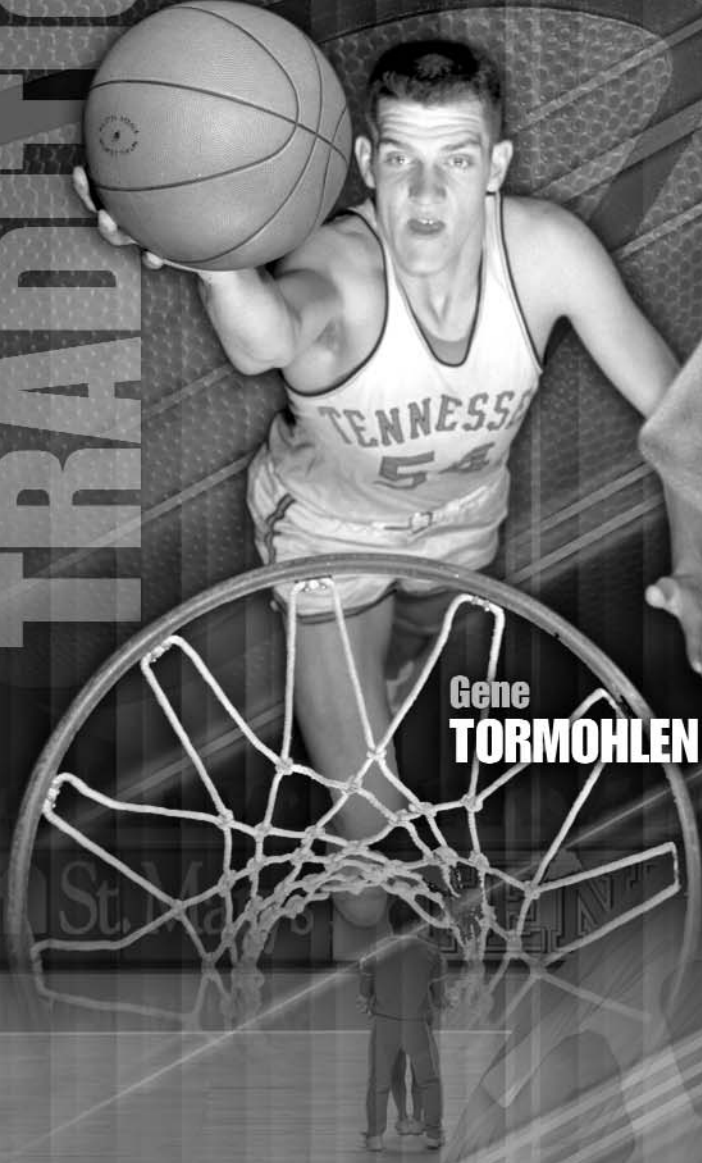
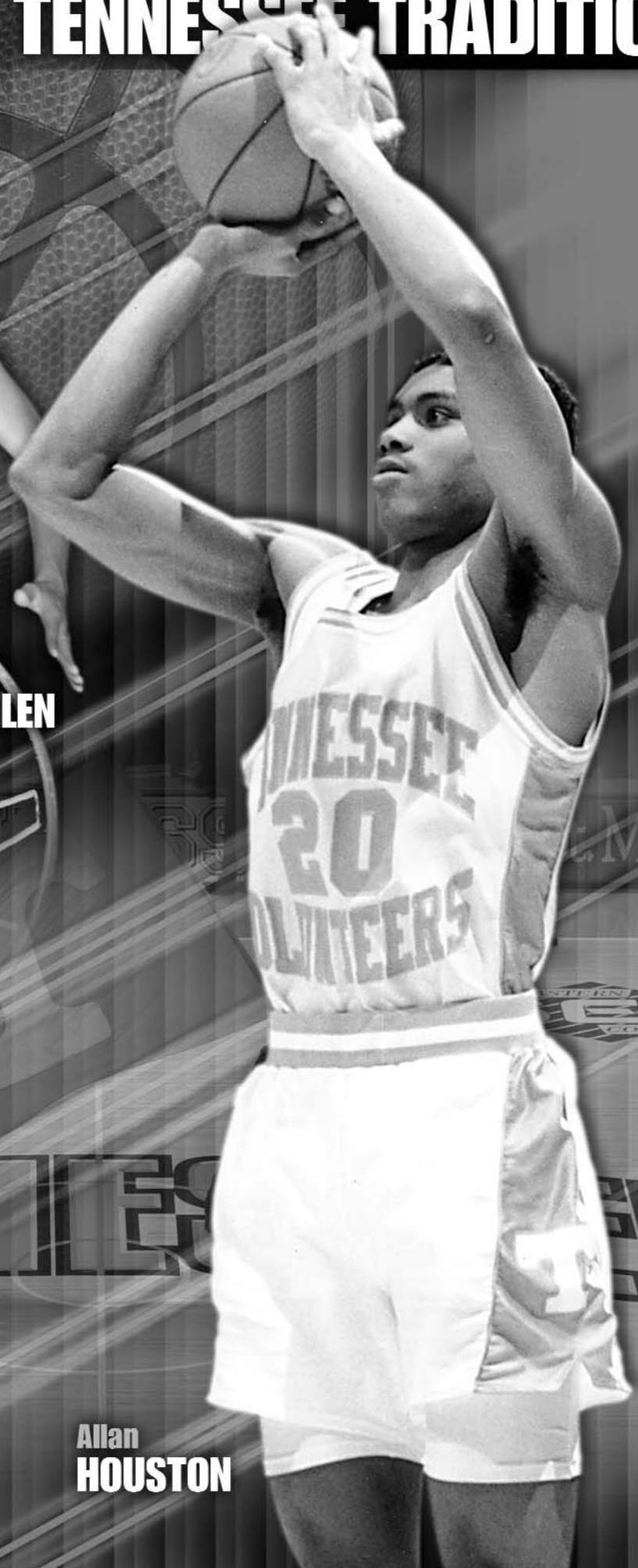


TENNESSEE TRADITION

TRADITION



Gene
TORMOHLEN



Allan
HOUSTON

TENNESSEE





By Ben Byrd

“Intercollegiate basketball will make its initial appearance in Knoxville tonight when in the YMCA gymnasium at the University of Tennessee, the Volunteers will meet the five hailing from the Central University of Kentucky at Danville.”

— The Knoxville Journal and Tribune
Thursday, Dec. 16, 1909.

It had taken the new game invented by Dr. James Naismith 18 years to arrive on campus, but UT students were ready for it. A capacity crowd of 200 crammed into the box-like YMCA gym atop The Hill that night to watch the beginning of a new chapter in the school’s sports history. They came away excited and pleased, for the Vols won that historic game, 33-31, with an assist from a slow train from Kentucky. The Central Kentucky team was more than one hour late arriving at the gym. During the wait the fans were entertained, if one can call it that, by a preliminary skirmish between the UT women’s team and the Central High girls which was won by the Lady Bobcats 21-1.

The starting lineup for that first Tennessee team was composed of Howard Sandberg and DeWitt Welcker at forwards, Jasper Ring at center, and Captain Solon Kipp and Earl Ketchen at guards. Sandberg, who stood all of 5-9 at his forward position, led the scoring with 13 points. The basketball Vols were off and running.

That first Tennessee team did not have a coach, but in the following season, 1910-11, football coach Alex Stone donned a second hat and served in that capacity. After that season the Vols moved their home court to the Downtown YMCA gym at the corner of Commerce and Vine, where both playing and practice conditions were better than those afforded by the little gym on The Hill. The early Vol teams were neither especially good nor particularly bad, generally hovering around the .500 mark against a mixed schedule of college and YMCA foes. But the 1913-14 team broke that pattern by recording a 15-2 won-lost record and the reason was the appearance on the

scene of Tennessee’s first genuine superstar cager.

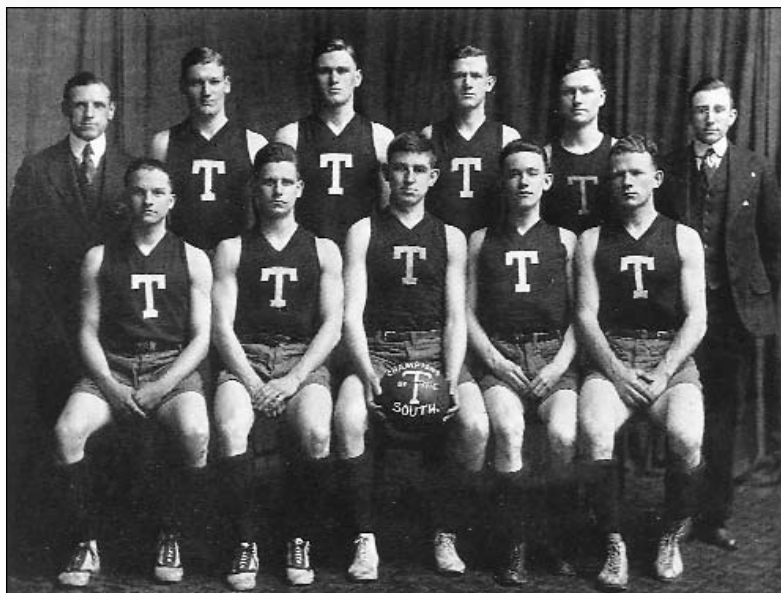
Lum Reeder, the son of a Knox County sheriff, had honed his skills shooting at a basket that had been hung up for him at the county jail. Two-hand shots were the standard in those days, but young Lum broke with tradition and learned to unload deadly one-hand shots while on the move. He made his UT debut by scoring 27 points in his first game as a freshman forward, this in an era when entire teams averaged little more than 20 points per game. A few games later in that campaign he rang up 41 points in a 49-16 victory over Maryville College, a Volunteer scoring record that stayed on the books until Carl Widseth scored 47 in a game against Auburn in 1956. Unfortunately for UT his career was interrupted twice, once when he transferred to the University of Delaware where he made the All-Eastern team in 1916, and later by World War I.

Early Tennessee basketball teams played a game that would scarcely be recognizable to today’s fans.

The ball was returned to center court after each score for a center jump, thus interrupting the flow of play. The small gyms of the time often featured overhanging balconies which forced a lower trajectory on shots from the corner, and the home floor advantage was a tangible reality and not just a psychological factor. Home teams furnished the referees in most

instances, often from the ranks of their own former players. Reeder once protested a call in a game at Virginia and woke up a few minutes later stretched out on the floor. The referee was also the host school’s heavyweight boxing champion!

There were no basketball scholarships then, and local youths made up a large percentage of the Vol squads. Reeder, Vic Klein, Lloyd Wolfe and Frank Callaway, all later Knoxville business or civic leaders, were among the outstanding cagers of the teens. Basketball was the only UT sport to stay at it through the World War I years, although many of the better players, including Reeder, were away in service. The 1917-18 team played a nine-game schedule, winning two, losing six, and tying one. The deadlock came about when the Maryville College team, enraged by a call that had enabled the Vols to tie the game at the end, walked off the floor and refused to return for an overtime period.



The 1915-16 Vols recorded a perfect 12-0 mark and were recognized as the South’s best team.

1920s: Ups And Downs

The basketball team finally had an on-campus home of its own when Jefferson Hall was built at the site of the old Waite Field at the corner of Cumberland Avenue and Fifteenth Street in time for the opening of the 1922-23 season. The cage program appeared to have gotten an immediate lift from the new arena as the '23 team went 15-2, led by such stalwarts as David Beane, Roe Campbell and Earl Keister. That team was perhaps the best equipped to make a run at the Southern Conference championship of any of the 1920s Volunteer teams, but its best player, Beane, was declared academically ineligible shortly before the conference tournament and the Vols lost in the first round to the University of Georgia Bulldogs.

Head football coaches had continued to serve as head basketball coaches through the teens and early 1920s, but Robert R. Neyland put a stop to that practice when he succeeded M.B. Banks as the head grid coach in 1926. Neyland put the basketball job off on his end coach and good friend, Bill Britton. The Britton era of UT basketball was largely a win-some, lose-some operation except for the memorable season of 1927-28 which produced the only winless varsity team in UT history. The Vols of that infamous campaign finished 0-12, despite boasting one of the South's finest players in center Elvin Butcher. With Butcher playing brilliantly the Vols had a narrow escape in their season finale with Vanderbilt at Jefferson Hall, leading most of the game before Vandy pulled out a 28-26 decision at the end.

Stars from off the great football teams of the late 1920s and early 1930s, Bobby Dodd, Buddy Hackman, Beattie Feathers and Hugh Faust were among the grid standouts who doubled as cagers in the winter. But the teams remained rather ordinary, for the most part, and when the Southeastern Conference was formed in 1933 the UT program was no better than middle-of-the-pack in this new league.

A New Conference Is Formed

On Feb. 25, 1921, the University of Tennessee was a charter member in forming the Southern Conference. Fourteen schools founded the Southern Conference and within a decade, conference membership had exploded to 23 schools located primarily in the Southeast. However, member schools ranged from as far north as Kentucky and Maryland and as far south as Florida and Louisiana.

Tired of traveling halfway across the country and over a mountain chain for conference athletic events, 13 schools located west and south of the Appalachian Mountains withdrew from the Southern Conference to take up new allegiance.

In December 1932, the Southeastern Conference was created. Its founding members, all of which came from the Southern Conference, were Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Georgia Tech, Kentucky, Louisiana State, Mississippi, Mississippi State, Tennessee, Tulane, Vanderbilt and the University of the South (now Sewanee). Only basketball, baseball, football and men's outdoor track crowned SEC champions the following year.

Basketball was the first sport to have a championship with Kentucky winning the first SEC basketball tournament in 1933 in Atlanta. Alabama won the first ever SEC football title in 1933 with a record of 5-0-1 in the conference, 7-1-1 overall. LSU won the 1933 track championship, while Georgia was the conference's first baseball champion in 1933.

Over the years, three of the founding members have left the SEC. The University of the South left the conference in 1940 and now belongs to the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference. Georgia Tech left after competition in 1963 and stood independent for some time before joining the Atlantic Coast Conference in 1979. Tulane left in 1966 and now participates in Conference USA.

In 1990, the University of Arkansas and the University of South Carolina joined the SEC to expand the league to a 12-team conference. They began competition in 1992, the same year the conference split into East and West divisions.

In the SEC's 70 years of existence, the conference has developed into an athletic powerhouse. The conference, which began with a mere four sports, now sponsors 20 sports in which it crowns a conference champion.

All-Time Members of the SEC

Alabama (1932-present)
 Arkansas (1991-present)
 Auburn (1932-present)
 Florida (1932-present)
 Georgia (1932-present)
 Georgia Tech (1932-1966)
 Kentucky (1932-present)
 LSU (1932-present)
 Mississippi (1932-present)
 Mississippi State (1932-present)
 Sewanee (1932-1940)
 South Carolina (1991-present)
 Tennessee (1932-present)
 Tulane (1932-1966)
 Vanderbilt (1932-present)

Clevenger Leads Vols To First Winning Season And An Undefeated Season

World War I didn't give college students much to cheer about, as all collegiate sports on the University of Tennessee campus came to a halt - all of them except basketball. Many college athletes left the athletic scene to turn their focus on fighting for the United States. During that same time, Tennessee basketball produced some of its finest years as a young program in search of success.

After struggling through the pioneer years of Tennessee basketball, the Vols finally broke through during the 1913-14 season, finishing with a 15-2 record under coach Zora G. Clevenger. The Vols cruised past several area colleges, including Maryville, Carson-Newman and Chattanooga, as well as future conference foe Alabama. Two YMCA teams were on the schedule and even a Feb. 3 contest with Knoxville High School created interest. The game, however, was less than a showdown as the Vols crushed KHS 52-18.

The only losses of the 1913-14 season were consecutive setbacks to Kentucky on back-to-back days. In the middle of a road trip in which Tennessee played six games in six days, Kentucky defeated the Vols by scores of 20-14 and 20-18. Still, the Volunteer basketball program was enjoying its first taste of success.

The following season was another respectable campaign for Tennessee, as Clevenger's troops went 9-2 on the season. Over one-third of the schedule was spent playing the Vols' new rival, Kentucky. The Vols split a four-game series with Kentucky, winning both games in Knoxville while losing both in Lexington.

Perhaps the pinnacle of the early years of Tennessee basketball came during the 1915-16 season, Clevenger's final season as the Vols' coach. But it was one to remember, as the nine players on the squad put Tennessee basketball on the map. UT finished the season with a perfect 12-0 record and was recognized as the best team in the South. It still stands as Tennessee's only basketball season without a loss.

During the perfect season, the Vols won by an average of more than 15 points per game. They capped off the year with a five-day, five-game road trip through Kentucky. The trip was started with a 63-33 victory over Cumberland College, the Vols' largest margin of victory, and finished with a two-point win over Transylvania, UT's smallest margin of victory. The road trip included a 28-17 win over Kentucky, the only meeting between the schools that season.

In a three-season span, Tennessee produced a 36-4 record. All four losses came at the hands of basketball powerhouse Kentucky. Other than the men in blue, the Vols swept through the rest of the South. Those three seasons were just what the Vols needed to jump-start memorable years to come for Tennessee basketball.

1930s: First All-America Brings UT First SEC Title

A number of events took place in the mid-1930s that combined to move Tennessee into the front ranks of college basketball. First, Neyland took a year's leave from UT to rejoin the Army for duty in Panama. That moved Britton into the head football coaching position for the season of 1935 and prompted the school, for the first time, to hire a full-time basketball coach in Blair Gullion, a former Purdue player. When Gullion reported for preseason practice in the fall of 1935 he was greeted by perhaps the three best players ever to adorn a Volunteer roster at the same time-senior center Harry Anderson, junior forward Floyd (Biggy) Marshall and junior guard Gene Johnson.

Responding positively to the new coach's strict discipline and emphasis on the basics, the 1935-36 Vols posted a 12-6 regular season record that included the Vols' first-ever win over an Adolph Rupp-coached Kentucky team. Here another happenstance entered into the picture. UT was now playing its home games at the Alumni Memorial Gymnasium just north of the football stadium, Jefferson Hall having burned down a couple of years earlier. By good fortune the SEC postseason championship tournament was held at Alumni Gym in March of 1936, giving Gullion's troops the home floor advantage to go along with their considerable playing skills. The time had arrived for the basketball Vols to step forward.

They did. After blowing past Auburn in the first test, the Vols ousted pre-tourney favorite Kentucky in the semi-finals, 39-28, the same score by which they had beaten the Wildcats in regular season play. In the championship game with Alabama, they fell behind badly with just two minutes left in the first half trailing by the rather embarrassing score of 13-4. This was the last season that college basketball was played under the old center jump rule, and it was the agile Anderson's ability at winning the tip that enabled the Vols to rally. With the captain controlling the tip on every possession, the Vols reeled off seven straight points to cut the halftime lead to 13-11. Tennessee then took command in the second half to win 29-25 and bring the school its first SEC championship.

The triumph established basketball as a major sport on campus. Anderson became UT's first All America and he, Marshall and Johnson were elevated to hero status formerly reserved for football stars. All over Knoxville backyard baskets sprang up, and for the first time Dr. Naismith's crazy game had become a local craze.

But the man who had put UT on the college cage map didn't stay around to build on his success. After three seasons at the Vol helm, Gullion abruptly resigned a few weeks before the 1938-39 season to take a similar position at Cornell. He was succeeded by a proven veteran who had previously enjoyed successful tenures at Kentucky and Miami of Ohio, John Mauer.

Vols Win 1936 SEC Championship

The year of 1936 was a Leap Year, and that meant an extra day was added in February. It also meant several odd occurrences were in store. Someone forgot to tell the Tennessee basketball team. For them, it was just a little hard work and dedication.

The previous year, legendary Tennessee football coach Robert R. Neyland took a year's leave from coaching on the gridiron to rejoin the Army for a tour of duty in Panama. With the absence of the football coach, former assistant football coach and head basketball coach Bill Britton took over duties as head football coach. That left Tennessee without a coach on the basketball court.

Enter Blair Gullion. For the first time in school history, Tennessee hired a full-time basketball coach in Gullion. Prior to the hiring of the former Purdue basketball player, UT had followed suit with the majority of other schools and put the basketball job off on football coaches.

The Vols flourished under their new full-time coach, going 12-6 during the 1935-36 regular season and undefeated at home. Of course, it didn't hurt that Gullion's first season was the same year Tennessee dressed, perhaps, three of the best players in UT history to ever play on one squad. Senior center Harry Anderson, junior forward Floyd "Biggy" Marshall and junior guard Gene Johnson made up the trio that led UT into the 1936 postseason - a postseason that will never be forgotten.

Four years after the opening of Alumni Gym, the SEC awarded Tennessee by bringing the basketball tournament to Knoxville in 1936. With home court advantage, the Vols cruised past Auburn in the first round 43-25. The second-round game was played on Feb. 29, the extra day thanks to the Leap Year. It was like the extra day was provided just for the Vols, as Tennessee upset pre-tournament favorite Kentucky by the score of 39-28, the same exact score Tennessee had beaten Kentucky earlier in the season.

In the finals, Tennessee trailed Alabama 13-11 at halftime. But Anderson, due to his ability to control the jump balls at mid-court, almost single-handedly propelled the Vols past Alabama for a 29-25 victory. The Tennessee Volunteers were SEC champions for the first time ever. In no other season and in no other sport had Tennessee won an SEC title until March 2, 1936.

Anderson Is UT's First All-America

When Harry Anderson walked out of Alumni Gym on March 2, 1936, he left the building a winner. Wearing an orange jersey with Vols scripted across his chest for the last time, Anderson had just led Tennessee to its first SEC championship.

While Anderson played before Tennessee's modern records, he remains one of the greatest players ever to suit up for Tennessee. And he was Tennessee's first All-America selection.

Anderson, who was a 6-foot-3 center, was joined by teammates Floyd "Biggy" Marshall and Gene Johnson as perhaps the best trio of UT basketball players to ever hit the hardwood in one season. Although Anderson's size was short compared to today's standards for big men, Anderson could dominate a game due to his outstanding leaping ability. His bread and butter, though, was his uncanny pursuit of jump balls at mid-court.

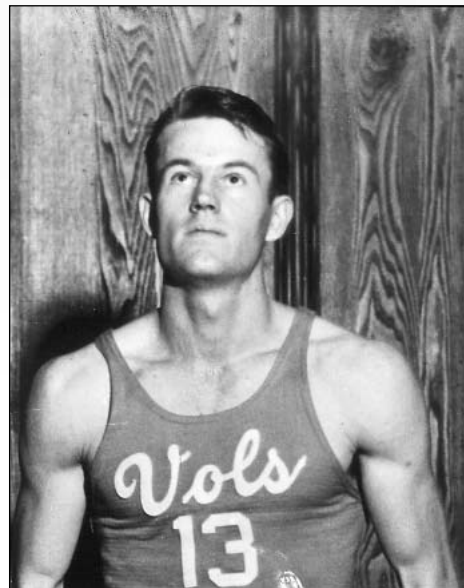
"No one who played in the SEC in our time had as much leaping ability as Harry," Marshall once said of his former teammate.

During Anderson's playing days, each time a team scored a basket, the ball was reset at half court and a jump ball was conducted. Anderson's control of jump balls was the key to UT's run through the 1936 SEC Tournament.

The Vols had beaten Auburn and Kentucky to get to the finals against Alabama. Tennessee trailed 13-4 with 2 minutes remaining in the first half before Anderson brought the Vols back into the game. He controlled every tip for the remainder of the half, allowing UT to cut the deficit to 13-11. The Vols went on to win the game 29-25 and claim their first SEC championship in any sport.

Anderson's dominating performance in the SEC Championship and his regular season success opened eyes and earned him a spot on the Converse All-America team. It was the first time a UT basketball player had earned such an honor.

Also a track star, Anderson was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1999.



UT's first All-America on the hardwood, Harry Anderson led the Vols to the school's first-ever SEC title (any sport) in 1936.

1940s: Mauer Leads Vols To Two SEC Titles

The momentum that Gullion had established didn't miss a beat under Mauer. The new coach found the nucleus of a future championship team already on hand in sophomore guard Gilbert Huffman, sophomore center Frank Thomas and freshman forward Bernie Mehen. Two seasons later that trio led the Vols to the 1941 SEC championship with a 36-33 win over top-seeded Kentucky in the finals of the conference tourney at Louisville, Ky. Mehen, called "Houdini" because of his ball-handling wizardry, became the school's second All-America and Huffman the third.

Mauer then chalked up a second SEC title two years later, when his 1942-43 team, led by center Dick Mehen, Bernie's younger brother, handed Kentucky another stunning upset loss in the tourney finals at Louisville, 33-30, with Dick Mehen scoring 18 points.

The Mauer years were a time of plenty for UT basketball. In addition to the two conference titles, the big, jovial coach authored one of the great Vol cage victories of all time when his '41-42 team put an end to the then No. 1-ranked Long Island University's 23-game win streak, 36-33, in the Sugar Bowl Tournament. When he left to take the Army coaching job after the 1946-47 season Mauer departed with an eight-season record of 127 wins and only 41 losses and a .756 winning percentage, highest ever by a Vol coach.

Emmett Lowery, another former Purdue star, succeeded Mauer in 1947 and brought a new dimension to Tennessee basketball. An acknowledged master of the fast break offense, Lowery soon had the Vols racing up and down the floor at full steam. Led by a holdover standout from the Mauer regime, forward Paul (Lefty) Walther, the new coach's first two Vol teams posted records of 20-5 and 19-7 and drew capacity crowds at Alumni Gym with their entertaining style of play. Walther, who had joined the growing list of All-Americans, was part clown at heart, and his pre-game passing and dribbling antics often brought down the house.



Bernie Mehen earned All-America honors in 1940.

Alumni Gymnasium Gives Vols The Best Homecourt In The Region

It was Dec. 17, 1932, and the season opener was minutes away. Fans walked through the five arched doorways decorated with streetlights and tiny windows above. Inside, protected from the cold, nearly 400 spectators occupied the 3,200 wooden seats, most of which were lofted in the balcony more than 10 feet above the floor.

Although the crowd was somewhat small for Tennessee's first basketball game at the new Alumni Memorial Gymnasium, the Vols didn't hesitate to put on a show, pounding Lincoln Memorial University 41-18. The victory was the first of many at the new gym on The Hill, rated the best facility in the South in 1932.

Located on the south side of The Hill adjacent to the football field, Alumni Gym was built in 1931 to be the new basketball home of the Vols. UT alumni had wanted to build a memorial to those graduates who had lost their lives in World War I and the Spanish-American War. Thus, Alumni Memorial Auditorium-Gymnasium was built to take the place of Jefferson Hall as the campus' primary multi-purpose facility. Along with basketball, the gym was used for indoor physical education and auditorium events since the three-story facility was one of the largest buildings on campus at the time.

The interior of the facility fit the mold of a 1930s basketball gym. The basketball court was the centerpiece surrounded by three walls of seats and a stage serving as the fourth wall. A handful of rows were tucked below the balcony to provide courtside seating, while the majority of the seats were located on the steep overhang above the floor. The stage, however, provided the opportunity to use the facility as an auditorium with a seating capacity of 3,800. Surrounding the gym were wings used for physical

education. Each wing contained an auxiliary gymnasium suitable for handball and other intramural sports. But it's the basketball memories that keep the gym alive today.

John Mauer: A Proven Winner

Taking over as UT's head coach just before the start of the 1938-39 season, John Mauer didn't waste any time turning the Vols into a championship team.

Little did the Vol faithful know that his first two seasons that produced 14-7 records would be UT's worst under Mauer.

During the 1940-41 season, Mauer guided his team to a 17-5 record and a 36-33 win over Kentucky to capture the 1941 SEC championship. The win gave UT redemption from the two previous years in which the Vols lost in the finals. From 1933-50, the SEC champion was determined by a postseason tournament.

The 1941-42 campaign saw the Vols post a 19-3 record and a 7-1 conference mark, the best regular season mark in the SEC. However, UT fell to Alabama in the finals of the SEC championship.

One year after failing to defend its SEC crown, UT again made it to the finals of the SEC Tournament. Tennessee upset favored Kentucky by three points, 33-30, to win its second title in three years.

The 1944-45 Vols were best in the regular season with an 8-2 league mark and an 18-5 overall record but fell to Kentucky in the SEC championship game.

In eight years as the Tennessee head coach, Mauer compiled a 127-41 record. His .756 winning percentage stands as the highest of any UT coach. John Mauer was a proven winner.



Alumni Gym was home to the Vols from 1932-58. Tennessee hosted the 1936, 1937, 1939 and 1940 SEC Tournaments there.

1950s: Stars Widseth And Tormohlen Set Scoring And Rebounding Records

The Lowery era reached an early peak in January 1950 when his third Vol team put an end to Kentucky's five-year, 67-game winning streak with in the Southeastern Conference, 66-53. Captain Art Burris outdueled his opposite center, the Wildcats' seven-foot Bill Spivey, with a 28-point performance as the Vols led from buzzer to buzzer. After the game the overflow crowd stormed onto the court to lift Burris and the other Vol players for a victory ride to the dressing room in one of the wildest scenes UT basketball has ever produced.

The gentlemanly Lowery stayed on for 12 seasons, fashioning a solid winning record of 169-110 and developing such headline players as scoring champion Carl Widseth and his mid-1950s sidekick Ed Wiener, Herman Thompson, big Gene Tormohlen, the Vols' all-time rebound leader, and Dalen Showalter. His successor, longtime assistant John Sines, fared less well, and after his third season, 1961-62, ended in a 4-19 disaster, UT basketball underwent a historic coaching change.

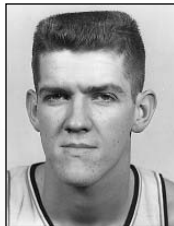


Ed Wiener earned first team All-America honors in 1955 after averaging 19.7 points and 7.1 rebounds per game to lead the Vols.

Gene Tormohlen - The Chairman Of The Boards

One thing about Tennessee basketball in the 1950s was that if a shot went up and didn't go in, Gene Tormohlen was almost a sure bet to bring down the rock. Grabbing a school-record 1,113 career rebounds will make you chairman of the boards.

"Bumper," as he was referred to due to his physical play, was a master at rebounding. He helped turn rebounding into an art form during his college playing days. And although the post play was as physical as it gets, Tormohlen says it was his finesse that helped him own the boards.



Tormohlen

"Rebounding is hard work," said Tormohlen, who is considered Tennessee's first accomplished big man. "There are certain ingredients you look for in rebounding, but the key is to go after every rebound as if it were yours."

From 1956-59, the 6-foot-8 Tormohlen owned the middle of the paint for the Vols. His art of rebounding became a trademark of sorts, making him a regular vacuum cleaner around the rim, as well as a two-time All-SEC performer. But what may be most impressive about his longstanding rebounding records at Tennessee is that Tormohlen accomplished all his feats in a three-year career with the Vols. In his playing days, freshmen were limited to the freshman squad and only upperclassmen were welcome on the varsity.

Still, only three years of playing time didn't limit Tormohlen's potential or achievements. During the 1957-58 season, Tormohlen's junior year, he pulled down 384 boards for the season, a Tennessee record. His 372 rebounds his senior season ranks second on the school list. His name is on the list one more time for his sophomore campaign when he grabbed 357, good enough for fourth. Sixteen times during his career he had at least 22 rebounds in a game. One time, while playing with a cut that required eight stitches on a shooting-hand finger, he scored 15 points and gathered 17 rebounds.

"I'm proud of the fact that I hold some of those rebounding records," Tormohlen said. "But I'll be honest, we didn't make many shots."

No matter how many shots Tennessee missed, "Bumper" was reliable enough to clean up the garbage under the rim. Tormohlen, who is a member of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame after leading tiny Holland High School to its first sectional championship as a sophomore in 1953.

He amazingly averaged 16.9 rebounds in his career with the Vols, another rebounding record. On the season average list, Tormohlen's senior year saw him grab an average of 17.7 boards per game for a UT record. He also earned Converse All-America honors that year for his accomplishments on the hardwood. His junior year he averaged 16.7, and his sophomore year he averaged 16.2 to sweep the top three spots on the season rebounding average list.

One rebounding record that Tormohlen does not hold at Tennessee is most rebounds in a single game. Herb Neff holds that honor when he grabbed 36

against Georgia Tech in 1952. However, Tormohlen ranks second with 31, third with 28 and fourth with 27. His name appears 16 times among the top 23 performances on the list.

"Rebounding is one thing in basketball that you can go after and it's not a selfish thing," he said. "It's hard work that benefits the team. We all played rough, but I always felt I could play against anybody."

Former *Knoxville Journal* writer Ben Byrd perhaps paid best tribute to Tormohlen in 1959 when he penned: "There will be others just as big, maybe bigger. Some will shoot better, some will play defense better, some run more gracefully. But when there is elbow-flying, rib-thumping, eyeball-scratching action under the boards, you can lay long odds that there won't be another like Gene Tormohlen. Not for a long, long time."

Following his successful career at Tennessee, the Holland, Ind., native was a second round selection of the Syracuse Nationals in the 1959 NBA Draft. He went on to a nine-year professional career that included a six-year stint with the NBA's St. Louis and Atlanta Hawks.

After his playing career was over, he moved to the bench where he was an NBA assistant coach for 12 years. Twice he served as an interim head coach in the NBA. After his time coaching, Tormohlen also served as a collegiate scout for several years.

Gene Tormohlen In The Tennessee Record Books Single Game

1. 36 Herb Neff vs. Ga. Tech (1/26/52)
2. 31 vs. Mississippi (2/11/57)
3. 28 vs. Michigan (12/5/58)
4. 27 vs. Arizona (12/28/56)
6. 26 vs. Georgia Tech (1/24/59)
7. 25 vs. Wyoming (12/2/58)
- 25 vs. Wyoming (12/6/58)
- 25 vs. Vanderbilt (1/3/59)
10. 24 vs. Florida (2/3/58)
11. 23 vs. Tulane (1/10/59)
- 23 vs. Mississippi (2/9/59)
- 23 vs. Georgia Tech (12/20/57)
- 23 vs. Georgia Tech (1/25/58)
- 23 vs. Vanderbilt (2/15/58)
- 23 vs. Auburn (2/21/58)

Rebounds Season

1. 384 Gene Tormohlen (23 games) - 1957-58
2. 372 Gene Tormohlen (21 games) - 1958-59
3. 371 Bernard King (26 games) - 1976-77
4. 357 Gene Tormohlen (22 games) - 1956-57

Career

1. 1113 Gene Tormohlen (66 games) - 1956-59
2. 1004 Bernard King (76 games) - 1974-77
3. 944 Dyron Nix (113 games) - 1985-89
4. 937 Carl Widseth (88 games) - 1952-56

Rebounding Average Season

1. 17.7 Gene Tormohlen (21 games) - 1958-59
2. 16.7 Gene Tormohlen (23 games) - 1957-58
3. 16.2 Gene Tormohlen (22 games) - 1956-57
4. 14.3 Bernard King (26 games) - 1976-77

Career

1. 16.9 Gene Tormohlen (66 games) - 1956-59
2. 13.2 Bernard King (76 games) - 1974-77
3. 10.9 Red Robbins (48 games) - 1964-66
4. 10.6 Carl Widseth (88 games) - 1952-56

1960s: Enter Ray Mears; Vols Become SEC Champs

The new man's name was Ray Mears. A Miami (Ohio) graduate, he was fresh off winning the NCAA small college championship at Wittenberg University. His style featured a deliberate offense, a zone defense, a heavy dose of discipline for his players and a bagful of sideshow tricks for the paying customers. He introduced the practice of a pep band blaring out at the court level, and his players executed fancy pregame drills and, later on, even had one of his athletes riding around the court on a unicycle to help get the home crowd excited.

Behind that carnival show exterior was a shrewd tactician and strategist. Mears' teams played basketball in much the way Bob Neyland's teams had played football. They didn't beat themselves.

The new coach was fortunate in inheriting a rich stockpile of good young talent from the Sines era, most notably sophomore forward A.W. Davis and junior point guard Danny Schultz. Although both would have flourished as high scorers in a higher-powered system of offense, Davis and Schultz gladly accepted the deliberate pace of the new coach's game and led the way to a quick resurgence in Tennessee basketball fortunes. The 1962-63 team posted a 13-11 worksheet, which included a pair of upset wins over mighty Kentucky, and the 1963-64 team climbed to 16-8. In Mears' third season, when Davis was the captain and heartbeat of the team, the Vols reached the 20-win level for the first time in 17 years and finished second in the Southeastern Conference race. The 1966 Vols provided a harbinger of things to come by closing out the season with a 69-62 victory over Kentucky, who came to Knoxville with a 23-0 mark.

UT basketball had been moved into a new home, the Armory-Fieldhouse, in 1959, but the interest stirred by Mears's success soon rendered the 7,500-seat facility obsolete. Thanks to a generous gift by industrialist William B. Stokely, Jr., the old fieldhouse was remodeled and enlarged into a 12,700-seat arena, Stokely Center. The timing was perfect. The Vols were about to unveil their first SEC championship team in 24 years.

The 1966-67 team was short on experience and depth as it set out on what promised to be an uphill journey. But somehow the chemistry turned out just right for a lineup composed of senior Ron Widby and junior Tom Hendrix at forwards, junior Tom Boerwinkle at center and sophomores Billy Justus and Billy Hann in the backcourt. The two guards had never played a minute of varsity action, and Boerwinkle, UT's first seven-footer, had played very sparingly. But the Fearless Five, as they came to be known, overturned the odds with three magnificent road wins against the other contenders.

First they knocked off Florida, the eventual runner-up, with an almost perfectly played game at Gainesville, 66-53. Then they outlasted Kentucky, 52-50, in a tense overtime duel at Lexington. But those two were just warmups for the stormy season finale at Mississippi State.

The Vols had to win that game to take the SEC title, and they couldn't have picked a tougher foe.

With Tennessee's Widby and State's David Williams swapping deadeye jumpers from the perimeter, the two teams wound up all even at 64-64 after regulation time. A cautious first overtime ended 66-66. After Justus missed a pair of free throws with four seconds left, the second overtime also wound up in a tie. But in the third extra period, with players and fans alike near exhaustion, Justus got one last chance. With the count tied at 76, he once again went to the stripe with four seconds remaining. This time he made them both, and the Vols held on to win what many longtime observers believe was the greatest game in UT basketball history.

That not only earned the Vols the SEC crown; it also won them the school's first-ever berth in the NCAA Tournament. This time, the cat jumped the other way. In another tense battle at Evanston, Ill., the Fearless Five was ousted in its first test by Dayton, 53-52, as Widby's last second shot caromed off the rim.

Vols Celebrate First Season In Stokely Athletics Center With An SEC Championship

The first Tennessee basketball game in the Armory-Fieldhouse was nothing but a glimpse of the future. The 72-71 victory over Wyoming gave the idea that basketball in the new arena would be a successful era. And the temporary wall that stood on the east side of the arena was a hint that expansion was on the way.

To kick off the 1958-59 season, the University of Tennessee had erected a new facility for basketball. Replacing Alumni Gym was a difficult thing to do, but the state-of-the-art arena would quickly remind the team and fans that the new facility was worth the \$1.5 million.

Equipped with huge steel trusses that lined the

walls and roof, the gigantic new arena could seat 7,000 people in its opening years. The west end of the arena had two levels of permanent seats while temporary bleachers lined the baselines. On the east end, more temporary bleachers rose from the floor to the temporary wall. Along each baseline was a row of folding chairs, primarily for the teams to sit. Other than basketball, the Armory-Fieldhouse was home to supply rooms for Army and Air Force ROTC, offices and classrooms.

The temporary wall was the key to the Armory-Fieldhouse. In 1965, a \$500,000 gift from William B. Stokely Jr. jump-started a \$3 million expansion on the facility - an expansion that had been designed in the original blueprints of the facility. By the 1966-67 season, the Armory-Fieldhouse was doubled in size and seating capacity rose to 12,700 just in time for the SEC championship season. Stokely had died before the completion of the expansion project, and the Armory-Fieldhouse became William B. Stokely Athletics Center.

Stokely Athletics Center was a special home to Tennessee basketball. It housed more fans than ever before. It featured a newly designed Tartan rubber playing surface after the expansion to the arena. But more importantly, it featured great teams. Tennessee teams were extremely successful in the arena, compiling a 321-69 record at Stokely and winning four SEC championships.



Tennessee moved into Stokely Athletics Center in time for the 1966-67 SEC championship season.

Ray Mears Brings Showmanship And Championships

Ray Mears was hired as head basketball coach in 1962 after he had just won the NCAA small college championship the previous year as coach at Wittenberg University. But this was Division I, and Mears was brought in to revitalize a struggling Tennessee basketball program. The Vols were coming off back-to-back losing seasons and were caught in a decade and a half of finishing no higher than fourth in the SEC.

All that changed when Mears took over. His first year saw the Vols finish with a 13-11 record, including a season sweep over arch-rival Kentucky. In fact, Adolph Rupp's Kentucky teams grew to be Mears' top foe, despite the fact that Mears and Rupp were friends away from the court.

"Beating Adolph Rupp was my favorite," Mears admitted. "We ended up tying Kentucky, but seven of them were against Joe Hall so I can't claim I beat Rupp every time. We had the best record against Kentucky and the best record against Rupp."

In Mears' second season at Tennessee, the Vols were 16-8 and finished second in the conference. Then there was a 20-5 year, an 18-8 year, a 21-7 SEC title year and so on. Mears had sent a breath of fresh air through the Tennessee basketball program.

Not only did the legendary coach bring success to the hardwood, he brought entertainment to the fans. Mears instructed the pep band to play in the stands of Stokely Athletics Center during games - a first for its time. With the pep band blasting traditional fight songs, Mears' squad would perform dazzling tricks during pre-game warm-ups. From fancy passes to mind-boggling dribbling skills, the Vols looked more like the Harlem Globetrotters as they prepared for their opponent. It's said Mears even went to the extent of having one of his players ride around the court on a unicycle to fire up a sleepy crowd at Stokely.



Ray Mears directed Tennessee to its most successful period as head coach from 1963-77. Mears' teams won 20 or more games seven years and finished no worse than third in the Southeastern Conference in 13 of his 15 years as head coach.

"We brought the pep band and marched the band around the floor and all that kind of stuff," Mears said. "We had a guy that juggled basketballs and we had warm-up drills. We did a lot of things like that. We were trying to get people interested in basketball. I tried to get the crowd excited. We got people coming at 7 for a 7:30 game."

People flocked to campus to see the newest attraction - the Tennessee basketball team. But they also enjoyed the side antics as well. Record numbers came to Stokely Athletics Center, eventually forcing the expansion of the facility in 1966 to twice its original size.

On the sidelines, Mears was a basketball mastermind. His slow, deliberate offense gelled with his zone defense. His strict and disciplined basketball style carried the Vols to a SEC championship in the 1966-67 season and the school's first NCAA Tournament appearance.

Success was common during the Mears era. During his 15 years (1963-77) as head coach of the Vols, Mears collected 278 wins against 112 losses for a .713 winning percentage. Tennessee won three conference titles under Mears - 1966-67, 1971-72 and 1976-77. And during his tenure, only twice did UT finish lower than third in the SEC. He was hired to turn the program around. He did his job and then some.

Ray Mears took Tennessee basketball to a level it had never been before. His actions on the court made him a legendary coach. His knack for entertainment made him legendary with the fans. Both make Mears a legendary man.

Texas Western Wasn't The First To Challenge Rupp's Runts

On the evening of March 5, 1966, the Tennessee Volunteers had nothing to do but finish a decent basketball season. The Vols were 17-8 and 9-6 in the SEC heading into their final game of the season, and the NCAA Tournament only took conference champions at the time. On the other side of the court, the No. 1-ranked Kentucky Wildcats were planning their run at a national championship. They had played 23 games and won every one of them.

Labeled Rupp's Runts, coach Adolph Rupp's squad was loaded with talent but short on size. The tallest players on the team, center Thad Jaracz and guard Tommy Kron stood at 6-foot-5. Forwards Larry Conley and Pat Riley stood 6-4, and the other guard, Louie Dampier, was 6-0.

Probabilities said the Vols were going to get whipped by the 'Cats. A week earlier, Tennessee had gotten beat in Lexington by top-ranked Kentucky, 78-64. But this time, probabilities were wrong. UT captains Larry McIntosh and Howard Bayne helped push the overmatched Vols past Kentucky 69-62 to give the Wildcats their first loss of the season.

Tennessee closed the season at 18-8 and finished tied for third in the SEC. Kentucky, however, went all the way to the NCAA finals where they faced Texas Western (now UTEP). In one of the most memorable and influential finals in NCAA history, Texas Western shocked the Wildcats with a 72-65 upset to win the NCAA championship. Texas Western became the first school to win the title with five black starters when they beat an all-white Kentucky team, which paved the way for cultural diversity in college basketball.

An unbeatable Kentucky team rolled into Knoxville in 1966 but left with a loss. The win for UT paved the way for a successful 1966-67 campaign in which the Vols won the SEC.



The 1966-67 Vols captured the Southeastern Conference championship with a thrilling 78-76 victory at Mississippi State in triple overtime and earned UT its first NCAA Tournament berth.

1970s: Success Continues Under Mears; Grunfeld/King Combo Puts UT In National Spotlight

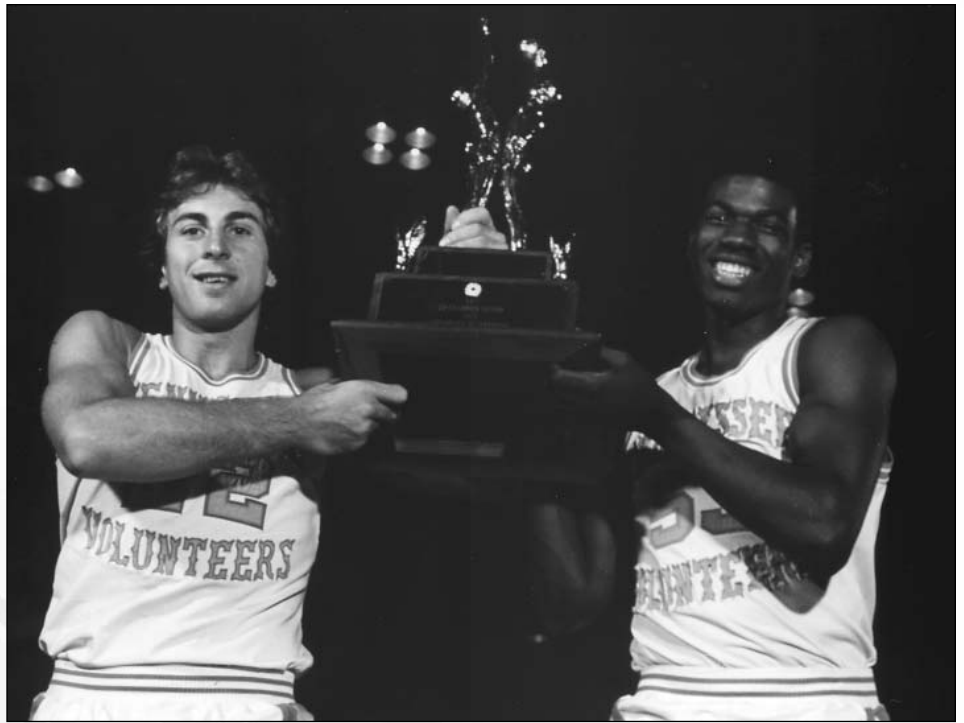
Consistent excellence was the trademark of the program under Mears. Twenty-win seasons became the rule rather than the exception, and the Vols became contenders in the SEC title race on a yearly basis. It took Mears five seasons to win his second conference title, and that one had a rather sour taste to it.

The 1971-72 team, built around the sharp shooting of guard Mike Edwards and 6-11 center Len Kosmowski came into the season-ending game with Kentucky at Stokely Center one game ahead of Rupp's Wildcats. With five seconds left in a hard-fought battle UK held a 67-66 lead. But Tennessee got one last chance when Edwards was fouled as he started into his shooting mode. Referee Bobby Hartsfield called it a non-shooting foul, and the usually unflappable guard missed the free throw. Kentucky rebounded to gain a tie for the title, and because they had swept the season's series with Tennessee the Wildcats also won the SEC's berth in the NCAA Tournament. The Vols were so downcast by the loss that they voted not to accept a bid to the NIT, where they had reached the semifinals in 1969 and 1971.

The 1971-72 season also marked a new chapter in Volunteer cage history when Larry Robinson, a 6-5 high post player out of Ferrum (Va.) Junior College became the school's first black player. A tireless worker and the ultimate team player, Robinson made a big hit with the fans and teammates alike, and as evidence of the respect they felt for him his mates



Johnny Darden (left) and Don DeVoe celebrate winning the 1979 SEC Tournament following a 76-69 overtime victory against Kentucky in the championship game.



All-Americans Ernie Grunfeld (left) and Bernard King led the Vols to the 1977 SEC championship.

elected him captain of the 1972-73 team despite the fact that he had played only one season of varsity basketball with them.

Mears had stuck with his deliberate offense through his first decade at UT, but the appearance of two remarkable offensive performers in the mid-1970s prompted him to speed up his attack. Assistant coach Stu Aberdeen, who had strong recruiting contacts in the New York City area, hit the jackpot two years in succession when he signed Ernie Grunfeld of Forest Hills in 1973 and Bernard King of Brooklyn in 1974. Never before or since has UT basketball boasted two such enormous talents on the same team.

Grunfeld, a 6-6 wing who could move into the post when needed, broke Widseth's all-time Volunteer scoring record during his four-year career with 2249 points, for an average of 22.3 per game. King, a brilliant post player, who played only three seasons before turning to the professional ranks, posted a new career average record of 25.8 points per game. Known as the Ernie and Bernie Show, the two great players led the Vols to a record of 61-20 during their three seasons together, 1974-75, 1975-76 and 1976-77. During that run the Volunteers made two NCAA Tournament appearances and won one SEC championship in 1977. Wherever they played they drew standing-room-only crowds, *Sports Illustrated* even ran a cover page of them ("Double Trouble from Tennessee"), and for the first time in its cage history, UT had become a household word in the world of college basketball.

The one thing that even King and Grunfeld couldn't do was to bring their coach an NCAA Tournament victory. In 1976 the Vols fell out in first round play at Charlotte, losing to darkhorse VMI in a game that King had to sit out because of a hand injury suffered in practice a few days earlier. And then, in the biggest disappointment of all, the 1977 team went down in overtime to the Orangemen from Syracuse

University (93-88) in a game played in Baton Rouge, La., as both King and Grunfeld fouled out in second half action.

Mears soon followed his two great stars in farewell. A longtime sufferer from depression, the Vol coach could not answer the bell for the 1977-78 season, and assistant coach Cliff Wettig led the team through a tough rebuilding season that produced the school's first losing season in 16 years. When it became clear that Mears could not return to his post, UT hired a new head coach, Don DeVoe, in the spring of 1978.

Mears left an enviable record behind him. In 15 seasons his teams had won 278 games against only 112 losses for a .713 winning percentage, had captured three SEC championships and had played old rival Kentucky to a dead heat with 15 wins in 30 meetings. His acts of psychological warfare, such as the long walks at Nashville that brought the Vanderbilt crowds to a boil, had won him more than his share of detractors, but underneath all the boos there was a grudging respect for one of the best coaches of his time.

John Ward And The Vol Network

John Ward sat atop Mississippi State Gymnasium on March 8, 1967, peering down on the Vols as time expired on the clock. Mississippi State had just taken Tennessee into overtime in the season finale for both teams. The Vols were in a battle in Starkville, Miss., but they were in a three-way war for the SEC championship, along with Florida and Vanderbilt.

Ward, thanks to the Vols playing in the Central Time Zone, already knew both Florida and Vanderbilt had finished at 14-4. Should the Vols win, they would finish at 15-3 and win their first SEC title in more than 20 years. And it all came down to overtime. Then a second overtime. Then a third.

By then, Ward's voice was getting rougher and rougher. He, along with color analyst Lowell Blanchard, were located high atop the gym to get a bird's eye view of the game.

"When I do broadcasts, I prefer to be working upstairs because I can see the game unfold better," Ward said. "We were upstairs near the top of the gym and against the wall. Well, with a window behind us, a draft kept blowing onto my neck and it was cold. By the second overtime, I just looked at Lowell - just a wonderful man - and said, 'I can't finish the game.'"

Ward's throat was getting tight due to the cold air on his neck and he was losing his voice. Quick to aid Ward, Blanchard retrieved a towel from the Tennessee bench at courtside and Ward wrapped it around his neck. The treatment warmed and opened Ward's throat, and he was able to finish broadcasting the Vols' 78-76 triple-overtime win over the Bulldogs. A 1967 SEC championship and Tennessee's first trip to the NCAA Tournament came courtesy of the win.

Of course, the towel became a trademark of Ward's during his 31-year run as "Voice of the Vols." But according to Ward, it was always used for medical purposes.

"I always wore it to protect my voice and throat," he insisted after he recalled his most memorable UT basketball game. "Never was it intended to be a trademark."

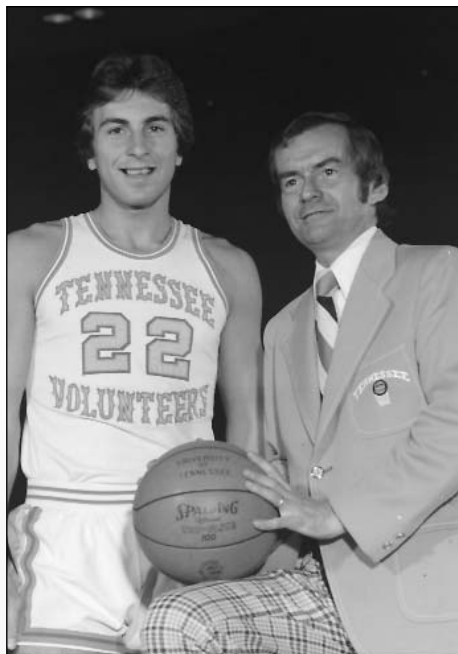
There are other games that stick out in Ward's mind - especially the Kentucky games. Games like the one in 1976 when Tennessee rallied from 14 points down to beat the Wildcats in overtime in Memorial Coliseum. Or the game that very next year when Tennessee beat Kentucky in its first trip to the new Rupp Arena. Then there's Tennessee's 1979 SEC championship.

"Tennessee won the SEC championship in '79 and they beat who? Kentucky," Ward said. "You've got to understand, Kentucky didn't lose back then. They just didn't."

For those fans not able to attend the games in person, they depended on Ward to paint the picture over radio broadcasts. He never failed.

"Prior to around 1980, there were no TV games," Ward said. "So obviously, radio broadcasts became the dominant medium to follow those games."

Through the late 1950s and early 1960s, UT basketball games were not heard over the radio on a regular basis. Only big games, like Kentucky and Vanderbilt, made the airwaves. But in 1966, athletics



John Ward, pictured here with Ernie Grunfeld, served as the "Voice of the Vols" for 33 years. He became one of the most popular figures in the state after providing precise descriptions that painted lifelike word pictures of Tennessee basketball and football games for the Vol Network.

director Bob Woodruff, with the assistance of Bill Petty, Ward and basketball coach Ray Mears, began the groundwork for a Vol Basketball Network. The Vol Network already covered football games, and now it was time for basketball coverage.

The 1966-67 season was the first full season of basketball broadcasts for Ward and the Vol Network, and it could be heard on one station. But thanks to the marketing mindset of Mears and the successful teams he put on the floor, Tennessee basketball was exploding in popularity.

"Nothing defined the ascendancy of basketball on the UT scene more clearly than the game's identity with John Ward's broadcasting style," said Haywood Harris, UT's long-time sports information director. "The presence of Ward at UT games was as much a part of the basketball presentation as Mears' pre-game warm-ups and Roger Peltz' unicycle act."

In the following years, Ward began to work more closely with the network, and the program increased the number of stations that carried the broadcasts to around 15 throughout the state.

The unique aspect of the Vol Network was that small, community-based radio stations carried the broadcasts. Instead of relying on larger radio stations in Nashville to broadcast the games to larger areas, the Vol Network targeted the small stations in Tennessee and created a down-home atmosphere for listeners.

"My primary goal was to involve the local stations throughout the state," Ward said. "Our philosophy was that it's not the number of stations but amount of coverage in the state. We wanted to touch every county in Tennessee."

The Vol Network came pretty close to doing that. By choosing to reach the small-town audiences

through smaller stations, the network expanded and eventually had more than 50 stations carrying the sports broadcasts. Now, the Vol Network is one of the largest radio networks in the nation with affiliates in four surrounding states. The Vol Network can also be heard in 28 states after dark and worldwide on the Internet. Bob Kesling inherited the title "Voice of the Vols" in 1999 and currently pairs with former Vol basketball player Bert Bertelkamp to bring Tennessee basketball to life on the radio.

"To grow from one station to more than 50 stations was a great accomplishment," said Ward, who retired after the 1998-99 basketball season. "But the key to that was the sponsors, not me. I was only a broadcaster."

John Ward was never only a broadcaster. He was music to Vol fans' ears.

Dec. 15, 1973:

UT And Temple Combine To Score 17 Points

It was Dec. 15 and it was the championship game of the 1973 Volunteer Classic at Stokely Athletics Center. Tennessee's high-powered offense was looking to dispose quickly of Temple to win yet another Classic title on its own floor.

Tennessee put points on the board at will. They scored 80 points in a season-opening victory in 1973 over North Texas State and 65 in a loss to Marquette. But in the two games leading up to the clash with Temple, the Vols had scored 117 and 96 points, respectively. Needless to say, fans were expecting a show.

If anything, a show was not what the fans got. Temple coach Don Casey had instructed his squad to merely pass the ball back and forth to keep the rock away from the Vols. That's exactly what they did. And with Mears' strict discipline, Tennessee wasn't about to stray from their traditional zone defense. Neither team would budge. But the fans did. They booed and complained throughout the chess match between the Vols and Owls.

When the buzzer sounded, the crowd had something to cheer about. Tennessee came away victorious 11-6. That's right, 11-6. Temple had effectively taken the ball out of Tennessee's hands, yet the Vols had also proven a point that they were sticking to their game plan.

Throughout the rest of the season, Tennessee was content at scoring in the 60s, 70s and 80s, even topping the 100-point mark against LSU to finish 17-9. But the UT-Temple fiasco will live in the record books forever. The game holds the NCAA record for fewest points scored by both teams - something that may never be broken with today's fast-paced game. The NCAA record for fewest points allowed since 1938 also goes to Tennessee (tie) for holding the Owls to a mere six points.

1980s: Vols Enjoy NCAA Tournament Successes; Thompson-Boling Arena Opens

Just as Mears had done a decade and a half earlier, Don DeVoe put his stamp on Tennessee basketball in quick order. Inheriting a team built around All-America Reggie Johnson in the post and Terry Crosby and freshman Gary Carter at the wings, the 37-year-old former Ohio State player soon put whatever doubts there may have been about his appointment to rest. In that first season of 1978-79 DeVoe achieved a number of "firsts" for a Tennessee cage coach.

That first DeVoe team posted an overall record of 21-12 and a regular season SEC mark of 12-6, good for the runner-up spot. That happened to be the season when the postseason conference tournament was revived after a 27-year hiatus, and when the Vols beat Kentucky 75-69 in the finals it was the first conference tourney title for Tennessee since 1943. And since his team had swept the Wildcats in regular season play, DeVoe became the first Vol skipper ever to beat the Wildcats three times in one campaign. The tourney championship also put the team in the NCAA playoffs, and when the Vols dusted off Eastern Kentucky 97-81 in the first round of play at Murfreesboro, he became the first UT coach ever to record an NCAA Tournament victory. The Vols then lost in the second round to Notre Dame, but it had been a storybook maiden season for the tall man from the Buckeye state.

The good times rolled on. With such standout performers as Carter, Howard Wood and the All-America forward Dale Ellis leading the attack, DeVoe's first five teams all participated in NCAA tourney play, all of them winning first round games before being later eliminated. The 1981 team advanced to the NCAA Tournament's Sweet Sixteen before being eliminated 62-48 by Virginia and college player of the year Ralph Sampson. The best of the lot, 1981-82, won the school's seventh SEC title and posted a 20-10 record. That team fell just shy of upsetting powerful Virginia, led by Sampson, in an NCAA second round game at Indianapolis, Ind., losing 54-51.

The 1983-84 team went 21-14 overall and went three rounds deep into NIT tournament play, and the 1984-85 team went 22-15 and reached the NIT's Final Four before losing to Indiana at Madison Square Garden. But after seven postseason tourney appearances in as many seasons, the DeVoe program suddenly made a sharp downward turn with two consecutive losing seasons in 1985-86 and 1986-87. But there were still bright spots. Guard Tony White scored 51 points in a game against Auburn in 1987, bettering by one point an old school single game scoring record set by Ron Widby against LSU 20 years earlier.

The 1987-88 team turned things around with a 16-13 record and an NIT appearance, and when the 1988-89 team went 19-11 to get the Volunteers back into the NCAA playoffs, the program seemed to be

moving in the right direction. But an 84-68 loss to West Virginia at Greensboro, N.C., in the first round of play sealed DeVoe's doom. After an 11-year tenure that had produced a 204-137 record, one SEC championship, one SEC tourney title, six NCAA playoff appearances and three trips to the NIT, DeVoe resigned.

In a way, DeVoe was a victim of his own accomplishments. The rousing successes of his early years, combined with Mears' long run, had raised expectations among Tennessee basketball fans. Overflow crowds at Stokely Center had sparked a drive for a new facility, and in the 1987-88 season the Vols moved into one of the most palatial college basketball homes in the country. The \$30 million, 24,535-seat Thompson-Boling Arena and Assembly Center. It was named after philanthropist B. Ray Thompson and then-UT president Ed Boling, and it signaled the school's commitment to competitive excellence.

Vols Open New Arena On The Tennessee River

No one ever thought the Tennessee Volunteers would outgrow Stokely Athletics Center. The 12,700-seat arena was gigantic compared to the previous basketball arenas that the Vols called home. But with a winning basketball team and loads of excitement surrounding the program, a new basketball arena was inevitable.

Work began to raise money for a new and larger basketball facility. There was one goal for the new arena - make it larger than any arena in the SEC. In the early 1980s, Kentucky's Rupp Arena was tops in the SEC with its 23,000 seats. The big question was if an arena of that size would be large enough for the Vols. The demand for Tennessee basketball tickets was outrageous, and school officials were concerned.

The spark for the fire was an anonymous gift of \$5 million. That was followed by \$5 million in private UT donations, a \$7 million pledge from the state of

Tennessee, \$10 million from Knox County and \$3 million in ticket and parking revenue. The ball was officially rolling.

Everything, however, came to a screeching halt after work on the arena had already begun. The Kansas contractor, who had obtained the contract with a bid of \$23 million, pulled out after multiple delays had pushed the completion date back several times. A Nashville contractor took over the responsibilities, and the new 24,535-seat arena was completed for the 1987-88 season.

It was discovered that B. Ray Thompson was the man responsible for the original donation for construction, and he was convinced to have his name attached to the new arena. However, the only way he would comply was if then-UT President Edward J. Boling's name was attached also. So, on Sept. 25, 1987, the new basketball facility was officially named the Thompson-Boling Assembly Center and Arena.

The largest on-campus basketball-only facility in the nation, Thompson-Boling Arena opened its doors to the Vols in good fashion when Tennessee beat Marquette 82-56 before 25,272 people. An arena record crowd of 25,610 showed up Jan. 21, 1989, when UT hosted Kentucky.



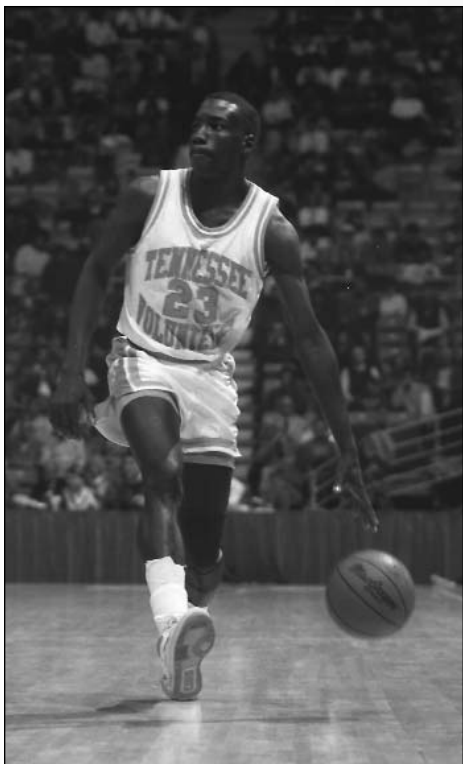
The Vols are 190-78 (.709) in 17 seasons playing in Thompson-Boling Arena.

1990s: Houston Sets UT Scoring Mark; Vols Return to NCAA Tournament

Ironically, UT's cage fortunes slumped badly in these luxurious new surroundings. DeVoe's successor, Wade Houston, was never able to get the program rolling. Houston, an Alcoa native who had played at Louisville and served as an assistant coach there, was warmly welcomed in his pioneer role as UT's first black head coach. He was enormously popular on the personal level, but he was able to post only two winning records in five seasons, and after a 5-22 campaign in 1993-94, he was replaced by Kevin O'Neill.

Even so, the name Houston still stands tall in UT history. The coach's son, Allan Houston, rewrote the Volunteer scoring record book during his four years under his father's tutelage, 1989-93. A velvet-match guard, he zoomed past Grunfeld to set the school career mark with 2801 points and also set records in single season scoring, field goals and 3-point goals. The younger Houston led his dad's teams to NIT appearances in 1990 and 1992, both ventures ending in second round losses.

Houston's successor, O'Neill, was a much fiercer sideline coach than his laid-back predecessor. O'Neill had enjoyed great success at Marquette, where he had won a reputation as a standout recruiter and defensive specialist. He took over the Vol program when its stock was at a very low ebb, and was not able to turn the program around in regard to wins and losses. Of his three Volunteer teams only one, 1995-96, managed to break even during the regular seasons, 14-14, before suffering an NIT opening



Greg Bell, who ranks fifth all-time at Tennessee with a career 3-point percentage of 39.9, finished his career with 1,198 career points.



Kevin O'Neill directed the Vols to an appearance in the 1996 National Invitation Tournament.

round loss to the College of Charleston at Thompson-Boling Arena on a bitterly cold March evening. But he did make headway in recruiting, and when he departed to take the head coaching job at Northwestern after the 1996-97 season he left behind a healthy crop of young players.

Jerry Green's initial season of 20-9 in 1997-98 was the best for a first-year Volunteer cage coach since Emmett Lowery's 20-5 record in 1947-48. And it ended on a high note when the Vols won their way into the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 1989. Even an overtime loss to Illinois State at the Arco Arena in Sacramento, Calif., in the opening round could not rub the shine off Tennessee's best season in a decade. A South Carolina native who had a successful tenure as the head coach at Oregon and as Roy Williams' top assistant at Kansas, Green seemed to strike the right chord among players and fans alike with his down home style. And his first year success didn't end with the season. His signing of Cleveland (Tenn.) high school superstar Vincent Yarbrough was perhaps Tennessee's greatest recruiting coup since Grunfeld and King.

Under Green's direction, Tennessee continued to achieve milestones for the program during the 1998-99 season in which the Vols went 21-9. The Vols returned to the NCAA Tournament, giving UT its first back-to-back bids since 1982-83, and won its first NCAA tourney game since 1983. The Vols won their last six SEC games, including a season-ending showdown with Kentucky to win their first SEC Eastern Division crown since divisional play started in 1992. UT's 21 wins were the most for the Vols since 1985 and just one short of the school's single-season record. Tennessee's season sweep of arch-rivals Kentucky and Vanderbilt were also cause for celebration. The Vols' win at Lexington was the first at Rupp Arena in 20 years.

Vols Make Run At 1991 SEC Tournament Title

After enjoying peaks of success in the 1970s and '80s, the Tennessee Volunteers hit a treacherous valley in the early 1990s. Despite a tremendous scoring threat in Allan Houston (23.7 points) and a sharp shooter in Lang Wiseman (13.2 points), the Vols fell on hard times during the 1990-91 season.

Tennessee began the season red-hot, winning five of its first six games. However, the Vols would only win four more games the rest of the season. Losing streaks highlighted the schedule, as the Vols saw consecutive streaks hit three, four and five games, as well as a seven-game losing streak to end the regular season. Tennessee won four straight during the first six games but never could win back-to-back games again. Wins over Florida, No. 19 LSU and Vanderbilt gave the Vols a 3-15 record in the SEC and placed them in a tie for eighth heading into the SEC Tournament in Nashville.

In the first round, Tennessee avenged two close losses to Mississippi with a 94-85 win over the Rebels. It was an upset, but no one was searching for a Cinderella slipper until the Vols upset No. 18 Mississippi State 87-70 in the second round. An underrated Tennessee team was having its way with the conference's best teams, and the magic ride continued with an 85-65 thrashing of Georgia in the semifinals.

The same Tennessee team that had won only three conference games in the regular season had just won three consecutive conference games in three straight days. They were the talk of the tournament and they were looking to write a happy ending to the fairy tale. The underdog Volunteers met No. 24 Alabama in the finals of the SEC Tournament, and the Crimson Tide washed away Tennessee's hopes of completing the dream with an 88-69 victory.

Tennessee ended the season with a 12-22 record in 1991. There wasn't much to cheer about other than an appearance in the conference tournament finals. But for three consecutive nights, the Vols were the Cinderella of the SEC Tournament, dreaming of an invitation to the Big Dance.

2000s: Buzz Peterson Era Begins In Knoxville

Tennessee continued its return to the national spotlight with the dawn of the new century. The Vols began the new millennium as a consistent name in national polls and with a pair of trips to the NCAA Tournament.

The 2000 season was one of the most successful in school history with the Vols winning a school record 26 games and advancing to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament. UT won a share of its eighth SEC title and its second straight SEC Eastern Division crown. Not only did the Vols win 20 games for the third consecutive season but they did so faster (23 games) than any other team in school history. They spent the entire season ranked in the Top 25, reaching as high as No. 5, and finished the season ranked 11th in the final Associated Press poll.

The 2001 season saw the Vols ranked No. 9 in the Associated Press preseason poll, and they climbed as high as No. 4 during the year. The No. 4 ranking tied for the highest in school history. For the fourth straight year, the Vols won 20 games, finishing the season with a 22-11 record. At the end of the regular season, UT made its fourth trip to the NCAA Tournament in as many years, bowing to Charlotte in the first round.

Buzz Peterson was named the 16th head coach in school history on April 4, 2001, following the resignation of Jerry Green after the season. Peterson, who attended UT football games while growing up in Asheville, N.C., came to Knoxville after leading Tulsa to a 26-11 record and the NIT championship.

In just his second season in Knoxville, Peterson took a team that was predicted to finish no better than fifth in the SEC's Eastern Division to a 9-7 league record, the fourth-best mark in the entire league. The Vols returned to postseason competition with a trip to the National Invitation Tournament. Ron Slay, who missed the second half of his junior season with a knee injury, returned to the Vol lineup to lead the Southeastern Conference in scoring with 21.2 points per game and was named the league's Player of the Year.



Vincent Yarbrough

Marcus Haislip & Vincent Yarbrough Make Splash In NBA Draft

Marcus Haislip and Vincent Yarbrough did something no one had done at Tennessee in more than a decade. In June 2002, they became the first Tennessee duo to be taken in the NBA Draft since Dyron Nix and Doug Roth were both taken in the second round in 1989.

The Milwaukee Bucks took Haislip with the 13th pick of the draft to make him a lottery pick, the Vols' first since Allan Houston was taken sixth in 1993. It was the first time a Tennessee player was taken in the draft since 1996 when Boston drafted Steve Hamer. Yarbrough completed the duo when he was chosen by the Denver Nuggets with the 33rd pick overall.

"We're very happy with Haislip," former Vol great and then-Bucks GM Ernie Grunfeld said. "He's one of the most athletic players in the first round. He's very explosive and has the chance to be a very good player for us down the road."

With loads of potential, Haislip skipped his senior season with Tennessee to enter the NBA. His freshman and sophomore years were filled with sparse playing time. However, his junior year he exploded to dominate the paint for the Vols. The 6-foot-10 power forward averaged 16.7 points and 6.7 rebounds his junior year, more than double his output as a sophomore. And the new connection with the Bucks could be a lasting one.

A complete player, Yarbrough led the Vols for the 2001-02 season with 18.1 points per game and 7.5 rebounds per game. He also ranked second in the SEC in scoring. In his four-year career at Tennessee, the swingman holds the record for most career steals (211). He also ranks eighth in scoring (1,737) and sixth in rebounds (862).



Marcus Haislip

Ron Slay Overcomes Injury To Be Named SEC Player Of The Year

He was the freshman who strutted into Thompson-Boling Arena for Midnight Madness in 1999 and stole the show by dunking over a rack of basketballs wearing a "Scream" mask. He was the sophomore who was touted by many to be the best sixth man in the nation, coming off the bench to average 12.9 points and one standing ovation each game. He was the junior who had senior leadership skills and blew up in his first four SEC games, averaging 19 points and 8.8 rebounds until a torn ACL ended his season 15 games short.

But what Ron Slay will be remembered for most is returning his senior season to carry the Vols back to the postseason, while putting on a display for the ages on the hardwood.

Returning from injury was nothing easy for the 6-foot-8 power forward from Nashville, but his diligent training in the offseason prepped him for going out on top.

Slay was ready. He never avoided being the center of attention during his career. But the attention he got during the 2002-03 season was something new to the trash-talking, headband-wearing, chest-bumping, in-your-face Slay fans in the South came to know. Love him or hate him, which everyone in the SEC did, he earned respect.

Slay wasn't on any preseason watch list. He wasn't on a single All-SEC chart, with the exception of a few second-team mentions. And he definitely wasn't spoken in the same sentence as All-America candidate. But all that was before he took a shot.

By season's end, Slay was the best player in the SEC, thanks to his ability to single-handedly take over games. Of course, his coast-to-coast layups and trademark 3s from the top didn't hurt either. The Associated Press named him SEC Player of the Year and third-team All-America. He led the league in scoring wire to wire and finished with a 21.2-point average. "I just wanted to come back out here and re-establish my name," Slay said.

"I am sure there are a lot of coaches around the country who wish they had a Ron Slay on their team," said Tennessee coach Buzz Peterson. But that's what made Slay special - he was one of a kind. From his one-liners to the on-court conversations over his four years, there'll never be another head-banded hero like him.

Ben Byrd is the former sports editor of the Knoxville Journal. He has covered Tennessee basketball for more than 50 years.

Additional stories by Josh Pate, UT sports information.

Tennessee Timeline

1903

Basketball first appeared on campus when students organized the first class teams and battled for the school championship.

1907-08

Nathan Dougherty captained a squad composed of Howard Sandberg, L.W. McCowan, M.G. Smith, Solon Kipp, Benton White and manager Clarence Daniels in its first varsity basketball game, a 10-20 loss at the Asheville YMCA on Jan. 22, 1908. Five days later, UT earned its first victory, a 55-16 win over TSD.

1909-10

The first varsity basketball game was played at Knoxville when the Vols hosted Central University of Kentucky at Danville at the University YMCA on Dec. 16, 1909.

1913-14

Lum Reeder, considered to be the first star player at Tennessee, scored 41 points in a 49-16 win over Maryville College on Jan. 17, 1914. Reeder, who was one of the first players to use a one-handed jump shot, scored 27 points in his first game at UT as a freshman in 1913-14.

1920-21

In February of 1921, Tennessee joined the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference as a charter member.

1922-23

Tennessee got its first on-campus facility when Jefferson Hall was built at the corner of Cumberland and 15th.

1929-30

Maurice Corbitt and Bobby Dodd became Tennessee's first all-conference selections when they were named to the first and second team All-Southern Conference Tournament squads, respectively.

1932-33

In December 1932, 13 members of the Southern Conference joined to form the Southeastern Conference. The Vols also got new digs when Alumni Memorial Gym opened on the southern slopes of The Hill, just north of the football stadium.

1935-36

With wins over Auburn and Kentucky in the first two rounds, Harry Anderson led the Vols to a 29-25 win over Alabama in the championship game of the SEC Tournament to give the Vols their first conference championship. Anderson became UT's first All-America selection when Converse made him a first team pick.

1939-40

Bernie Mehen became Tennessee's second first team All-America selection.

1940-41

Gilbert Huffman earned first team All-America honors while leading the Vols to their second SEC championship. Along the way, UT defeated top-ranked Long Island University 36-33 at the Sugar Bowl Classic in New Orleans. The win ended LIU's 23-game winning streak.

1942-43

John Mauer's Vols won their second SEC championship in three seasons with a 33-30 win over Kentucky in the conference tournament's championship game.

1944-45

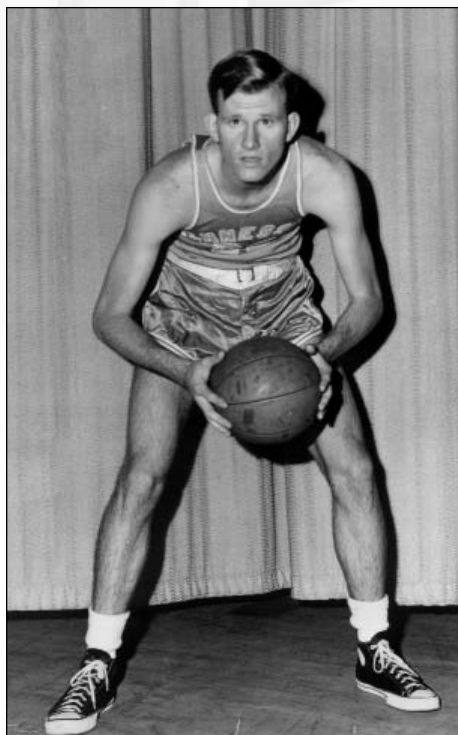
Seventeen-year-old freshman Paul Walther earned first team All-America honors thanks, in part, to a 21-point performance against New York University at Madison Square Garden. The Vols appeared in the NIT, bowing to Rhode Island 44-51.

1947-48

In his first season at the helm of the program, Emmett Lowery led the Vols to a 20-5 record, the first 20-win season in school history.

1949-50

Tennessee upset second-ranked Kentucky and ended the Wildcats' 67-game conference winning streak with a 66-53 win at Alumni Memorial Gym.



Herb Neff's 36 rebounds against Georgia Tech in 1952 are the most in SEC history.

1951-52

Herb Neff pulled down a school-record 36 rebounds against Georgia Tech, a mark that still stands as the most in UT and SEC history.

1954-55

Ed Weiner became just the third player to score 1,000 or more career points and earned first team All-America honors.

1955-56

Carl Widseth set a school record with 47 points in a late-season game against Auburn.

1956-57

The Vols opened the season with a 114-106 win at Furman, setting a then-school record for points in a game.

1958-59

Tennessee opened Armory-Fieldhouse with a 72-71 win over Wyoming on a late jumper by Kenny Coulter. Gene Tormohlen was named first team All-America after finishing his three-year career with 1,113 rebounds.

1959-60

John Sines, who spent eight years as an assistant to Emmett Lowery, became the first assistant in UT history to be promoted to head coach. Sines led the Vols to their first win over Kentucky in Lexington since 1939 with a 65-63 victory to end the season.

1962-63

Ray Mears was named head coach, ushering in one of the most successful eras in school history.

1963-64

Danny Schultz earned first team All-America honors.

1964-65

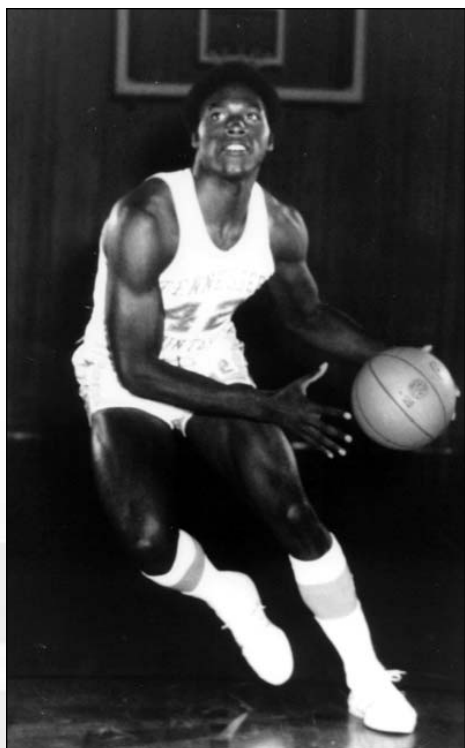
A.W. Davis, whose nickname was "The Man With The Golden Arm," earned first team All-America honors.

1965-66

Red Robbins earned first team All-America honors.

1966-67

The Vols moved into Stokely Athletics Center, their sixth home floor since 1909. The Fearless Five (Ron Widby, Tom Hendrix, Tom Boerwinkle, Bill Justus and Billy Hann) led the Vols to a 21-7 record and the Southeastern Conference championship. Multi-sport star Widby earned first team All-America honors and was named SEC Player of the Year. Widby set a school record that stood for 20 years with 50 points against LSU. Ray Mears became the first UT coach



Larry Robinson earned third team All-SEC honors in 1973.

to earn SEC Coach of the Year. The Vols won the inaugural Volunteer Classic with victories over Auburn and Clemson and also received their first invitation to the NCAA Tournament.

1967-68

Tom Boerwinkle earned first team All-America honors while leading UT to a second-place finish in the SEC with a 20-6 overall mark and a 13-5 record in league play.

1968-69

Bill Justus led the nation with his 90.5 free throw percentage and earned first team All-America honors. The Vols became the first SEC team to qualify for the National Invitation Tournament since the early 1950s.

1969-70

The Vols opened the season with a 55-54 win over No. 1-ranked South Carolina in Columbia.

1970-71

Jimmy England earned first team All-America honors while leading the Vols to their second NIT appearance in three seasons.

1971-72

The Vols won their second SEC championship under the direction of Ray Mears with a 19-6 overall and 14-4 SEC record. Mike Edwards was named SEC Player of the Year after averaging 19.4 points per game. Larry Robinson became the first African-American player to play for Tennessee.

1972-73

Tennessee finished in a three-way tie for second place in the SEC after falling 81-86 at Kentucky in the season finale. The Vols, who finished just one game behind the Wildcats, voted not to accept an invitation to the NIT soon after the loss in Lexington.

1973-74

Freshman forward Ernie Grunfeld burst onto the scene to lead the Vols with 17.4 points per game, earning first team all-conference honors. UT received an invitation to the new Conference Commissioners Association Tournament where it fell to 10th-ranked Indiana, 71-73. In early April, David Moss, a promising freshman on the junior varsity and occasionally on the varsity, underwent surgery to amputate his left leg after cancer had been discovered. After a quick recovery, Moss returned as a student assistant coach.

1974-75

Freshman Bernard King joined with Ernie Grunfeld to form the Ernie & Bernie Show. King, who earned first team All-America honors and was the SEC Player of the Year, scored 42 points in his first career game at Tennessee and went on to average 26.4 points, a school record that still stands. An 18-8 record secured a bid to the National Commissioners Invitational Tournament.

1975-76

The Ernie & Bernie Show brought Ray Mears his second NCAA Tournament appearance, while both players netted first team All-America honors. For the second year in a row, King was named SEC Player of the Year, while Grunfeld's 25.3 points led the league.

1976-77

The Vols won their third Southeastern Conference championship under Ray Mears as the Ernie & Bernie era came to an end. Both players earned first team All-America honors while splitting SEC Player of the Year awards. Mears was named the SEC Coach of the Year for the second time in his career. The Vols made their third NCAA Tournament appearance but lost to 10th-ranked Syracuse in the first round.

1977-78

Cliff Wettig served as acting coach for Ray Mears, who was unable to coach because of nervous exhaustion. The losses of Bernard King, Ernie Grunfeld and Mike Jackson helped contribute to Tennessee's first losing season since 1961-62.

1978-79

In Don DeVoe's first season at the helm of the Tennessee program, the surprising Vols rebounded from their first losing season since the early 1960s to post a 21-12 record and win the Southeastern Conference Tournament championship with a 75-69 overtime win over Kentucky. First team All-America Reggie Johnson led the Vols to the NCAA Tournament, where they fell to top-seeded Notre Dame in the second round.



Mike Jackson helped lead the Vols to an SEC Championship in 1977.

1979-80

Reggie Johnson became the third Vol to win first team All-America honors more than once in his career. The Vols made another appearance in the NCAA Tournament following an 18-11 year.

1980-81

Don DeVoe earned SEC Coach of the Year honors after directing the Vols to a 21-8 record and the Regional Semifinals of the NCAA Tournament. During the season, the Vols won the Sugar Bowl Classic with wins over Arizona State and Duke.

1981-82

The Vols set a school record with their 54.2 field goal percentage en route to making their fourth consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance. Tennessee's 20-10 overall record and 13-5 SEC mark brought the school its seventh SEC championship. Junior Dale Ellis earned first team All-America honors and was the SEC Player of the Year after ranking second in the nation in field goal percentage with a 65.4 accuracy rate.

1982-83

Tennessee made its school-record fifth NCAA Tournament appearance in a row, advancing to the second round before being eliminated by the No. 1 seed for the third consecutive year. Dale Ellis earned first team All-America honors and was the SEC Player of the Year for the second year in a row. Ellis became just the third Vol to reach the 2,000-point plateau.

1983-84

The Vols won the 1,000th game in school history with an 83-59 win over Mississippi. Tennessee appeared in the NIT, advancing to the quarterfinals.

1984-85

The Vols posted a 22-15 record that was highlighted by a 12-game home winning streak. Tennessee appeared in the NIT, its seventh straight postseason tournament appearance.

1985-86

Tony White led the SEC in scoring with 22.2 points per game while earning first team all-conference honors. Rob Jones set a school record for games played at 130.

1986-87

Tony White was named SEC Player of the Year while leading the SEC in scoring with 24.5 points per game.

1987-88

Tennessee opened Thompson-Boling Arena with an impressive 82-56 win over Marquette. UT ranked third nationally in attendance, averaging more than 20,000 fans per game. The Vols returned to postseason action with an appearance in the National Invitation Tournament. For the third year in a row, a Vol led the SEC in scoring when Dyron Nix averaged 22.2 points.



Tony White set a school record with 51 points against Auburn on Feb. 14, 1987.

1988-89

Honorable mention All-America selection Dyron Nix averaged 21.6 points in leading the Vols back to the NCAA Tournament.

1989-90

Wade Houston was named the 13th head coach in Tennessee history and promptly led a team that featured seven freshmen and no returning starters to the National Invitation Tournament.

1990-91

Entering the SEC Tournament with just nine regular season wins, the Vols won three games in as many days at the league tournament before falling to Alabama in the championship game. Allan Houston, the SEC Tournament MVP, earned honorable mention All-America honors.

1991-92

The Vols received their 15th postseason invite in 19 years when the NIT extended an invitation.

1992-93

Allan Houston became Tennessee's all-time leading scorer with 2,801 career points. Lang Wiseman was named the SEC's male student-athlete of the year.

1994-95

In his first season as UT's head coach, Kevin O'Neill more than doubled the wins from the previous season.

1995-96

Playing one of the nation's toughest schedules, UT returned to postseason play with an appearance in the NIT. Steve Hamer set an SEC Tournament record with a 31-point, 21-rebound performance against Alabama.

1997-98

The Vols returned to the NCAA Tournament in Jerry Green's first season as head coach.

1998-99

Tennessee won its first SEC Eastern Division title since divisional play began in 1992. UT went 14-1 at Thompson-Boling Arena, the best home record in arena history.

1999-2000

One of the most successful seasons in school history, the Vols won a school-record 26 games and advanced to the Sweet Sixteen of the NCAA Tournament after winning a share of the overall SEC title. UT finished the season ranked 11th by the Associated Press.

2000-01

The Vols tied the highest ranking in school history when the Associated Press listed them fourth. Tennessee won the Rainbow Classic and advanced to its fourth NCAA Tournament in a row.

2001-02

Buzz Peterson was named the 16th head coach in Tennessee history on April 4, 2001. Vincent Yarbrough finished a close second in the SEC scoring race with 18.1 points per game. Marcus Haislip was the 13th overall pick in the NBA Draft.

2002-03

Tennessee returned to the postseason with an appearance in the National Invitation Tournament. Ron Slay led the SEC in scoring with 21.2 points and was named the SEC Player of the Year while earning third team All-America honors.

2003-04

Scooter McFadgon broke a 35-year-old school record with his 91.2-percent free throw shooting while ranking fifth in the nation. The Vols made their second NIT appearance in a row.



Steve Hamer had 31 points and 21 rebounds in a 1996 SEC Tournament game against Alabama.