. (Sistersville went 12-9 in 1977-78 during Mick Price's one and only season as head coach.)

He wasn't just a prolific scorer, he was a strong rebounder and, at 6-foot-2, an underrated jumper who won several dunk contests after his senior season. (One conducted by all-time WVIAC scoring leader and showman Archie Talley of Salem.)

How good a shooter was Richard Summers? This is all you need to know: the third quarter of Sistersville's 80-66 loss to Meadow Bridge in the state tournament semifinals in Charleston in 1977. Meadow Bridge dropped from Class AA to A just before the school year started.

Summers, a junior, attempted seven shots in the quarter. He made every one. Every one was from the outside (in the pre-3 point line era). The radar was locked and loaded.

Afterward, Charleston Gazette writer Terry Marchal, who compiled the official play by play for the state sports writers association, went out on the court and walked off the distances of Summers' shots. Every one was from at least 19 feet, which later became the 3-point standard for high schools.

If the 3-point line had been in effect at the time, Summers, who ended with 28 points, would have scored

20 or 21 points in the greatest one-quarter shooting display in state tournament history.

This kind of shooting became a nightly event during his senior season even if for the first time in his high school career, Sistersville wasn't a state-ranked team.

The highlight was a school 74-point game against Wirt County in a 113-88 win. He scored the most points by any Ohio Valley player since Allan Hornyak of Bellaire St. John's scored 81 in 1969. That night, he scored 21 points in both the first and third quarters and 16 each in the second and fourth.

Summers remains tied with two other players for the second most points in a West Virginia high school game, behind only the 135-point game by Danny Heater of Burnsville in 1960. (No doubt Price would have allowed Summers to score one more basket and not pulled him with more than three minutes remaining if he'd known.)

But here's something many have forgotten over the nearly half-century since Richard Summers left no high school net unscorched: The night before, he scored **47 points** in a 106-79 loss at Paden City. (Sistersville was in a stretch of playing multiple makeup games caused by the horrible winter weather.)

Count 'em up, and that's 121 points in 26 hours' time over two nights. That's almost certainly a state record for two games in as many nights, since West Virginia teams don't often play on back-to-back nights.

The points kept coming all season long as Summers and Gary Fonner of Bishop Donahue engaged in a shootout to be the leading scorer in both the state and Ohio Valley. Their scoring feats drew such interest, Sistersville's game at Bishop Donahue was moved to the Wheeling Civic Center.

Fonner won that one in a 90-65 blowout as he scored 49 points and Summers scored 29. But Radar Richard got his revenge later when he outscored Fonner 54-40 in a 101-100 Sistersville home floor victory on Feb. 28.

Summers scored 41 of his 54 points in the second half, getting 18 in the third quarter and 23 in the fourth quarter.

Marshall University's late coach, Stu Aberdeen, scouted Summers that night and later said it was the most exciting high school game he ever saw. His assistant coach, the late C.J. Woollum, said, "He got so excited, I had to pull him down [to his seat] several times."

By the time his career ended, Summers — a third-team all-stater as a junior and first team as a senior — set records that likely wouldn't have been broken even if Sistersville High had remained open another 100 years.

That season, Summers also had 59 points against Cameron and 55 against Williamstown among his seven games of 40 or more points. He scored 30 or more 15 times and 20 or more 18 times.

Fonner led the state/Valley scoring race for much of the season, but fell off toward the end and ended up averaging 33.4 to Summers' 38.2. For his career, Summers scored 1,824 points for a 26.4 points per game average.

Summers went on to play at Concord College under coach Don Christie, who certainly didn't given him the levity to shoot from 35 feet and in that he did with Talley at Salem College.

Richard Summers graduated from Concord and went into coaching and teaching, and became the principal of one of the largest junior high schools in the state in Parkersburg. He also coached Tyler Consolidated's girls volleyball teams to state championships in 25-year second career.

S Is For Shooter

... And Schneider

By CHUCK LANDON
Daily Mail Sports Writer

Clarksburg Washington Irving has created a new phrase in West Virginia sports writing . . . the Hilltoppers don't defeat opponents, they 'Schneider' them.

Ten times foes have tried to beat W-I and 10 times they've been 'Schneidered.' In fact, the 'Schneiderers' have been so impressive Mountain State sports writers have voted the Hilltoppers the number one Triple-A team in West Virginia for three weeks in a row.

And it's all because of a 6-4, 157-pound senior named Jeff Schneider. Voted the top high school eager in the state last season after a scintillating state tournament performance, Jeff has picked up where he left off.

He's still mauling in 'zip code shots' . . . he's still rifling assist-producing passes past unsuspecting defenders . . . he's still using those deceptively quick hands to steal dribbles and snare rebounds.

In other words, Schneider is still doing all those remarkable things which earned him the title 'Mr. Adjective.'

"Jeff has had a couple of off games, but here of late he's been playing real well," said Bob Schneider, who doubles as Jeff's coach and father.

The first time we played Grafton, Jeff was about eight for 24 from the floor and two for seven from the foul line. He just had a bad game and to be honest we were lucky to win. And, he had a bad game against Clarksburg Notre Dame, too."

Hmmmm . . . maybe he is human.

"But other than that, I've been pleased with his play. The first part of the season I wasn't pleased with his rebounding. He was spending too much time playing perimeter basketball. He's 6-4 and we need him to do some rebounding, but he was spending too much time outside. And he was letting teams force him farther and farther out on offense.

"We changed that though. The last couple of games he has been in double figures rebounding and he has his rebounding average up to eight now. That's important to me, too. If he scores 28 points, but only gets five or six rebounds I'm not pleased with his performance. Everyone thinks of Jeff as being a super shooter and sometimes that's all they look at. But, I

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JEFF SCHNEIDER
Clarksburg WI

... And Summers

By CHUCK LANDON
Daily Mail Sports Writer

The ground may be covered with snow and the temperature may be lower than attendance at a 'Jay Rockefeller Fan Club' meeting, but when the Sistersville's town clock strikes basketball, it's 'Summers-time' in the little northern town.

And the reason is a 6-2 hotshot named Richard Summers. 'Radar Richard' is pouring points in at the rate of 34.8 per game. And when he shoots his jumpshot even the most frigid Sistersville thermometers jump to 90 degrees in the shade.

But, Summers' real talent is thawing out zone defenses and melting man-to-man. He makes defenders look like day-old snowmen in Palm Beach. Trying to stop Richard is like holding dry ice . . . you're going to get burned.

While leading a young, inexperienced team to a highly-respectable 7-3 record, Summers has produced scoring nights of 50, 30, 33, 29, 19, 44, 30, 39, and 36 points. He has scored 348 points for a 34.8 average; is shooting 45.4 percent from the field, 79 percent from the foul line and is averaging 12.2 rebounds per game.

Oh yes, there's one more thing he's averaging . . . kilowatts. When Richard Summers plays, there's electricity in the air.

"He's the best shooter I've seen in our area of West Virginia in the last 10 years," said Doug Huff, veteran Wheeling Intelligence sports writer. "He's simply a great shooter. But, I hate to talk about his shooting too much, because he's much more than a mere shooter. His ball handling, defense and rebounding have improved greatly this year."

Apparently Huff isn't alone in his estimation, either, as Marshall University coaches have visited Summers four times to watch his sizzling shooting.

"He can shoot from all over," said Mick Price, first-year Sistersville coach. "He can play inside with anyone and he can play the wing and shoot with anyone. Plus, he has great leaping ability. What people don't realize, perhaps because he is just a tremendous outside shooter, is how good he is inside. He has all the moves and it shows in the number of free throws he's taken. He's 90 for 114 at the foul line (with a one-game high of 19-24) and he shot more free throws in our first three games than he did all last season.

And, he never gets single coverage. I'm only 24 years old and a young punk when it comes to coaching, but I swear I've seen just about every kind of defense there is in our first 10 games. But, nothing has really stopped him. When they play some sort of man he goes inside and gets his points and when they go zone — which doesn't happen very often — I just put him out on the wing for about two minutes and that's it for the zone. He'll close a zone down real quick."

"What people don't realize, however, is how team oriented he is. You wouldn't think of a player with his statistics being a team man, but Richard is. It seems like every game he comes up with a game breaker play like going up for his jumper from 20 feet, seeing a teammate break underneath and hitting him with a pass for a layup. I've seen a lot of kids play and he's one of the top ones in the state . . . he has to be. He's our leading scorer, our leading rebounder and when we go into the four-corners he runs it. If it needs done, Richard can do it."

And that's why the winter in Tyler County has been so warm. When the clock strikes basketball in Sistersville it's 'Summers-time' . . . and the shooting is easy.



RICHARD SUMMERS
Sistersville

