

Chapter 7 - Susan Tucker



Sue Tucker

Personal

Susan (“Sue”) Marie Tucker was born on December 26, 1962, the daughter of William and Ruth Tucker. Sue was “into” athletics from an early age. Deb Pozega Pierce of the *Lansing State Journal* wrote a feature article on Sue headlined as follows: “Versatile Sue Tucker – A complete athlete” ([Source](#)):

Age 7: Sue Tucker, the young athlete, is into swimming. She swims a lot. She swims all the time. She likes to compete and she wins a lot. There’s something about winning that she likes. A lot.

Age 8: Sue Tucker, the tomboy, wants to play football. She is, as it turns out, better at it than most of the boys in her class. “Girls aren’t supposed to do that,” she is told. “Girls can’t do that.” Her dad, Bill, growls, “There’s no such word as ‘can’t.’ You can do what you want.” She plays. She plays well.

Age 10: Sue Tucker, the versatile one, plays tennis. She plays hard and she plays to win. She wins a lot.

Age 14: Sue Tucker, self-proclaimed rookie, is all raw talent and no finesse on the basketball court. She knows little about the game’s structure, its background. (“Nancy Lieberman?” she remembers asking. “Who’s that?”) She knows only that she likes the game, the competition.

Okemos High School

In high school Tucker was a four-year starter on the girls' varsity squad (1979-82), first as a freshman at Haslett High School (1979-80) and then at Okemos High School (1980-83) where she played basketball her last three years of high school.

1979-80

As a freshman for Haslett High, Tucker averaged 18 points and 13 rebounds per game, leading Haslett to a District Class C title ([Source](#)).

1980-81

With the start of the new school Tucker had transferred to Okemos but did not play during the Chieftains first five games due to a preseason ankle sprain.



Front Row: Angela Poletes, Terri Carvey, Kathy Barron, Audrey Brink, Cheryl Bartholic, Jill Cooley. Row Two: Monica Moya, Mary DeRose, Ann Mead, Jane Foster, Amy Peterson, Sue Tucker, Jane Cambray. Row Three: Jason Mott, Coach Ron Mott, Manager: Joanne Poletes.

Regular Season

On September 25, Okemos defeated **Howell**, 48-37, with Tucker pulling down 16 rebounds and scoring 14 points ([Source](#)).

On September 30, the Chieftains downed **Charlotte**, 53-36, with Tucker leading all scorers with 13 points ([Source](#)).

By mid-October, Okemos was undefeated at 5-0 in Capital Circuit girls' basketball. On October 14, the Chieftains defeated **Lansing Catholic Central**, 46-40, with Tucker scoring 13 points ([Source](#)).

By October 21, an undefeated (9-0) Okemos beat **Eaton Rapids**, 64-35, with Tucker grabbing six rebounds and scoring 15 points, on seven baskets and 1-1 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On October 26, the *Lansing State Journal* headline read "Okemos girls 10-0" following the Chieftains 42-39 victory the night before over **East Lansing**. "Tucker dominated the rebounds with 23, and added 19 points on seven baskets and shooting 5-10 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

Okemos continued unbeaten on October 28 as the Chieftains downed **Mason**, 52-38. Tucker grabbed 15 rebounds and led all scorers with 19 points on nine baskets and 1-2 from the charity line ([Source](#)).

On October 30, "Tucker was the only player to score in double figures..., pumping in 26 points [on 12 baskets and 2-3 from the free throw line] to pace Okemos to a 52-34 non-conference girls' basketball win over **Haslett**" ([Source](#)). The win kept the Chieftains record untarnished for the season at 12-0 overall and 7-0 in the Capital Circuit.

On November 4, Okemos clinched a share of the Capital Circuit title with a 42-31 victory over **Charlotte**, lifting the "Chieftains league slate to 8-0, and [keeping] their season record perfect at 13-0" ([Source](#)). Tucker pulled in 10 rebounds while leading all scorers with 17 points on eight baskets and 1-7 on free throws.

On November 8, Class B Okemos topped Class A **Eastern**, 43-42, aided by two fourth-quarter baskets by Tucker who finished the contest with a game-high 18 points on nine baskets. While Tucker went 0-5 from the free throw line, Okemos upped its season record to 14-0 ([Source](#)).

On November 11, Okemos trounced **DeWitt**, 54-28, clinching the Capital Circuit league championship and keeping the Chieftains record perfect at 9-0 in the Circuit and 15-0 overall. Tucker pulled down 13 rebounds while leading all scorers with 24 points on 11 baskets and 2-7 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On November 19, the *State Journal* headline read “Tucker hits 25 in Okemos; 16th straight win” which came just a day before as Tucker sank two free throws with 15 seconds left in the game, keeping Okemos’ unbeaten record unscathed by defeating Capital Circuit rival **Catholic Central**, 44-42 ([Source](#)). Tucker’s scoring came with nine baskets and 7-8 from the charity line.

Districts

On November 20, Okemos upended **Charlotte**, 39-26, in the Class B district opener. “Sue Tucker did a fine job for us..., Okemos Coach Ron Mott said. “She got us off to a good start and then everything just fell into place” ([Source](#)). Tucker’s 17 points were earned on seven baskets and 3-3 from the free throw line

On November 22, “Sue Tucker tallied 18 points..., including all eight of Okemos High’s first quarter markers” ([Source](#)) in the Chieftains 44-35 victory over **Holt**. Tucker led all scorers with 18 points on seven baskets and a perfect 4-4 on free throws.

On November 24, Okemos topped **Easton Rapids**, 44-26, to up the Chieftains’ season record to 19-0. Terri Carvey picked up the scoring for the Chieftains when Sue Tucker had to come out of the game. “Tucker, Okemos’ sophomore sensation, exited the game with 1:40 left in the first quarter because her ankle was taped too tightly. She returned three minutes into the second quarter, but did not play until the start of the second half. ... Tucker scored all six of her points [on three baskets] in the final period” ([Source](#)) and grabbed six rebounds.

Regionals

On December 3, “Sue Tucker poured in 25 points in three-and-a-half quarters...as Okemos ran its winning streak to 20 games ([Source](#)) in a 66-39 victory over **Greenville** in an opening round game of the Class B state regional tournament at Lakewood High in Lake Odessa. “Tucker, a transfer from Haslett who missed the first five games of the season after suffering a severe ankle sprain in a preseason scrimmage, went to the bench with 6:40 to play in the game. The 25 points was her second highest production of the season” ([Source](#)). Tucker’s scoring came on ten baskets and 5-6 shooting from the free throw line.

On December 6, Okemos came out the winner, 59-51, over **Ovid-Elsie** in the Class B regional championship game. Despite Tucker again suffering a left ankle sprain and having to head for the locker room wearing an ice pack, she nevertheless was the game’s third leading scorer with 20 points on eight baskets and a perfect 4-4 from the strip ([Source](#)).

Quarterfinals

On December 10, Okemos, playing in a Class B state quarterfinals match, came up short with a slow start against and loss to **Grand Rapids West Catholic**, losing 55-48. Tucker led all scorers with 29 points on 12 baskets and a perfect 5-5 from the free throw line. But Tucker played “under adverse conditions” having to wear an air cast on her left ankle because of the sprain she suffered in the regional victory last Saturday over **Ovid-Elsie**” ([Source](#)).

Commenting on Tucker’s performance, Chieftains Coach Ron Mott said “I know she was in pain, but what a job she did. There can’t be too many better players in the state” ([Source](#)). Following the game, Tucker said: “The ankle really hurt and I tried not to let it bother me. This is such a sad loss because all of us played so well together all season, and it hurts when you get this far and start off like we did. We didn’t get up” ([Source](#)).

OKEMOS VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL	
<i>Chiefs</i>	<i>Opponents</i>
53 Holt	45
46 Eaton Rapids	32
50 Harry Hill	30
68 Mason	30
48 Howell	37
53 Charlotte	36
37 DeWitt	20
46 L.C.C.	40
64 Eaton Rapids	35
42 East Lansing	39
52 Mason	39
52 Haslett	38
42 Charlotte	31
43 Eastern	42
54 DeWitt	28
44 L.C.C.	42
<i>District</i>	
39 Charlotte	26
44 Holt	35
44 Eaton Rapids	26
<i>Regional</i>	
66 Greenville	39
59 Ovid-Elsie	51
<i>Quarterfinals</i>	
Grand Rapids	
48 West Catholic	54
<i>Over All Record</i>	
21-1 League, District and Regional Champions	
Co-Captains: Jane Foster, Terri Carvey	
Coaches Award: Amy Peterson	
Most Improved: Jane Foster	
Most valuable: Sue Tucker, Terri Carvey	

The 1980 Girls' Varsity Basketball team finished an excellent season, losing in the quarter finals to the defending state champion, Grand Rapids West Catholic. En route to the final game, they remained undefeated in League play, capturing the League crown, and also earning District and Regional trophies under second-year coach, *Ron Mott*. The girls showed enthusiasm, determination, pride and composure in pulling out the close games.

Laurels

As Okemos prepared for its December 6th clash with Ovid-Elsie for the Class B regional championship, *Lansing State Journal* Staff Writer Bob Gross wrote: "Sue Tucker is only a sophomore, but she plays like a seasoned veteran on Okemos High School's unbeaten girls' basketball team" ([Source](#)).



Sue Tucker, the strong 5-foot-10 sophomore forward from Okemos High, came off an early season injury to average almost 16 points per game and routinely pulled in 13 rebounds. Her added ability at assist-making and her 55 percent success ratio from the free throw line put her among the top all-around players in the area.

Tucker ended the season averaging 17 points per game and was recognized as co-MVP on her team. While not included on the 1980 Associated Press Class B All-State girls' basketball team (selected by Michigan sportswriters and broadcasters, Tucker received Special Honor recognition ([Source](#)). Locally, Tucker was named to All-League and All-Area teams. She also was on the Okemos girls' track and volleyball teams.



1981-82

At the outset of the 1981 Chieftain season, a feature story on Sue Tucker reported as follows (read top two inserts from left to right and then bottom two inserts from left to right):

TUCKER, NOW 16 years old and a 5-foot-11 junior at Okemos High School, is not a rookie anymore. She is, in the minds of those who watch carefully for such things, one of the best basketball players in the state. Certainly, she is one of the best in mid-Michigan, all power and drive, all concentration and determination on the court.

Odd, then, that when she speaks of her game, she speaks of need for improvement, of hard work yet to be done, of the fear that lays like a coiled snake in her stomach prior to each competition.

"It's always hard," Tucker said. "I've worked so hard. Some people say, 'Oh, it just comes naturally,' but I don't agree. I work hard at it.

"I don't think it's easy. I really don't."

Alone, Tucker is excellent. Teamed with Kathy Barron, Cheryl Bartholic, Mary DeRose, Chris Carvey, she is nearly unstoppable.

Where else can she improve? Everywhere, she said insistently.

"I'm never satisfied with myself," Tucker said. "I never am. You always can better yourself.

"I've had that all my life. I can get 30-some points and I look back and say, 'now, what did I do wrong?'

"I'm never happy with myself. Maybe that's why I'm improving. I'm always trying to do something better."

And so are the Chieftains, who won the Capital Circuit title last season and reached the quarterfinals before Grand Rapids West Catholic stopped them. None of that this year, Tucker said. None of that.

"LAST YEAR WE had an excellent team, but now we have so much depth," she said. "I've never seen so much depth. It's great.

"We're not going to fall short. Last year we didn't make it . . . we all know the feeling of falling short, and we don't want it.

"It's like the Okemos spirit. It's so different. Pride — that's what we all have. Mr. Mott, he makes us feel proud of ourselves."

So Tucker keeps working, for the team and for herself. She works hard at everything, whether its schoolwork (she carried better than a 3.7 grade point average), track and field (she was runnerup in the state Class B meet last year in the high jump, leaping 5-5), volleyball, basketball.

She realizes that she has always been a winner, always played on a successful team. Maybe things would be different if she hadn't. Still, it's doubtful her attitude would have changed, since her family has always encouraged — indeed, demanded — that she be the best she can.

"THE NAME," she said. "You've got to live up the name.' That's what my dad always says. 'You've got to live up the name.'"

How far can she take her talents? How well can she develop them? With another year of high school ball ahead of her, anything can happen. She has not been immune to injury, having suffered serious ankle sprains and, most recently, chipping a bone in her finger. But she works around such things, working toward improvement and, hopefully, college ball at a major university.



1982 Class B Champs: Joanne Poletes, Connie Keros, Jill Fortino, Audrey Brink, Cheryl Bartholic, Monica Moya, Mary Derosa, Kathy Barron, Anne Mead, Celeste Waldmiller, Jill Cooley, Sue Tucker, Hope Helmbrecht, Grace Keros, Chris Carvey, Cheri Brophy, COACH RON MOTT, Jason Mott.

1982 Okemos *Tomahawk*



Junior Photo

Regular Season

In the Chieftains' season opener, with Sue Tucker out due to an injury, Okemos lost to Class A **Holt** by one point, 41-40, in double overtime. The game would turn out to be the Chieftains' only loss during the schedule that followed – and a launching pad for the Chieftains to run off 49 straight wins during this and the following season.

On September 12, Okemos downed **Grand Ledge**, 65-53, in a non-conference game, with Tucker grabbing seven rebounds and leading all scorers with 29 points on 14 baskets and 1-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 15, "Tucker scored 26 [on thirteen baskets] points in only 12 minutes of play" ([Source](#)) in Okemos' 72-25 romp over **Eaton Rapids**, upping the Chieftains' record to 2-1 overall. If there was any Tucker miscue, it was missing her only free throw attempt.

On September 22, Okemos blasted **Mason**, 61-14. "Tucker fired home 23 points and handed out five assists as Okemos raised its league slate to 2-0 and 3-1 overall" ([Source](#)). Tucker scored on 11 baskets and 1-2 shooting from the foul line.

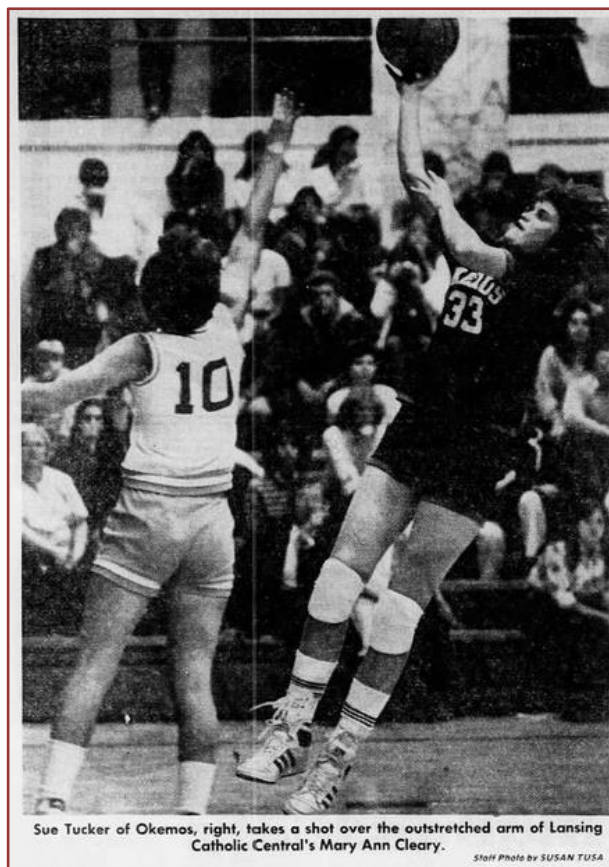
On September 24, Okemos romped over **Ovid-Elsie**, 63-24, with Tucker chipping in ten points on five baskets ([Source](#)).

On September 30, Sue Tucker pumped in 11 field goals, scoring 22 points, as the Chieftains upped their Capital Circuit record to 3-0 in a 62-31 victory over **Charlotte** ([Source](#)).

On October 6, Tucker led all scorers with 28 points on ten baskets and 8-12 from the free throw line as Okemos defeated **DeWitt**, 64-45, upping the Chieftains' season record to 6-1 and 4-0 in the Capital Circuit league ([Source](#)).

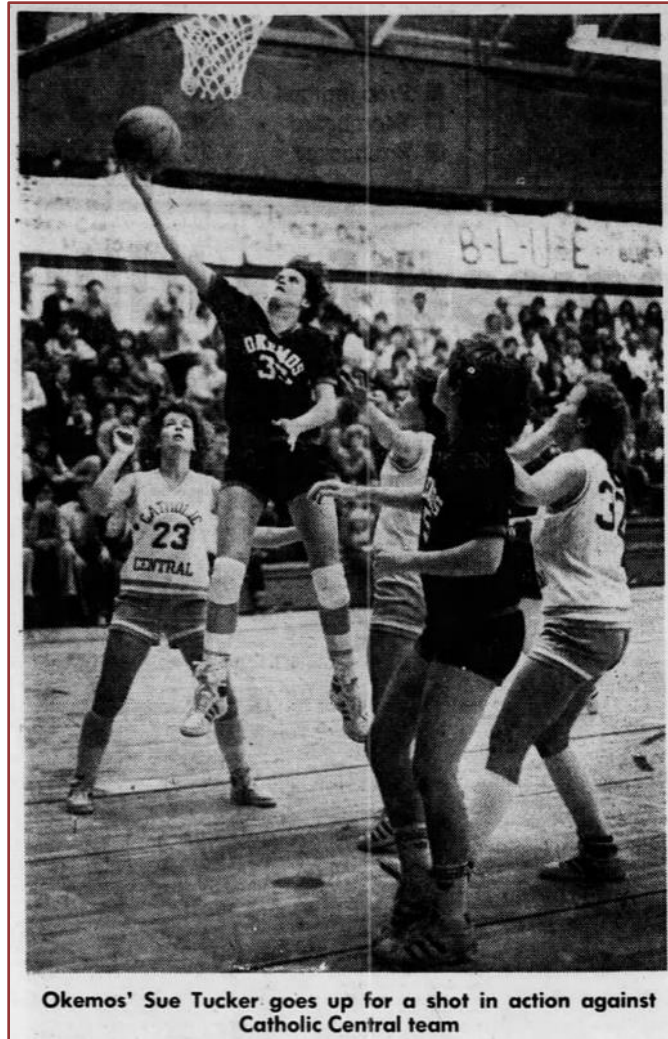
On October 11, Okemos' season record rose to 7-1 as the Chieftains nearly doubled up on **Eastern**, winning 49-25, in a game that saw Tucker grab eight rebounds and score 13 points on five baskets and 3-5 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On October 13, Okemos beat **Lansing Catholic Central**, 56-35, with Tucker leading all scorers with 24 points on 12 baskets and 0-3 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).



Sue Tucker of Okemos, right, takes a shot over the outstretched arm of Lansing Catholic Central's Mary Ann Cleary.

Staff Photo by SUSAN TUSA



On October 17, Okemos won its 9th straight, downing **Williamston**, 55-31. Tucker netted six of the Chieftains first seven points, scored 10 points in the first quarter, and was the game's leading scorer with 19 points on eight baskets and 3-9 at the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On October 21, Okemos pressed winless **Eaton Rapids** into 62 turnovers on the way to winning, 74-23. Playing only 10 minutes, Tucker led all scorers with 14 points on six baskets and 2-2 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On October 24, Okemos bombed **East Lansing**, 62-27, with Tucker again leading all scorers with 19 points on six baskets and nearly perfect 6-7 free throws ([Source](#)).

On October 27, "Okemos exploded to a 25-1 lead in the first quarter as the Chieftains emptied their bench for the remainder of their [65-31] win over **Mason**" ([Source](#)). While Tucker was 0-2 from the free throw line, she led all scorers with 14 points on seven baskets.

On October 29, the Chieftains posted their 13th straight victory, defeating **St. Johns High**, 52-22, with Tucker leading all scorers with 10 points on three baskets and 4-9 shooting from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On November 3, Okemos, in downing **Charlotte**, 77-38, won its 14th straight game, opening up a 2-game lead (8-0) over second place Catholic Central (6-2) in the Capital Circuit league. Tucker led all scorers with 24 points netted on ten baskets and perfect 4-4 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On November 10, Okemos remained unbeaten with a 64-27 thrashing of **DeWitt**. “After claiming a 27-12 halftime edge, Okemos reeled off 22 third-quarter [points], turning the game into a one-sided affair” ([Source](#)). Tucker tallied 15 points on five baskets and 5-7 from the charity stripe.

Going into the November 14th game against **Williamston**, Okemos was 16-1 and ranked sixth in Class B in the coaches’ poll. After Williamston held a 22-17 lead at halftime, “the Chieftains switched defenses in the second half, varying man-to-man, zone and presses and pulled away. Tucker and [Jill] Cooley pounded the boards the entire game, combining for 23 rebounds” ([Source](#)). Okemos turned what could have been a loss into a 52-24 win, with Tucker’s eight baskets, 5-8 from the free throw line, and 21 points nearly outscoring Williamston’s 24 points.

On November 17, Tucker scored nine of her 15 points in the fourth quarter as Okemos completed a perfect Capital Circuit season by downing **Lansing Catholic Central**, 48-38. Tucker led the Chieftains’ scoring with 15 points on five baskets and 5-9 from the charity line ([Source](#)).

Districts

On November 21, Okemos defeated **Fowlerville**, 66-34. Tucker, the game’s leading scorer, grabbed seven rebounds and tossed in 22 of her 24 points during the first half, scoring on 11 baskets and 2-4 on free throws ([Season](#)).

On November 24, Okemos exploded for 49 first-half points on the way to a 93-34 romp over **Eaton Raids**, giving the Chieftains a Class B district championship and their 19th win in 20 tries for the season. Leading all scorers, Tucker netted 20 points on ten baskets (0-3 on free throws) ([Source](#)).

Regionals

On December 1, Okemos defeated **Corunna** in the first round of Class B regional play. The next day *Lansing State Journal* headlines read “Tucker lifts Okemos with scoring, passing” ([Source](#)) and “Tucker spurs on Okemos” ([Source](#)) as Tucker led all scorers with 27 points on nine field goals and a perfect 9-9 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

Tucker lifts Okemos with scoring, passing

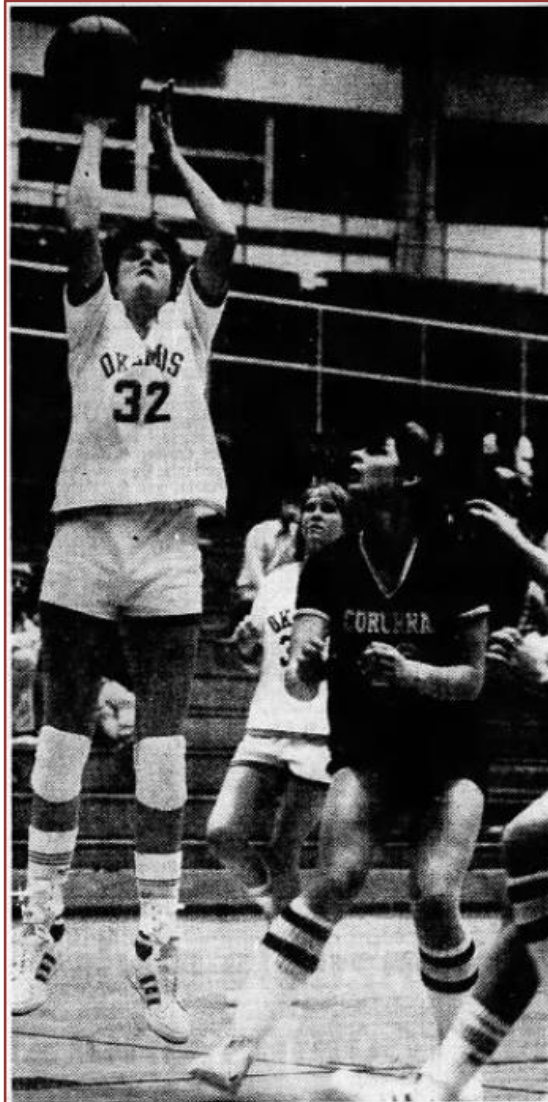
CHARLOTTE — The unstoppable Sue Tucker was that and more Tuesday night.

The 5-foot-11 junior forward-center netted 27 points and set up several other baskets in guiding her Okemos High School girls' basketball squad to a 72-54 victory over Corunna in the first round of Class B regional play at Charlotte High School.

Corunna, directed by assistant coach Dick Osborn due to the sudden illness of head coach William Kenyon Tuesday afternoon, tried all night to shut off the towering Tucker from getting inside. When the Cavaliers did manage to keep Tucker outside, she was either right on target with 10-foot jump shots or setting up senior center Mary DeRose or senior forward Jill Cooley with pinpoint passes under the Corunna basket.

"WE KNOW teams are always looking to shut off Sue, but if they gang up on her, it keeps other players open," said Okemos Coach Ron Mott. "Sue was certainly one of the keys to the win — she's really something out there."

Tucker, who finished with nine field goals and a nine-for-nine performance at the free throw line, time and again got the ball into DeRose or Cooley when she was double- or triple-teamed. That ability enabled DeRose to finish with 17 points and Cooley with 12.



Okemos standout Sue Tucker (32) scores an easy basket over Corunna's Marshon Honke Tuesday night.

Photo by EILEEN BLASS

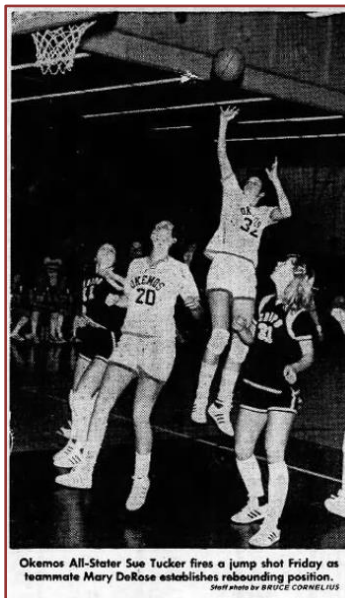
On December 5, in the Class B region finals, Okemos nearly doubled up on **Greenville**, winning by a 39 point margin, 80-41. Tucker was second in scoring for the Chieftains, netting 17 points on five baskets and a nearly perfect 7-8 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

Quarterfinals

Going into the Class B quarterfinal match up against **Grand Rapids Christian**, Tucker was averaging 20 points and 11 rebounds per game. On December 9, the Chieftains marched on to the semifinals with a 49-42 win over Grand Rapids, blowing “Grand Rapids right out of its game plan in the opening quarter, keeping the Eagles from crossing half court on almost every possession. Okemos guard Sue Tucker and forward Cheryl Bartholic converted most of the Grand Rapids turnovers into points, propelling Okemos to a 17-2 lead” ([Source](#)). Tucker led all scorers with 25 points on nine baskets and 7-12 on free throws.

Semifinals

On December 11, Okemos ran over **Manistee**, 57-38, in a Class B semifinal. Okemos’ Kathy Barron opened the scoring following a Chieftain defensive rebound with less than 30 seconds off the clock. After that, the quarter belonged to Tucker; she made field goals of every variety, from hook shots to jump shots. The All-State standout grabbed one rebound and drove the length of the court for a layup. Tucker had 12 of the Chieftains’ first-quarter points, then sat out the second quarter. But even with her on the bench, Okemos had little trouble beating the Manistee press. Five different players scored for Okemos in that quarter to increase the Okemos lead to 15 points by half-time ([Source](#)). In the second half, “Tucker, who had scored just four points in the third quarter, took the Chieftains’ next possession in for a layup and drew a foul ... [Coach Ron Mott] said that was when he figured his team was headed for the title game. “When Tucker got that basket, right then I knew,” said Mott. “I looked at our ladies, and I knew” ([Source](#)). Playing slightly less than three quarters, Tucker finished with 26 points on nine baskets and nearly perfect 8-9 shooting from the free throw line.



Final (Championship Game)

On December 12, in the game for the Class B state championship at the University of Detroit's Calihan Hall, Okemos turned a 13-point deficit into a 12-point lead in defeating **Marshall**, 64-52, thus securing Okemos' first state title in girls' basketball. The win also secured Okemos' second Class B state basketball crown in less than a year, following the boys' winning the state title in March.

"I knew we would catch up." Sue Tucker commenting on Okemos' comeback in the final.

1982 Okemos Yearbook

"Tucker finished with 27 point, the most ever scored by a player in a Class B championship game. She was nine of 19 from the floor, 9 of 10 from the free throw line" ([Source](#)). Okemos ended its season with a 24-1 record, the championship victory being the team's 24th win in a row after losing the season opener to Class A **Holt** by only one point. "A prime reason for winning the championship," Sue recalled, "was having great team chemistry and Ron Mott who was a phenomenal." (Sue Tucker, personal communication).



1982 Okemos Yearbook



THE STATE CHAMPIONS — After losing their first game of the season in overtime to Holt, the Okemos girls went on to register 24 straight victories en route to the Class B state title. Above, front row, from left: Connie Keros, Joanne Poletes, Cheri Brophy, Kathy Barron, Ron Mott (head coach), Audrey Brink, Jill

Fortino; back row, from left: Dr. John Pudliner, team physician, Anne Mead, Cheryl Bartholic, Mary DeRose, Jill Cooley, Sue Tucker, Celeste Waldmiller, Hope Helmbrecht, Grace Keros, Chris Carvey, Monica Moya.

Staff photo by SUE TUSA

GIRLS' VARSITY BASKETBALL		
Okemos	Opponent	
40	Holt	41
65	Grand Ledge	53
72	Eaton Rapids	26
61	Mason	14
63	Ovid-Elsie	24
62	Charlotte	31
64	Dewitt	45
49	Eastern	25
56	L.C.C.	35
55	Williamston	31
74	Eaton Rapids	23
61	East Lansing	27
65	Mason	31
52	St. Johns	22
77	Charlotte	38
64	Dewitt	37
52	Williamston	24
48	L.C.C.	38
DISTRICTS		
Okemos 68	Fowlerville 34	
Okemos 93	Eaton Rapids 34	
REGIONALS		
Okemos 72	Corunna 54	
Okemos 80	Greenville 41	
QUARTERFINALS		
Okemos 49	Grand Rapids Christ. 42	
CLASS "B" FINALS		
Okemos 64	Marshall 52	
ALL STATE		
Sue Tucker		
ALL STATE HONORABLE MENTION		
— Kathy Barron		
FIRST TEAM ALL LEAGUE		
Sue Tucker		
Kathy Barron		
ALL LEAGUE HONORABLE MENTION		
— Mary DeRose		

Girls' Varsity Basketball Scoreboard for the 1981 Season (1982 Tomahawk)

Laurels

As a junior, Sue and her sophomore teammate Kathy Barron were named to the Capital Circuit All-League First Team ([Source](#)). The *Lansing State Journal* named Sue Tucker as starting forward to the All-Area Team and Ron Mott as that team's coach ([Source](#)).

Tucker averaged more than 20 points and 11 rebounds per game this season in leading the Chieftains' title drive, and she rarely played more than three quarters until tournament time. She has often scored with a deadly hook shot; she can shoot it with either hand and uses it with accuracy from 10 feet or less ([Source](#)).

Tucker also was named to the 1981 Associated Press Class B girl's All-State basketball team ([Source](#)).

***Okemos'
Tucker an
All-Stater***



Sue Tucker



Sue Tucker

In June of 1982 Tucker was one of 15 Michigan prep basketball players named to the B/C Time All-America Basketball Team for girls. "The team, chosen by sports reporters at the St. Petersburg (Fla.) times and based on a nationwide poll of sportswriters, was comprised of 500 players from across the country" ([Source](#)).

1982-83



Senior Photo

Regular Season

On September 9, Okemos defeated **Williamston**, 52-31, in the Okemos Tip-Off Tournament at the Chieftains' gym. Sue Tucker led all scorers with 14 points on seven baskets ([Source](#)).



Varsity Team Photo (Sue Tucker #50) (1983 Tomahawk)

On September 11, Okemos downed **St. Johns**, 61-42, to win its own girls' basketball tournament. Tucker again led all scorers with 26 points on 11 baskets and a perfect 4-4 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 14, Okemos beat **Ovid-Elsie**, 60-43, in a non-league game. Tucker was on fire, leading all scorers with 24 points on five baskets and 14-16 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On September 16, Okemos downed **Lansing Catholic Central**, 55-36, placing the Chieftains 1-0 in the Capital Circuit and 4-0 on the season and extending their unbeaten streak to 28 games, a streak that goes back to last year's season opener, one-point loss to Class A Holt in double overtime. Tucker scored a game high total of 26 points to lead all scorers on 4-4 shooting from the free throw line and netting 10 baskets ([Source](#)).

On September 21, Okemos ran its record to 5-0 with a 50-33 win over **Sexton**. Tucker grabbed 10 rebounds and again led all scorers with 28 points on 11 baskets and shooting 6-11 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 23, Okemos upped its win streak to 30 with 66-37 Capital Circuit win over **DeWitt**. Again leading all scores, Tucker netted 23 points on eight baskets and 7-9 shooting from the stripe ([Source](#)).

On September 28, Okemos downed **Grand Ledge**, 56-41, extending the Chieftains' win streak to 31 games and a 7-0 record for the season. Tucker again led all scorers with 25 points on twelve baskets and 1-3 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On September 30, the Chieftains beat **Charlotte**, 56-20, again paced by Tucker. Despite seeing only first-half action, Tucker led all scorers with 23 points on 11 baskets and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)), upping the Chieftains' record to 3-0 in the league and 8-0 overall and their win streak to 32.



SENSATIONAL SUE — Sue Tucker, an All-State standout a year ago, has returned to average 23 points and 11 rebounds a game for the unbeaten and No. 1 ranked Okemos High Lady Chiefs basketball team. — Staff Photo By SUSAN TUSA.

Sue Tucker is a very good high school basketball player.

So good, in fact, offers to play in college have come from every school in the Big Ten Conference and more than a dozen other major schools.

But the 5-foot-11 senior All-Stater on unbeaten and No. 1 ranked Class B Okemos High, the 1981 state champion and winner of 32 straight games, pays little attention to all the fuss created wherever she and the Lady Chiefs play.

"I just try to do my best at all times," she said, one day last week at practice. "But it's not a team with just one player. We work together and although it's nice to win, I think having fun is also important. Our goals are to win the league again and if we're fortunate enough, the state championship once more. That would real nice."

In an early October feature story in the *Lansing State Journal*, Tucker was asked about the 32-game win streak, Tucker replied:

"I didn't know we had won that many until I read it in the paper one day," Tucker said. "It's nice but we're just going out each night and try to play our best. Our practices are hard but they pay off. This is a very close-knit team. We look out for each other, we care for each other and we do things together. ... It's not just a man's sport anymore," she said. "I think the [Okemos girls' basketball] program has come along very good and it'll get bigger."

[\(Source\)](#)

On October 5, Okemos ran its winning streak to 33 as the Chieftains defeated **Eastern**. Sue Tucker was again the game's scoring leader with 25 points on eight baskets and 9-13 shooting from the free throw line. As the game clock ticked down,

Eastern took its first and only lead, 37-36, when Rachel Dexter made two free throws...with 3:21 left. Tucker tied it on a free throw with 50 seconds left. With 17 seconds remaining, Okemos forced Eastern into a five-second violation, setting up Tucker's game winning drive.

...

Tucker, driving in from midcourt with five seconds left, moved around two Quaker defenders and threw up an off-balance five-foot shot when confronted by Eastern's Debbie Sweet.

Tucker won the scramble for the rebound and scored [just before the buzzer sounded], as Okemos stayed undefeated at 9-0 this season and its win streak was extended to 33 games

[\(Source\)](#).

On October 7, Okemos won its 34th consecutive game as the Chieftains (4-0, 10-0) picked up an easy win over **Mason**, with Tucker scoring eight points (on three baskets and 2-2 from the free throw line, second to Okemos' Kathy Barron who led all scorers with 12 points [\(Source\)](#)).

On October 11, the Chieftains topped **Lake Odessa Lakewood**, 67-58, notching their “35th win in a row”. While Lakewood coach Ron Coppess said his club was able to keep the Chieftains from running away with the game, it couldn’t stop All-State senior forward Sue Tucker ([Source](#)). “We played good, heads-up ball, but there’s just no stopping Tucker. She was the difference,” said Coppess following Tucker’s 33-point performance on 13 baskets and 7-11 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On October 14, Okemos upped its record to 12-0 overall and 4-0 in Capital Circuit play, winning its 36th straight game against **Eaton Rapids**, 56-41. Tucker returned to her leading scorer role with 21 points on ten field goals and 1-2 from the charity line ([Source](#)).

On October 19, Okemos boosted its winning streak to 37 in a row, defeating **East Lansing**, 54-32, in a non-league game. Okemos’ Kathy Barron led all scorers with 21 points, trailed by Tucker’s 15 points on six baskets 3-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On October 21, Okemos rolled to its 38th straight victory, 66-46, over **Catholic Central**. Tucker led the Chieftains’ scoring with 18 points on nine baskets, although she was sidelined with a knee bruise midway through the third quarter ([Source](#)).

On October 28, Okemos topped **DeWitt**, 50-45, keeping the Chieftains’ win streak alive at 39. Tucker did not play because of the knee bruise she suffered a week before in the Chieftains’ match with Catholic Central ([Source](#)).

On November 2, Okemos kept on rolling with Tucker grabbing 12 rebounds and scoring 21 points (on eight baskets and 5-8 on free throws) as the Chieftains won their 40th straight game (the longest streak in the state) over **Jackson Lumen Christi** ([Source](#)).

On November 4, Okemos (ranked No. 1 in the state girls’ Class B Coaches’ Poll) extended its winning streak to 41 with a 63-35 victory over **Catholic Central**. Tucker led all scorers with 20 points on seven baskets and 6-7 from the charity line ([Source](#)).

On November 9, it was “42 straight wins for Okemos” as the Chieftains defeated **Fowlerville**, 69-54, as Tucker led all scorers with 20 points on six baskets and a perfect 8-8 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On November 12, Okemos’s 58-19 win over **Mason** lifted the Chieftains to their 43rd straight win, 19-0 on the 1982 season, and within one win of a third straight perfect Capital Circuit season. The Chieftains were led by Hope Helmbrecht who grabbed ten rebounds and scored 22 points, followed by Tucker who scored eight points on three baskets and 2-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

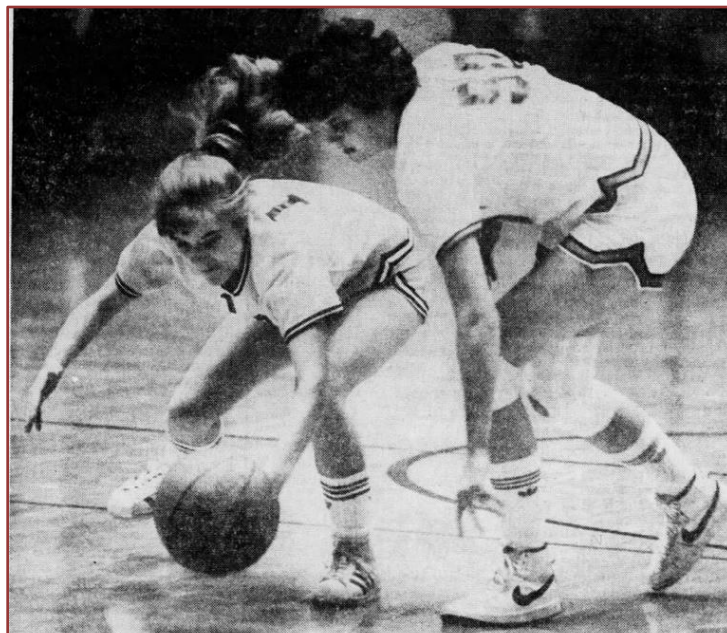


Sue Tucker (#50) in Team Huddle (1983 Tomahawk)

On November 16, Okemos upped its record to 20-0 with a 78-41 win over **Eaton Rapids**, also boosting the Chieftains' winning streak to 44 games. Tucker chipped in ten rebounds and 17 points on seven baskets and 3-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

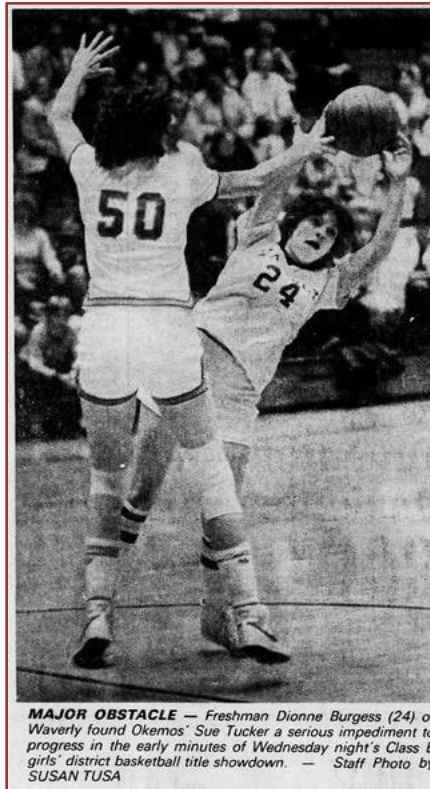
Districts

On November 22, Okemos outran **Haslett**, 59-30, extending its win streak to 45 games. Tucker sat out the entire second quarter after being benched with three fouls. "In the third quarter, with Tucker back in the lineup and the fast break working almost non-stop, Okemos fired in 17 points, including a streak of 14 that went unanswered by Haslett" ([Source](#)). For the night Tucker scored 16 points on seven baskets and 2-2 on free throws.



SAME OBJECTIVE — Okemos High's Sue Tucker (50) and Haslett's Sarah Porritt go after a loose ball in their Class B District basketball tournament game Monday. Okemos won 59-30. Photo by EILEEN BLASS

On November 24, Okemos stopped **Waverly**, 63-40, to win the Class B district title. Tucker scored 25 points on nine baskets and 11-15 on free throws, including seven in the fourth quarter ([Source](#)). The win upped the Chieftains' win streak to 46.



Regionals

On December 1, the Chieftains' defense held back **Greenville** which set the stage for Okemos handing Greenville a 63-35 whipping, upping Okemos' record to 23-0, and the win streak to 47. "Tucker had 11 of Okemos' 19 points in the third quarter as the Chiefs opened up a 54-21 lead, their biggest of the game" ([Source](#)). For the game Tucker had a total of 20 points on eight baskets and a perfect 4-4 on free throws.

On December 4, the Chieftains, "using the free throw line as their firing line in the fourth quarter, pulled off a 43-36 win" over **Caledonia** ([Source](#)) and upped their win streak to 48. The win gave Okemos the Class B regional championship. Tucker led all scorers with 19 points on eight baskets and 3-5 from the free throw line.

Quarterfinals

On December 8, the *Lansing State Journal* headline read: "It's 49th in a row for No. 1 Chiefs" ([Source](#)) as Okemos downed **Grand Rapids West Catholic**, 60-43. Tucker hauled in 11 rebounds and led all scorers with 24 points on nine field goals and a perfect six-for-six streak from the charity stripe.

Semifinals

But a "50 in a row" headline was not to be as Okemos, on December 10, lost to **Manistee**, 45-41, in the Class B semifinals. This for Manistee had to be sweet revenge because Okemos had knocked Manistee out of the title chase last year in the semifinals. Tucker led Okemos in scoring with 13 points on six baskets and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

Okemos varsity finished a fine season accomplished by determination and great coaching. In the last three seasons, the Chiefs have a record of 70 wins and only 3 losses. This year, the Capitol Circuit League and District championships are theirs. In the Regional Championship competition, Caledonia fell, 43-36 and the Ladies prevailed against Grand Rapids West Catholic for a quarter-final victory of 60-43. But, in a grueling match in the semi-finals, it was Manistee, the victor with a score of 45-41.

*All League 1st Team — **Kathy Barron, Sue Tucker**
2nd Team — **Hope Helmbrecht, Celeste Waldmiller.***

*Honorable Mention — **Chris Carvey***

Towne Courier All-Area Teams:

*1st — **Kathy Barron, Sue Tucker;** 2nd — **Chris Carvey***

Lansing State Journal Fabulous Five:

Kathy Barron, Sue Tucker

*Most Valuable Players: **Kathy Barron, Sue Tucker***

*Most Improved Player: **Hope Helmbrecht***

*Best Team Player: **Chris Carvey***

*All State Honors: **Kathy Barron, Sue Tucker***

*In addition **Kathy Barron** received: Detroit News and U.P.I. All-State 1st team, Free Press 3rd team and an honorable mention from the Associated Press.*

1983 Tomahawk

Laurels

On December 25, the *Lansing State Journal* announced its 1982 All-Area Girls' Basketball Team as including two Okemos Chieftains (Kathy Barron and Sue Tucker).



THE BEST AROUND — This team could beat just about anybody in the basketball business: the 1982 Lansing State Journal All-Area Girls' Basketball Team. The team members and coach are, from left to right, Karen Kramer of Portland St. Patrick; Kathy Barron, Okemos; Sue Pearsall, St. Johns; Sue Tucker, Okemos; Michelle Smith, Everett; and Tony Trierweiler Portland St. Patrick, Coach of the Year. — Staff Photo by BRUCE CORNELIUS

1982 All-Area Basketball Team

By DEB POZEGA PIERCE
Staff Writer

They've all got a specialty that separates them from the rest, puts them one rung above the excellent. And they're all all-around masters at basketball as well.

Meet the best in Mid-Michigan — the 1982 Lansing State Journal All-Area girls' basketball team. We think they're among the best players statewide in the hotly competitive sport of high school girls' basketball. Whether they'll turn out to be the proverbial "franchise players" for a college somewhere remains to be seen, but one thing's for certain: there's not a coach around that wouldn't like to have one of these players taking care of the home team. Or two or three of them, for that matter.

Sue "The Taskmaster" Tucker: Also known as "The Doctor" in some circles, Tucker, a 5-11 guard who was a three-time All-Capital Circuit choice and two-time Associated Press All-Stater, helped Okemos heap win upon win during her three years as a starter for the Lady Chiefs. With Tucker ruling the boards and the baseline — and most of the rest of the court, for that matter — the Lady Chiefs built up a 49-game win streak, the longest ever for a girls' Class B team in Michigan, won a state title in 1981 and made the semis in '82 before bowing to eventual champ Manistee. Tucker hit 22 points per game, shot 67 percent from the line, averaged five assists and 10 rebounds and fin-


The All-Area Team				
Player	School	Pos.	Ht.	Yr
Sue Tucker	Okemos	G	5-11	Sr.
Kathy Barron	Okemos	G	5-9	Jr.
Michelle Smith	Everett	C	6-5	Jr.
Sue Pearsall	St. Johns	FG	5-10	Sr.
Karen Kramer	Port.St.Pat.	F	5-9	Sr.

Coach: Tony Trierweiler, Port. St. Patrick

See ALL-AREA, Page 4B

ished with more than 1,500 career points for Coach Ron Mott's squad.

Chieftains Tucker and Barron also were unanimous choices to the Capital Circuit coaches' All-Conference girls' basketball team ([Source](#)); and Tucker was named to the 1982 Associated Press high school Class B girls All-State basketball team ([Source](#)).



Tucker 'Player of Year'

Sue Tucker, the 5-foot-11 senior who led the Okemos Chieftains to the state Class B semifinals this season, has been named Michigan Girls High School Player of the Year by Michigan Basketball Advisory Council.

Tucker averaged 22 points and 10 rebounds a game as Okemos won 49 straight games before losing to Manistee in the state semifinals.

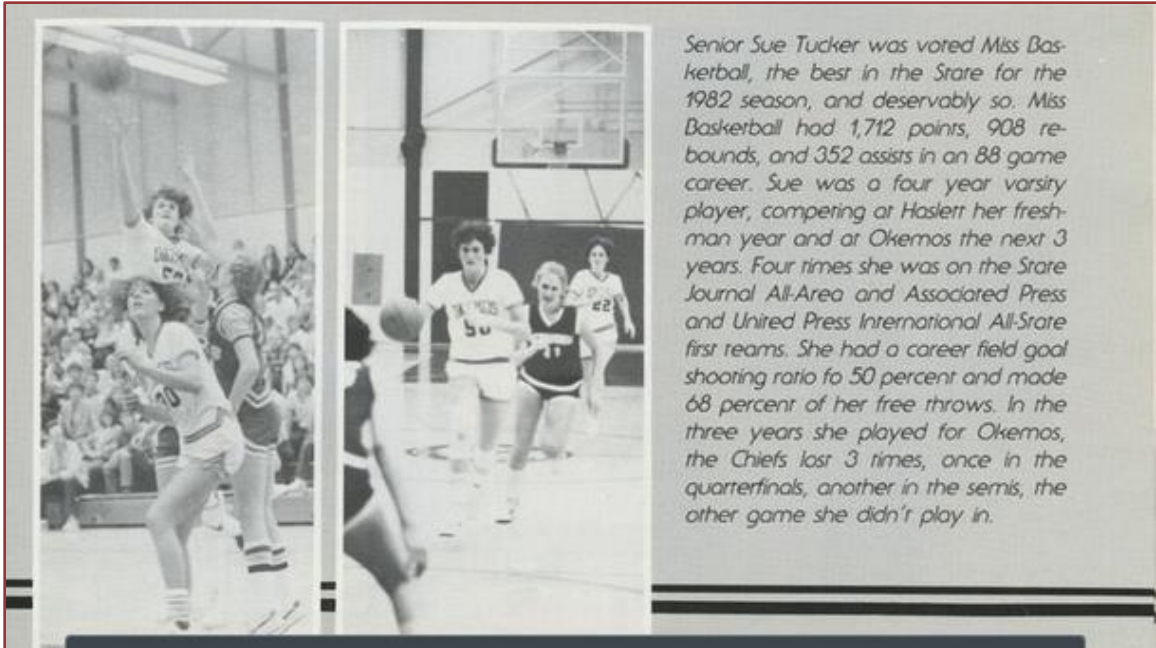
The council, a non-profit group with members statewide, also named Leland's Larry Glass and Flint Northern's Dottie Kulkulka as girls' high school basketball co-coaches of the year.

Tucker

Tucker also was voted the 1982 Michigan's Miss Basketball Award ([Source](#)).



MISS BASKETBALL AND CO. — Okemos High senior Sue Tucker and girls' basketball coach Ron Mott hold the trophy Tucker received from the Lansing State Journal Wednesday after she was named Michigan's Miss Basketball by the Michigan High School Basketball Coaches Association. At right is Okemos athletic director and boys' basketball coach Stan Stolz. — Staff Photo by GINGER SHARP

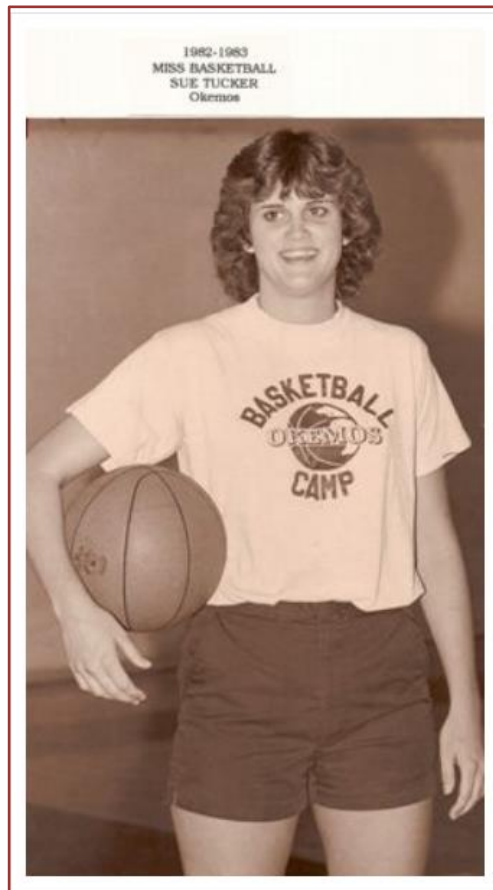


Senior Sue Tucker was voted Miss Basketball, the best in the State for the 1982 season, and deservedly so. Miss Basketball had 1,712 points, 908 rebounds, and 352 assists in an 88 game career. Sue was a four year varsity player, competing at Haslett her freshman year and at Okemos the next 3 years. Four times she was on the State Journal All-Area and Associated Press and United Press International All-State first teams. She had a career field shooting ratio to 50 percent and made 68 percent of her free throws. In the three years she played for Okemos, the Chiefs lost 3 times, once in the quarterfinals, another in the semis, the other game she didn't play in.

1983 Tomahawk



1982-1983
MISS BASKETBALL
SUE TUCKER
Okemos



1982-1983
MISS BASKETBALL
SUE TUCKER
Okemos

SUE TUCKER (OKEMOS HS) NAMED MISS BASKETBALL

Sue Tucker, who led Okemos High School to a 25-1 record this past season, was selected as Miss Basketball. Miss Tucker was honored at a award ceremony put on the the Lansing State Journal which sponsors the Miss Basketball award.

Sue ended her outstanding career against eventual state champion Manistee in the semi-finals. In her 4 year varsity career, Sue scored over 1700 points, played 69 games, had 759 rebounds, 276 assists, shot 52% from the floor and 76% from the line. This season she averaged 20 points, 11 rebounds, 4 assists, and 3 steals per game. Sue also maintained a 3.6 GPA in the classroom.

Miss Tucker has been heavily recruited by many major colleges and her coach, Ron Mott, has no doubts that she will help whichever college she decides to attend.

Tucker was recognized five times as an All-American Basketball Player, including by B/C Time, Street and Smith, National High School Athletic Coaches Association All American (sponsored by Converse Basketball), Parade, and Adidas. Sue recalls, "I was very excited by the five different All American honors and feel this was my highest accomplishment" (Sue Tucker, personal communication). Last but not least, Tucker received a full-ride scholarship to play basketball at Michigan State University.

Michigan State University

While many universities offered basketball scholarships to Tucker, the offer that she accepted was that from Michigan State ([Source](#)).

1983-84

Pre-Season

During pre-season practice, Tucker suffered a Grade 3 ankle injury (three torn ligaments) and had to sit out her first ten games. While she could have become a redshirt and sat out the season to save a year of eligibility, she recalled: "I wanted to play and the team needed me, so I worked hard to rehab so that I could begin playing."

On November 2, former Okemos star, Sue Tucker, made her "Spartan cage debut" at Okemos High when the MSU women's team held an intra-squad game, with the Green team narrowly downing the White team (on which Tucker played), 55-54. Tucker, "the crowd favorite" ([Source](#)), had 13 points on six baskets and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

Sue Tucker in Spartan cage debut

Former Okemos High star Sue Tucker will don different, but familiar colors this week when the Michigan State women's basketball team plays an intra-squad game Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Okemos High.

Tucker is one of four state All-State players to join eighth-year coach Karen Langeland's Spartans this season. MSU opens regular-season play Nov. 26 at Western Michigan.

Tucker lost for year?

By DEB POZEGA PIERCE
Staff Writer

The Michigan State women's basketball team has suffered what may be its most critical loss of the season, even though the squad has yet to play a game.

Standout freshman Sue Tucker, the Okemos High graduate who was named Michigan's "Miss Basketball" before signing with the Spartans, has suffered torn ligaments in her ankle and may be redshirted for the season.



Tucker

TUCKER, A 5-foot-11 forward, injured the ankle during the final minutes of Thursday's practice, Spartan coach Karen Langeland said. She does not know yet if Tucker is lost for the season.

"It's possible," Langeland said. "Once the swelling goes down,

they'll put her in a cast for three weeks. After that, she'll be in an air splint for three weeks. That takes us up to the first of January, not including rehabilitation time.

"We'll just have to see what happens in January."

The Spartans open the season Nov. 26 with a non-conference game at Western Michigan. The Big Ten season opens Jan. 6 at Iowa.

THE SPARTANS will also be without the services of sophomore guard Ronna Greenburg until January. Greenburg, a native of Livonia who transferred to MSU from Louisville, will not be eligible until winter term starts in concurrence with Big Ten transfer rules.

For now, Langeland is expected to use Sue Pearsall, a 5-10 freshman from St. Johns, as a forward, although Pearsall was expected to play a guard or wing position.

The Spartans will test the altered lineup today in their final pre-season intrasquad scrimmage at the IM-West Sports Arena. The game starts at 2 p.m.

Then, just two weeks later, on November 17 (see above article on the right), Tucker injured her ankle (torn ligaments) during the final minutes of practice ([Source](#)). On November 20, the *LSJ* reported that Tucker "will not play until at least January" and that she "may be red-shirted for the season" ([Source](#)).

Deb Pozega

Pierce

**Tucker tuckered
out from sittin'**

So far this has been the toughest basketball season Sue Tucker has ever had. And that's because so far, she hasn't really had a basketball season.

That's why it has been so tough on Tucker, the Okemos High all-stater whose early season ankle injury has kept her out of action since mid-November, a week before the Michigan State women's basketball team she was so enthusiastic about playing for began playing its games.

It has been a most frustrating, most enlightening season so far for Tucker, who says the injury has forced her to mature a lot faster as a college player than she might have had she been healthy. The frustration, at least, may be over this weekend. Tucker may see a few minutes of action, finally, after all these weeks of rehabilitation, of therapy, of ice massage and swimming and riding the exercise bike.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT? That's not going to end for awhile. Nobody is more interested to see just how Tucker will perform after all this time off than Tucker.

"I'm scared," said Tucker, who hasn't lost a bit of the honest, straightforward attitude she has about basketball, school and life in general. "I'm fired up, but I've got to calm down. It's kind of hard."

Tucker can't remember the last time she went for such a lengthy period without being able to go one-on-one with anyone who cared to challenge her. And she probably can't remember too many times, either, that she wasn't absolutely certain about what her capabilities were, and precisely how she would use them in a given situation.

That's why this weekend would be such an ideal time for Tucker to get playing time, even though the Spartans will be facing Indiana and Ohio State, two of the Big Ten's best women's basketball teams. There is no hometown crowd for a mid-Michigan native in Bloomington, Ind., or Columbus, Ohio. No pressure on Tucker except what she puts on herself. Nothing to worry about except taking advantage of a chance to test her strength, get the feel of the offense, get some contact on defense. And nobody to judge her except herself, her teammates, her coaches.



"I just want to learn my role . . . just to play my average game. That's my first goal, to get in there and just play."

— Sue Tucker

THOSE ARE the people she most wants the feedback from. If it wasn't for them, she said, she never would've retained her good spirits as much as she has.

Who has helped the most? "Everyone," Tucker said. "The team. Basically, the team. They're really good. They always talk to me . . . If this wasn't such a good team, I don't think I could handle it. We're all so close."

Tucker worked through her first full workout since the injury Tuesday, wearing an air splint to protect the ankle and going full-court on both offense and defense. She crashed a few boards, knocked heads with her teammates a few times, showed sparks of her old form and missed a few assignments. Afterward, her teammates congratulated her.

And afterward, she remembered how hard this all has been, even with her teammates' help. Here she was, Michigan's Miss Basketball 1983, trudging around campus in the middle of winter wearing a cast and lugging crutches along that were all but a nuisance on icy sidewalks. Here she was, a member of what some observers called the best recruiting class Coach Karen Langeland has ever had, a virtual certainty to earn a starting position. And suddenly she was out of it, and nobody knew how long.

"SOMETIMES," she said, "what I like to do is just go off by myself. I'd get depressed — everyone told me I had a right to be depressed — but I wanted to do it by myself. I didn't want to get the team involved."

Well, the team stayed involved and she learned a few things. And now she's ready to give this game she plays so well another shot, quite literally.

"I'm not even worried about my role," she said. "I just want to learn my role . . . just to play my average game. That's my first goal, to get in there and just play."

Deb Pozega Pierce is a member of the Lansing State Journal sports staff.

Big Ten Season

On January 20, the Spartans at Bloomington lost to **Indiana**, 76-58. "Tucker, playing in her first game of the season due to an injury, managed two points [and a basket and 0-2 on free throw attempts] in 12 minutes of playing time" ([Source](#)).

On January 22, the Spartans at **Ohio State** fell to the Buckeyes, 89-67, with Tucker scoring two points on 2-2 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On January 27, at Champaign, Illinois, the Spartans topped **Illinois**, 89-81, in overtime; while Tucker apparently appeared in the game, the box score showed that she did not score any points ([Source](#)).

On January 29, playing in the IM Sports-West Arena, the Spartans downed **Purdue**, 66-59, with Tucker four points on two baskets (0-0 on free throw attempts) ([Source](#)).

On February 17, at West Lafayette, the Spartans sped past **Purdue**, 79-62, with Tucker grabbing seven rebounds and scoring 10 points on three baskets and 4-4 from the foul line ([Source](#)).

On February 19, again at Champaign, the Spartans downed **Illinois**, 71-64, with Tucker scoring two points ([Source](#)).

On March 4, at Madison, the Spartans fell to **Wisconsin**, 88-68, with Tucker scoring six points on two baskets and 2-2 on free throws. MSU Assistant Coach Tina Krah noted: “We really didn’t play very well at all. But we got some good performances, like Sue Tucker coming off the bench and scoring six points and getting 11 rounds” ([Source](#)).

On March 8, the MSU Lady Cagers defeated **Northwestern**, 83-55 at the IM Sports-West Arena, with Sue Tucker turning in her “best game” of the season, with Tucker scoring 18 points on six field goals and 6-6 on free throws while also pulling in four rebounds ([Source](#)).

The Spartans finished the season with an overall 18-10 record and 10-8 in the Big Team (tying for 5th place).

1983-84 Karen Langeland, head coach Overall Record: 18-10 Big Ten Record: 10-8 (t-5th)		1/13/84 66-67 L WISCONSIN 1/15/84 92-67 W MINNESOTA 1/20/84 58-76 L Indiana 1/22/84 67-89 L Ohio State 1/27/84 89-81 WOT ILLINOIS 1/29/84 66-59 W PURDUE 2/3/84 73-72 W NOTRE DAME 2/5/84 76-63 W Michigan 2/12/84 68-66 W MICHIGAN 2/17/84 79-62 W Purdue 2/19/84 71-64 W Illinois 2/24/84 68-71 L OHIO STATE 2/26/84 60-57 W INDIANA 3/2/84 66-60 W Minnesota 3/4/84 68-88 L Wisconsin 3/8/84 83-66 W NORTHWESTERN 3/10/84 62-72 L IOWA <i>! Dial Classic</i>
11/26/83 66-65 W Western Michigan 11/30/83 88-50 W Eastern Michigan 12/3/83 76-72 W CENTRAL MICHIGAN 12/12/83 65-64 W Cleveland State 12/15/83 77-68 W TOLEDO 12/17/83 85-75 W Oakland 12/21/83 66-81 L Detroit 12/29/83 96-45 W Victoria ! 12/30/83 71-98 L Brigham Young ! 1/6/84 62-70 L Iowa 1/8/84 55-64 L Northwestern		

1984-85

Pre-Season

Going into the 1984-85 season, MSU Coach Karen Langeland was expecting that her entire 1983-84 roster to return, including 6’3” center Mary Kay McNall.

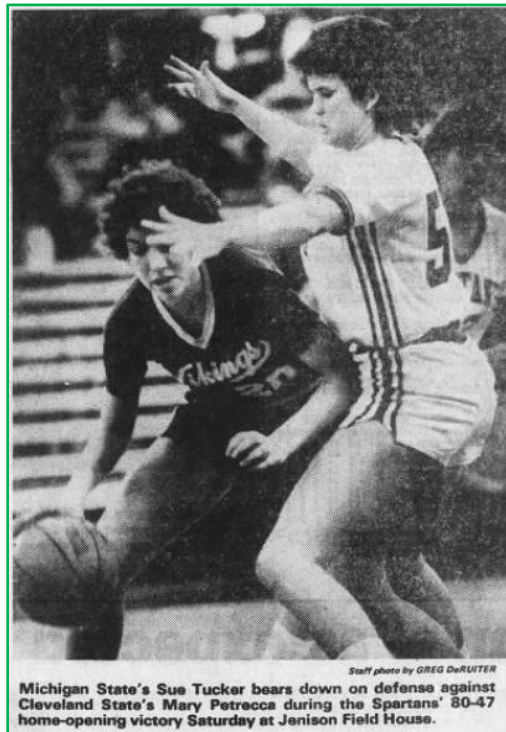
BUT, THE challenge for Langeland this fall has been replacing 6-foot-3 center Mary Kay McNall. McNall left school unexpectedly this fall with two years of eligibility remaining. It left Langeland without a six-footer and made 5-foot-11 forward Sue Tucker of Okemos High the logical choice in the pivot.

“She’s really improved offensively (at center) because she plays very well with her back to the basket,” Langeland said, “and she’s very strong on the boards. Right now, defense is her weakness. She’s not to the caliber she should be.”

Non-Conference

On November 24, the Spartans, without a six-footer on the roster, won their season opener, 74-71, at **Dayton**, with Tucker (playing center at 5'11") scoring eight points on four field goals (0-0 from the foul line) ([Source](#)).

On December 1, the MSU women's team began played for the first time in their new home (Jenison Fieldhouse), romping to an 80-47 victory over **Cleveland State**. Tucker scored four points on two baskets and 0-0 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).



On December 8, MSU beat **Central Michigan University** (at Mt. Pleasant's Ryan Hall), 67-64, with Tucker scoring 10 points (4-7 on field goal attempts and 0-0 on free throw attempts) and grabbing six rebounds ([Source](#)).

On December 12, the Spartans turned back **Ohio University**, 82-71, with Tucker scoring two points shooting 1-2 on field goals attempts and 0-0 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On December 17, the Spartans downed **Western Michigan**, 73-70, with Tucker scoring 10 points on 5-8 shooting from the field and 0-0 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 20, MSU's 5-0 winning streak ended with a 71-59 loss at **Notre Dame**. Tucker grabbed five rebounds and scored seven points on 3-11 shooting from the field and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 22, MSU was back in the win column, defeating **Detroit**, 85-84, with Tucker scoring 12 points (6-11 on field goal attempts and 0-0 at the foul line) ([Source](#)).

On December 28, the Spartans defeated **Manhattan**, 92-78, in the Women's Court Classic at the University of Miami. Tucker led the Spartans with 11 rebounds, scoring 16 points shooting 6-12 on field goal attempts and 4-6 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On December 30, at the Spartans lost to **Miami** (FL), 78-68, at the Miami Invitational (Women's Court Classic) LSJ apparently did not report an article or box score on the game.

Big Ten Conference

On January 4, the Spartans played their first Big Ten game of the season at Columbus, where #9-ranked **Ohio State** dismantled the Spartans, 105-77. Tucker grabbed seven rebounds and scored 12 points, shooting 4-9 from the field and 4-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 7, the Spartans lost at **Indiana**, 64-50, with Tucker scoring 12 points ([Source](#)).

On January 11, the Spartans notched their first Big 10 victory of the season, beating **Purdue**, 87-76. Tucker scored eight points on three field goals and 2-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 13, the Spartans fell, 88-86, to **Illinois**, with Tucker grabbing 10 rebounds and LSJ noting "the inspired play of center Sue Tucker" ([Source](#)). But LSJ's box score for the game didn't report how many points Tucker scored; however, with the box score tallying 72 points scored by five of Tucker's teammates, Sue possibly scored as many as 14 points (MSU 86 minus Teammates 72 = 14 points possibly scored by Tucker).

On January 18, the Spartans lost at #16-ranked **Iowa**, with Tucker scoring 11 on five field goals and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 20, the Spartans lost to **Minnesota**, 84-70. Tucker scored four points (on 2-7 field goal attempts and 0-0 on free throws) before fouling out ([Source](#)).

On January 25, LSJ's headline was MSU "cagers halt losing skid" as the Spartans beat **Michigan**, 60-56 ([Source](#)). Tucker's name doesn't appear in the article or box score.

On February 1, the Spartans held off **Wisconsin** for a 65-64 victory. "Sue Tucker ... paced the Spartans with 17 points, including [four field goals and] a 9-of-11 performance from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

Tucker, an Okemos High graduate, was replaced in the starting lineup by senior Becky Glass due to a recent slump. But it was Tucker's 13-point second half and clutch free throw shooting that kept MSU ahead throughout the second half.

On February 3, the Spartans lost, 77-59, at home to **Northwestern**. "Sue Tucker ... turned in another strong performance off the bench, with 12 of her 14 points coming in the first half" ([Source](#)). In addition to nine rebounds, Tucker's 14 points came on six field goals and 2-2 on free throws.

On February 5, Paul Stuart (*LSJ* Correspondent) wrote:

Tucker's play makes problem for coach

By PAUL STUART
Journal Correspondent

Despite a 77-59 loss to Northwestern on Sunday, the weekend did provide several bright spots for Michigan State women's basketball Coach Karen Langeland.

First, the Spartans held on to defeat a much-improved Badger squad, 65-64, on Friday night.

BUT MORE importantly, sophomore forward Sue Tucker came off the bench in both games to show some of the spark she had displayed earlier in the season.

Tucker, an Okemos High graduate, had been replaced in the starting lineup by senior Becky Glass, but paced the Spartans on Friday with 17 points in a reserve role. Tucker then followed with a 14-point, nine-rebound performance Sunday, while spending much of the game battling against the Wildcats standout center Anucha Browne.

According to Langeland, Tucker's improved play may result in some lineup changes when the Spartans (3-6, 10-8) go on the road to face Illinois on Friday and Purdue on Sunday.

"It's very important for the team to have Tucker in the lineup," Langeland said. "This is more like the Sue Tucker we saw earlier in the season."

"We'll be experimenting with a number of lineups this week and we'll see what happens. Sue certainly deserves to be in there, but the way Becky's been playing she doesn't deserve to be on the bench."

ONE OTHER thing that had Langeland smiling did not even involve Michigan State, but rather eighth-ranked Ohio State and Iowa.

The league-leading Buckeyes downed Iowa, 56-47, in front of a National Collegiate Athletic Association record-setting crowd of 22,157 on Sunday afternoon at Iowa's Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

"I think it's great for women's basketball as a whole, and it's especially nice for the Big Ten to have that type of turnout," Langeland said.

"They were pushing (to set the attendance record) at Iowa for two weeks and I think the people there just figured 'we, if anyone, should be the ones to do this.' And it definitely worked."

The previous attendance record for an NCAA women's basketball game was set on February 5, 1983, when Old Dominion and Kentucky matched up in Rupp Arena in front of 10,622 fans.

On February 8, the Spartans fell at Champaign to **Illinois**, 73-54. "MSU was led by sophomore center Sue Tucker's 17 points and 12 rebounds" made on seven field goals and 3-6 on free throws before fouling out of the game ([Source](#)).

On February 10, the Spartans lost, 88-59, to **Purdue** at West Lafayette. Tucker scored six points on three field goals ([Source](#)).

On February 15, the Spartans lost at home to **Minnesota**, 68-62, with Tucker scoring eight points on four field goals (0-0 on free throws) ([Source](#)).

On February 17, the Spartans suffered their fifth loss in a row, this time, 77-55, to **Iowa**. Tucker scored five points on two field goals and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On February 22, the Spartans broke a five-game losing streak by defeating **Michigan**, 77-65. Tucker scored nine points shooting 3-4 on field goal attempts and 3-4 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).


On March 1, the Spartans lost to **Northwestern**, 92-71. Tucker scored two points on a field goal but was 0-0 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On March 3, the Spartans lost to **Wisconsin**, 82-72, with Tucker grabbing 10 rebounds, making five assists, and scoring five points, shooting 2-10 on field goal attempts and 1-3 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On March 7, the Spartans, playing at home, lost to **Indiana**, 64-63, with Tucker scoring eight points on four field goals and 0-0 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On March 9, the Spartans ended their season at home with a 93-62 loss to #7-ranked **Ohio State**. Tucker scored six points on three field goals (0-2 on free throws (Source)). Of note, Ohio State became the first Big Ten women's basketball team in history to go undefeated (18-0) in league play ([Source](#)).

1984-85	
Karen Langeland, head coach	
Overall Record: 11-16	
Big Ten Record: 4-14 (9th)	
11/24/84	74-71 W Dayton
12/1/84	80-47 W CLEVELAND STATE
12/8/84	67-64 W Central Michigan
12/12/84	82-71 W OHIO
12/17/84	73-70 W WESTERNMICHIGAN
12/20/84	59-71 L Notre Dame
12/22/84	85-84 W DETROIT
12/28/84	92-78 W Manhattan !
12/30/84	68-78 L Miami (Fla.) !
1/4/85	77-105 L Ohio State (#9)
1/6/85	50-64 L Indiana
1/11/85	87-76 W PURDUE
1/13/85	86-88 L ILLINOIS
1/18/85	36-53 L Iowa
1/20/85	70-84 L Minnesota
1/25/85	60-56 W MICHIGAN
2/1/85	65-64 W WISCONSIN
2/3/85	59-77 L NORTHWESTERN
2/8/85	64-73 L Illinois
2/10/85	59-80 L Purdue
2/15/85	62-68 L MINNESOTA
2/17/85	55-77 L IOWA
2/22/85	77-65 W Michigan
3/01/85	71-92 L Northwestern
3/3/85	72-82 L Wisconsin
3/7/85	63-64 L INDIANA
3/9/85	62-93 L OHIO STATE (#7)
! Miami (Fla.) Court Classic (Miami)	
(# — Associated Press ranking)	



For the season the Spartans had an 11-16 record overall and finished 9th in the Big Ten with a 4-14 record. During her sophomore season, Tucker (#50) played in 27 games (starting in 20) and averaged 23.2 minutes per game. Her field goal percentage was .409 and her free throw percentage was .647. She averaged 6.4 rebounds per game.

1985-86

Pre-Season

On November 14, the Spartans lost in pre-season scrimmage to **Western Michigan**, 81-73 ([Source](#)).

Non-Conference

On November 23, the Spartans at home defeated **Illinois State**, 78-66. "Junior forward Sue Tucker, from Okemos High, came off the bench to score seven points and grab a team-leading 10 rebounds" ([Source](#)).

On November 30, the Spartans fell at **Ohio**, 83-66, with Tucker scoring five points on 1-6 shooting from the field and 3-5 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 7, **Central Michigan** beat the Spartans, 86-76. Before fouling out, Tucker scored nine points on three baskets and 3-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 15, the Spartans topped **Akron**, 72-65. "With Akron shutting down [Spartan Kris] Emerson in the opening half, junior center Sue Tucker (from Okemos) took advantage and scored 11 of her team- and season-high 20 points to pace the Spartans. ... Tucker paced MSU in the waning minutes, hitting seven of her 12 free throws before fouling out with 3:42 to go. Tucker's 12 free throws tied a school record for one game" ([Source](#)). Tucker's 20 points included four field goals.

Tucker not small on determination

By PAUL STUART
Lansing State Journal

At 5-foot-11, Michigan State junior Sue Tucker was the smallest center in Big Ten women's basketball last season.

But don't tell the former Okemos High standout and Miss Basketball recipient that she is playing out of position again this year.

Although she will continually match up against taller centers throughout the 1985-86 season, Tucker believes she can hold her own in the pivot against Big Ten and non-league opponents. Tucker, who averages 10.3 points and seven rebounds per game, will get another chance Friday at 7:30 p.m. when the Spartans host Dayton at Jensen Field House. The Flyers will likely start 6-5 senior Theresa Yingling in the post.

Last Sunday, Tucker turned in one of her best performances at MSU with 20 points and eight rebounds in a 72-65 win over Akron. Wednesday night, she tossed in 14 points and had 19 rebounds in a 73-72 loss to the University of Detroit. The Spartans, 2-3, complete a busy weekend by hosting Bowling Green at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

"I really should be scoring more, and before I just wasn't calling for the ball inside enough," Tucker said. "So that's what I did."

"But in a sense I'm really not like a center, because with Kris (Emerson) inside too I can go out more. It's a freelance type of thing. I know that a lot of them (opposing centers) will be bigger, but I think I'm quicker and that will give me an advantage."

MSU Coach Karen Langeland agrees with Tucker's views on the post position.

"I don't know if you can really say that Sue is playing out of position, because her post-up and offensive moves are more like a center," Langeland said. "But the biggest key with Sue is her defense. If she can contain the opposing center, it will be much to our advantage."

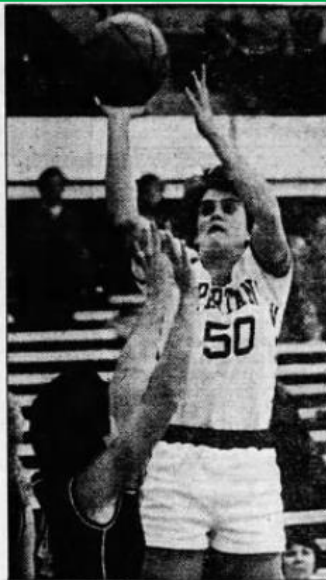
"Secondly is her rebounding, which we desperately need. Although she will be playing against taller opponents, Sue uses the tools she has well. She has great basketball sense and is a finesse player."

Perhaps Tucker's biggest benefit this season is that she is completely healthy. She sat out the first 13 games her freshman year with an ankle injury and finished the season averaging four points and 4.5 rebounds per game.

Tucker returned as a sophomore and started 20 of 27 games, averaging 8.2 points and 6.4 rebounds despite being hampered with nagging injuries throughout the season.

"Finally," Tucker said, "After two years I've started a season healthy."

Besides earning all-state honors at Okemos, Tucker also received All-American honors from



Lansing State Journal/BRIAN QUINN

Michigan State's 5-10 center Sue Tucker puts up a shot in the Spartans' 72-65 victory over Akron on Sunday.

magazines like Parade and Street and Smith's. But after two years in the Big Ten, she definitely notices the difference in competition.

"It's a lot rougher now," Tucker said. "In high school it seemed like if you even got touched, a foul was called. In the Big Ten there's plenty of contact, and a lot of it never gets called. But I'm used to it now."

Next season, Tucker will probably be moved to forward with 6-5 Sue Forsyth, a transfer from Rutgers, and 6-3 freshman Dawn DeYoung (currently out with a hand injury) the most likely candidates to handle the pivot chores. But for now, Tucker is preparing for the Spartans' final four non-league games. Then, on Jan 3, she may see her biggest challenge of the year when MSU hosts Ohio State, paced by two-time All-Big Ten center Francine Lewis.

Once again, Tucker may find herself looking up, but there's no doubt she's looking forward to the meeting.

On December 18, the Spartans narrowly lost to **Detroit**, 73-72, with Tucker grabbing 19 rebounds and scoring 14 points on four field goals and 6-9 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 20, the Spartans defeated **Dayton**, 79-67. Tucker grabbed a team-high 13 rebounds and scored 15 points on five field goals and 5-8 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On December 22, the Spartans edged **Bowling Green**, 80-78, with Tucker scoring 17 points on eight field goals and 1-3 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On December 29, the Spartans downed **Seton Hall**, 79-70 with Tucker netting eight points on two field goals and 4-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 30, at **Iona** (New Rochelle, NY), the Spartans won, 91-68, with Tucker scoring a team-leading and career-high 23 points on eight field goals and 7-8 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

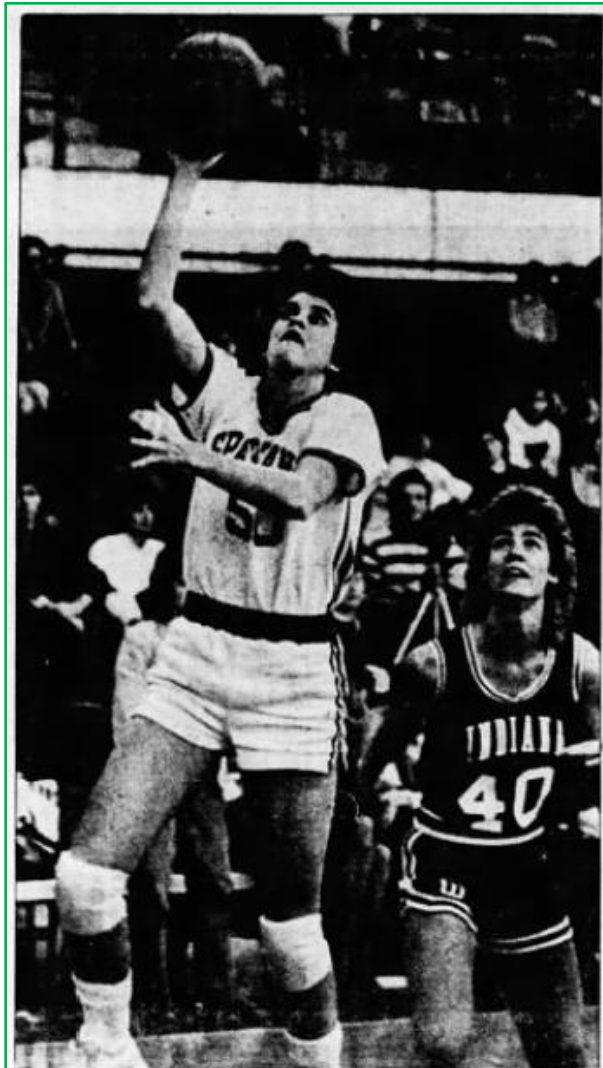
Big Ten Conference

On January 3, the Spartans lost at home, 72-58, to #14-ranked **Ohio State**, with Tucker scoring 10 points on five field goals (0-0 on free throws) ([Source](#)).



Lansing State Journal/EILEEN BLASS
Michigan State's Sue Tucker drives to the basket against Ohio State's Lisa Cline (24) and Tracey Hall (behind Tucker) during Friday's game at Jenison Field House.

On January 5, the Spartans hosted **Indiana** and won, 76-61. Tucker “turned in “a strong effort with 17 points and 14 rebounds” ([Source](#)), those points made on seven field goals and 3-3 on free throws.



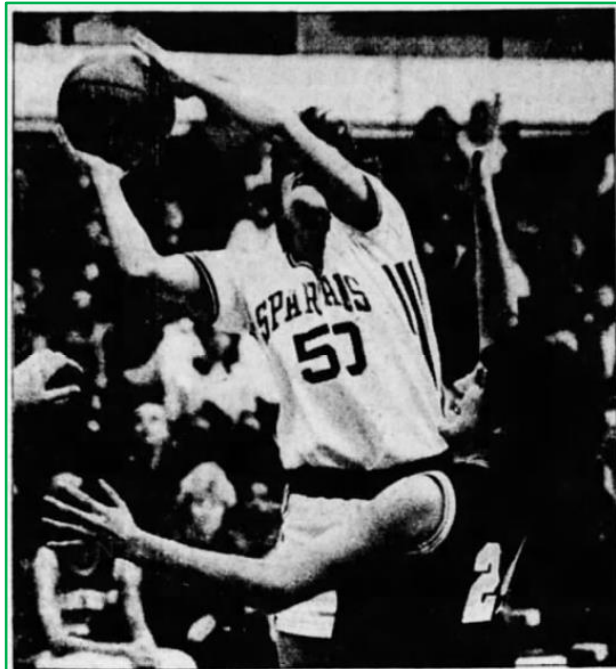
Lansing State Journal/BRIAN QUINN
Sue Tucker of Michigan State drives past Indiana's Karna Abram to lay up two points Sunday during the Spartans' solid 76-61 victory.

On January 10, the Spartans lost at **Purdue**, 70-53 with Tucker contributing 10 of the Spartans' points on five field goals (0-0 on free throws) ([Source](#)).

On January 12, at **Illinois**, the Spartans lost 81-72, with Tucker scoring a team-leading 20 points on eight field goals and 4-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 17, the Spartans hosted #16-ranked **Iowa** but lost 60-57, with Tucker contributing eight rebounds and scoring 11 points on five field goals and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 19, the Spartans defeated **Minnesota**, 62-60, with Tucker chipping in 11 points on four field goals and 3-5 on free throws ([Source](#)).



Lansing State Journal/BRIAN QUINN
Michigan State's Sue Tucker fires a shot over Minnesota's Elizabeth Hufford during the Spartans' 62-60 victory Sunday.

On January 24, the Spartans defeated **Michigan**, 68-62, with Tucker had 11 rebounds and scored 11 points on three field goals and 5-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

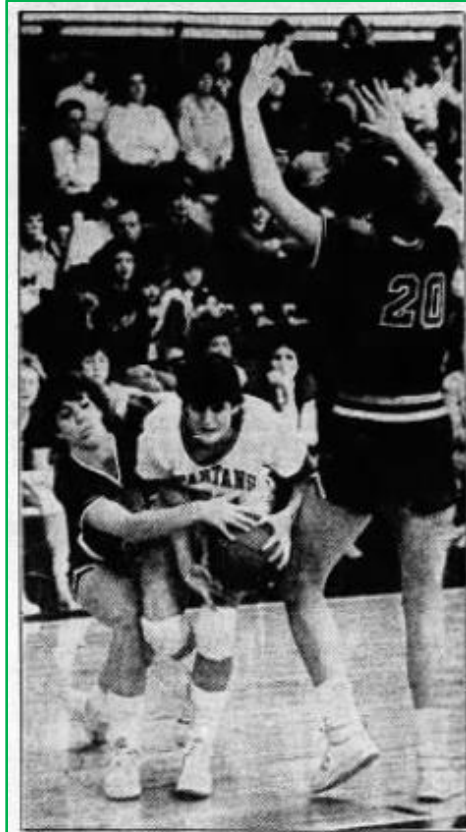
With 379 career rebounds, Tucker (13.1 ppg, 9.1 rebs) will likely move into eighth place on that list. The junior center is nine behind Mary Kay McNall.

On January 31, the Spartans at Madison topped **Wisconsin**, 58-55, with Tucker scoring a team-leading 16 points on five field goals and 6-9 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On February 2, "Junior forward Sue Tucker popped in 10 of her 17 points in the final 5:13 to lift the Michigan State University women's basketball team to an 80-72 Big Ten Conference victory over **Northwestern**" ([Source](#)). Tucker's 17 pints were made on six field goals and 5-9 from the charity stripe.

On February 7, visiting **Illinois** topped the Spartans, 83-64, snapping MSU's win streak at four. Tucker led the Spartans in scoring with 18 points on eight field goals and 2-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On February 9, the Spartans defeated **Purdue**, 69-63, with tucker scoring 12 points on five field goals and 2-3 on free throws ([Source](#)).



Lansing State Journal/BRIAN QUINN

Michigan State's Sue Tucker (center) battles Purdue's Sharon Versyp for the ball during Sunday's game at Jenison Field House. Christa LaCroix (20) looks on.

On February 14, the Spartans lost at **Minnesota**, 73-62, with Tucker scoring 18 points on eight field goals and 2-4 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On February 16, the Spartans lost at #14-ranked **Iowa**, 61-48, with Tucker contributing 11 points on four field goals and 3-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On February 23, the Spartans hosted and defeated **Michigan**, 75-70. Tucker grabbed nine rebounds and scored a game-leading high of 27 points on eleven field goals and 5-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

And Tucker, who played perhaps the best game of her career with 27 points and nine rebounds, agreed.

"It made all the difference in the world," the Okemos High graduate said. "The crowd definitely keyed us up and helped us on."



Lansing State Journal/BRIAN QUINN

Michigan State's Kris Emerson (41) dribbles past Michigan's Sandy Svoboda while MSU's Sue Tucker looks on during Sunday's Big Ten game at Jenison Field House.

On February 28, the Spartans narrowly lost to **Northwestern**, 70-68. Tucker scored 14 points on five field goals and 4-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).



Lansing State Journal/ED HYDE

Michigan State's Sue Tucker (right) passes to a teammate while guarded by Northwestern's Anne Marie McNamee and Kelly Byrne during Friday night's Big Ten basketball game at Jenison Field House. Northwestern won, 70-68.

On March 2, the Spartans defeated **Wisconsin**, 82-69, with Tucker scoring nine points on four field goals and 1-2 on free throws, along with sustaining an a cut on the eyelid ([Source](#)).

On March 6, the Spartans won, 77-75, at **Indiana**, with Tucker scoring 15 pints on seven field goals and 1-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On March 8, at Columbus, #13-ranked **Ohio State** ripped the Spartans, 98-63, to win the Big 10 women's basketball title. Tucker contributed 12 points on six field goals (0-0 on free throws) ([Source](#)).

The Spartans closed out their regular season with a 15-12 overall record and 9-9 in the Big 10, finishing 5th place in the conference compared with the prior season's 9th place finish.

But perhaps the two players who made the biggest difference in the turnaround were juniors Sue Tucker from Okemos and Sue Pearsall of St. Johns. After a pair of frustrating, injury-plagued seasons, Tucker started all but one game to finish with 14-point and 8.6-rebound averages. The emergence of Tucker gave the Spartans a desperately needed Big Ten caliber center.

1985-86			
Karen Langeland, head coach			
Overall Record: 15-12			
Big Ten Record: 9-9 (t-5th)			
11/23/85	78-86 W	ILLINOIS STATE	
11/30/85	66-83 L	Ohio	
12/7/85	76-86 L	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	
12/15/85	72-85 W	AKRON	
12/18/85	72-73 L	Detroit	
12/20/85	79-87 W	DAYTON	
12/22/85	80-78 W	BOWLING GREEN	
12/29/85	79-70 W	Seton Hall	
12/30/85	91-68 W	Iona	
1/3/86	58-72 L	OHIO STATE (#14)	
1/5/86	78-81 W	INDIANA	
1/10/86	53-70 L	Purdue	
1/12/86	72-81 L	Illinois	
1/17/86	57-80 L	IOWA (#16)	
1/19/86	62-80 W	MINNESOTA	
1/24/86	68-62 W	Michigan	
1/31/86	58-55 W	Wisconsin	
2/2/86	80-72 W	Northwestern	
2/7/86	64-83 L	ILLINOIS	
2/9/86	69-63 W	PURDUE	
2/14/86	62-73 L	Minnesota	
2/16/86	48-81 L	Iowa (#14)	
2/23/86	75-70 W	MICHIGAN	
2/28/86	68-70 L	NORTHWESTERN	
3/2/86	82-69 W	WISCONSIN	
3/6/86	77-75 W	Indiana	
3/8/86	63-98 L	Ohio State (#13)	
(# — Associated Press ranking)			

During her junior season, Tucker played in 27 games (starting in 26), averaging 32.7 minutes per game. Her field goal percentage was .507 and her free throw percentage was .718. She averaged 8.6 rebounds per game. Overall the Spartans had a 15-12 record, finishing tied for 5th place in the Big Ten with a 9-9 record.

Female athletes gaining respect

■ Last of two parts.

By DEB POZEGA PIERCE
Lansing State Journal

Yes, they used to play with the boys.

Baseball. Soccer. Football. A game of HORSE at the playground basketball hoop, and never mind that the hoop didn't have a net or backboard. Not to mention climbing trees, wading creeks and all those other things that used to make their mothers cringe and their fathers' foreheads crease in frown.

When they were little, these girls were tomboys, and that was kind of cute. As they got older they were jocks. That wasn't cute.

"That's one word that I could not stand," said Okemos High graduate Sue Tucker, a high school all-state basketball player now on the Michigan State varsity. "I don't think I'm a jock. I'm an athlete. I take it to mean like, sloppy. Wears sweats all the time. Not a lady. And that's not me."

Tucker, like so many women in athletics, saw her experiences reflected many times in the results of the Miller Lite Survey on Women in Sports, a study recently released in cooperation with the Women's Sports Foundation. Like many of the women surveyed, she grew up playing with boys or mixed-gender groups; like many of those surveyed, she has dealt with the negative comments people made about female athletes, and learned a great deal about herself while doing it.

It has never been easy, even for a child of the 1970s.

"When I was in the fourth grade, I wanted to play football," Tucker said. "I was the only girl who wanted to play. I had to get a petition signed by 150 people so I could play."

"Some parents were really rude. They said, 'No way would I let a girl play...'"

But she trudged from house to house in her Haslett neighborhood, got enough support and played. She remembers the first practice; she beat a lot of people that day, and a lot of them didn't like it.

"And they learned to like me, which was really neat," she said. "They really hated me at first, but by the end of the season they really liked me."

One can only assume that her teammates accepted her because



“I don't think I'm a jock. I'm an athlete.”

— Sue Tucker
MSU center

she was a good athlete — accepted her, that is, on the same basis they accepted every other player in the league. That's always been an awkward situation for young girls; boys who were good athletes were popular and

See WOMEN, Page 4D

[Article Continued on Page 4D](#)

1986-87



1986-77 MSU Women's Basketball Team (#50 Sue Tucker)

Courtesy: MSU Archives



Lansing State Journal/EILEEN BLASS
Returnees for Michigan State women's basketball team: (from left) Kim Archer, Sue Tucker, Kris Emerson and Sue Pearsall.

Pre-Season

On November 21, at Jenison Field House, MSU defeated the **University of Toronto**, defending Canadian National Champions, 75-53. Tucker led the Spartans in scoring with 25 points, shooting 10-14 on field goal attempts and 5-6 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

Non-Conference

On November 28, the Spartans lost their season opener, 79-57, to **Louisiana Tech**, in the Lady Jayhawks' Dial Classic (Lawrence, Kansas). "Senior forward Sue Tucker was a perfect 10-for-10 at the free throw line and scored a game-high 24 points for the Spartans. The Okemos High grad also hauled down a team-high nine rebounds" ([Source](#)).

On November 29, at the Lady Jayhawk Dial Classic (Lawrence, Kansas), the Spartans defeated **Central Missouri State**, 66-45. Tucker had 12 rebounds and scored 13 points on five field goals and 3-6 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On December 3, at Mount Pleasant (Mi), the Spartans rolled over **Central Michigan**, 95-72. Tucker scored 22 points, shooting 9-14 on field goal attempts and 4-5 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On December 14, the Spartans defeated **Detroit**, 77-69. Tucker led the Spartans in scoring with 20 points, including six assists, shooting 8-10 on field goal attempts and 4-5 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On December 16, at Normal (IL), the Spartans topped **Illinois State**, 71-65. Tucker scored 18 points on eight field goals and 2-4 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).



Better than ever

But Spartan Sue Tucker sees room for improvement

By NEIL KOEPKE
Lansing State Journal

Karen Langeland, Michigan State's women's basketball coach, feels forward Sue Tucker is "playing better than she's ever played" as a Spartan.

"She's been great for us. She's back at forward and playing with confidence," Langeland said of the 5-foot-11 senior from Okemos. "She's scoring well and rebounding well."

The praise is appreciated, but Tucker isn't in total agreement with her coach's assessment. It's not that Tucker isn't pleased about her play, it's just that she believes she can do better.

"I'm doing OK offensively, but there are other aspects of the game which I'm not happy with at all," said Tucker, who's averaging 19.4 points and eight rebounds a game. "My rebounding and defense are areas I really need to work on. Scoring is nice, but it sure isn't everything. You learn that in college."

"Everyone says 'you're really playing great,' but I know I'm not. I'm not playing good 'D' or rebounding as well as I should. I know I can get better."

What has Tucker really enthused is the prospect of Michigan State having an outstanding.

See **TUCKER**, Page 3C

Steady Improvement

Here's a look at Sue Tucker's basketball career at Michigan State.

Year	G	FG	FT	Reb.	Pts.	Avg.
■ 1983-84	15	23	21	60	67	4.5
■ 1984-85	27	94	33	173	221	8.2
■ 1985-86	27	144	89	233	377	14.0
■ 1986-87	5	37	23	38	97	19.4

Lansing State Journal/BRIAN QUINN

Senior Sue Tucker (left) is off to her best start for the 4-1 Michigan State women's basketball team, averaging 19.4 points a game.

Tucker From 1C

season. The Spartans are 4-1 entering Friday's game against Miami (Fla.) in the Felpausch MSU Holiday Classic at Jenison Field House. And, hopes are high for a strong showing in the Big Ten.

Tucker said the team's goal is to finish in the top three in the Big Ten and earn a berth in the NCAA tournament in March.

"We know we can do it if we stick together as a team and keep playing the way we have," she said. "The key is to stay together and play good defense. That's why I'm aware of my defensive play."

With 6-4 sophomore transfer Sue Forsyth taking over at center and giving MSU size up front, plus the return of veterans like Tucker, Kris Emerson and Sue Pearsall, the Spartans are feeling good about this season. Still, no one knew how good the Spartans could be.

"Right after we played Louisiana Tech in the opener, I think we said, 'Wow, we are pretty good,'" said Tucker, referring to the 79-57 loss to second-ranked Tech in a tournament in Kansas. "At half-time, we were down by only four or five points, and a couple players didn't play as well as they could."

"We never realized what potential we had until we played a top caliber team. The coaches were behind us, but we didn't believe in ourselves. Now, everybody has a lot more confidence."

Confidence and enthusiasm, Tucker says, are reasons she's off to a good offensive start. Another is the move back to forward after playing at center last season.

"This is my last year and we have a good team that's going to go far, so I'm really excited," said Tucker, an all-state selection at Okemos High and the state's "Miss Basketball," in 1983. "I have my shot down pretty well and I'm back at my natural position, so maybe that's why I'm scoring more. I think our team has an advantage on opponents because Kris (Emerson) or I can go inside or outside."

"Defensively, I'm still having a hard time because I have to deny the wing and now I have to go way out on top. I'm not used to that. The last couple of games, I've been playing people who were way out in the perimeter. In rebounding, I have to run to the boards."

Like all Spartan players, Tucker is excited about this weekend's well-promoted tournament and the chance to play in front of crowds near 10,000.

"It's great exposure for our team. We can let a lot of people know we're here and that we do have a good team," she said. "The big crowd will give us a boost. I think a lot of the people have never seen a women's game. Hopefully, they'll like it and come back."

The tournament opens Friday with Central Michi-

gan battling Brigham Young at 6 p.m. The Spartans and Miami tip it off at 8 p.m. On Saturday, the consolation game will start at 2 p.m, followed by the championship game at 4 p.m.

Tucker, a dietetics major, said the time she's spent at MSU has gone by too fast, so she's savoring her last year as a collegiate athlete.

"It's scary that I'm not going to be playing basketball like this again," she said. "In some ways, my body is glad. In four years, I've taken a lot of beatings. It was a rude awakening when I got here and saw how physical the game is in college. I came in and got injured (ankle) as a freshman, and it took my confidence away. My whole sophomore year was spent trying to get back in the swing of things."

"Last year, I finally got things together. It took a while to get my play down to where it was in high school."

Because she switched majors, Tucker will be in school for another year and expects to graduate in 1988. Next year, she plans to stay close to the team as a fan — an involved fan.

"I was talking to Sue Pearsall about what it's going to be like to be here but not playing," she said. "It kind of scares me. But I guess we'll go to all the games and maybe make some road trips. It'll be fun, but it'll be different."

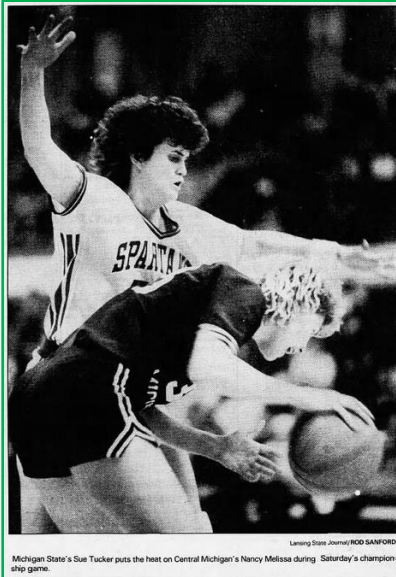
On December 19, at the Felpausch/MSU Holiday Classic, the Spartans defeated **Miami**, 63-52. Tucker scored 14 points on six field goals and 2-2 on free throws ([Source](#)).

"It was a little tight, a little scary," said Tucker. "We played pretty well except for the turnovers (MSU 25; Miami 12). Once we pulled together and slowed down our offense, we were fine. We weren't rebounding in the first half, but got better in the second. Rivera is definitely an All-American."



Lansing State Journal/ROD SANFORD
Michigan State's Sue Tucker (left) and Miami's Robin Williams scramble for a loose ball during Friday's game of the Felpausch MSU Holiday Classic.

On December 20, at the Felpausch/MSU Holiday Classic, the Spartans topped **Central Michigan**, 65-54. Tucker scored 10 points on five field goals and 0-0 on free throws ([Source](#)).



Leading Stars James ROD SANFORD
Michigan State's Sue Tucker puts the heat on Central Michigan's Nancy Melissa during Saturday's championship game.

On December 23, at **Bowling Green**, the Spartans won 91-68. Tucker had 10 rebounds and scored 22 points on 11 field goals and 0-1 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On December 30, at **Dayton**, MSU lost in overtime, 63-59. Tucker scored 14 points on six field goals and 1-5 on free throws ([Source](#)).

Big Ten Conference

On January 2, the Spartans hosted #17-ranked **Illinois** but lost, 76-66. Tucker scored 12 points on five baskets and 2-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

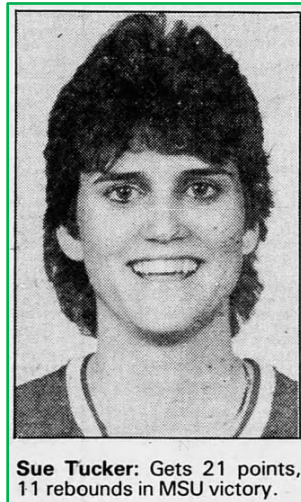


Sue Tucker (#50) Running the Court and in the Air vs Illinois

Courtesy: MSU Archives



On January 4, “Sue Tucker’s 21 points and game-high 11 rebounds paced the Michigan State women’s basketball team to a 62-50 victory over cold-shooting **Purdue**” ([Source](#))
Tucker’s 21 points came on eight field goals and 5-6 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).



On January 9, at **Indiana**, the Spartans won, 79-67, with Tucker scoring 16 points on six field goals and 4-4 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).

On January 11, at #18-ranked **Ohio State**, the Spartans lost, 76-64. Tucker scored 10 points on three baskets and 4-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 15, in a non-Big 10 game, the Spartans at **Akron** won 91-49, with Tucker chipping in eight points, shooting 4-4 from the field and 0-0 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On January 18, the Spartans defeated **Michigan**, 73-65. Tucker scored seven points on 3-10 field goal attempts and 1-3 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On January 23, the Spartans topped **Wisconsin**, 77-53, with Tucker scoring 18 points, shooting 7-9 on field goal attempts and 4-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 25, hosting **Northwestern**, the Spartans narrowly lost, 63-62, with Tucker scoring 12 points, shooting 5-11 on field goal attempts and 2-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On January 30, at #13-ranked **Iowa**, the Spartans lost, 83-61. Tucker scored 15 points on six field goals and 3-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On February 1, at **Minnesota**, the Spartans won, 70-64. While Tucker scored 10 points on five field goals and 0-0 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)), she also suffered an ankle injury that would keep her from playing for a number of the Spartans' upcoming games ([Source](#)).

On February 6, the Spartans hosted #11-ranked **Ohio State**, but lost, 79-65 ([Source](#)). Tucker is not listed in the game's box score and didn't play due to an ankle injury as would be later reported ([Source](#)).

On February 8, the Spartans continued to miss Sue Tucker in a 70-64 loss to **Indiana** at Jenison Field House ([Source](#)).

On February 13, at **Michigan**, the Spartans lost, 74-69. As reported below, Tucker has not been playing in games due to an ankle injury that she suffered during the February 1 game against **Minnesota**.

The loss of Sue Tucker has had a greater impact on the team, Langeland said, than expected. The senior from Okemos suffered an ankle injury in a 70-64 victory over Minnesota two weeks ago and depending on how her ankle holds up this week in practice, could miss the Northwestern game.

"It's a day by day thing, really," Langeland said. "Not having her puts pressure on Kris Emerson. Kris Emerson puts pressure on herself because Sue Tucker's out. She (Emerson) feels she has to do it all and that hurts rather than helps us."

On February 20, the Spartans lost at **Northwestern**, 64-50. However, Tucker returned from her ankle injury, scoring two points on 2-2 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)). After the loss, Spartans Coach Karen Langeland commented on the possible impact of the loss of Tucker over several games:

“We felt we could beat Northwestern. When we lost we started questioning our abilities,” says Langeland, whose team plays at Northwestern tonight and Wisconsin on Sunday afternoon.
“Maybe the loss of (injured) Sue Tucker had a bigger effect than we thought.”

On February 22, the Spartans won at **Wisconsin**, 71-57. Tucker scored one basket for two points and did not have any free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On February 27, the Spartans defeated **Minnesota**, 73-62, with Tucker nearly back to her pre-ankle injury performance level, scoring 14 points shooting 4-11 on field goal attempts and 6-6 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

On March 1, hosting #10-ranked **Iowa**, the Hawkeyes rolled over Spartans, 71-49. In her final home game appearance at Jenison Field House, Tucker scored one basket for two points on 1-4 field goal attempts and 0-0 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On March 5, the Spartans were outgunned at **Purdue**, losing 93-66. Tucker scored 13 points on five field goals and 3-3 on free throws ([Source](#)).

MSU’s Sue Tucker, a senior forward from Okemos, scored 13 points. She needs 16 in Saturday’s finale at Illinois to reach the 1,000-point mark for her career.

On March 7, the Spartans ended their regular season on a winning note with a 67-65 victory at **Illinois**. However, for Tucker, not so sweet, as she scored only two points on a field goal and 0-1 on free throw attempts ([Source](#)), leaving Tucker just 14 points short of reaching the 1,000-point mark for her career as a Spartan.

1986-87	
Karen Langeland, head coach	
Overall Record: 16-12	
Big Ten Record: 8-10 (6th)	
11/28/86	57-79 L Louisiana Tech ! (#2)
11/29/86	66-45 W Central Missouri St. !
12/3/86	85-72 W Central Michigan
12/14/86	77-89 W DETROIT
12/16/86	71-85 W Illinois State
12/19/86	63-52 W MIAMI (Fla.) %
12/20/86	65-54 W CENTRALMICHIGAN%
12/23/86	91-88 W Bowling Green
12/30/86	59-83LOT Dayton
1/2/87	66-76 L ILLINOIS (#17)
1/4/87	62-50 W PURDUE
1/9/87	79-87 W Indiana
1/11/87	64-76 L Ohio State (#18)
1/15/87	91-49 W Akron
1/18/87	73-85 W MICHIGAN
1/23/87	77-53 W WISCONSIN
1/25/87	62-63 L NORTHWESTERN
1/30/87	61-83 L Iowa (#13)
2/1/87	70-64 W Minnesota
2/6/87	65-79 L OHIO STATE (#11)
2/8/87	64-70 L INDIANA
2/13/87	69-74 L Michigan
2/20/87	50-64 L Northwestern
2/22/87	71-57 W Wisconsin
2/27/87	73-62 W MINNESOTA
3/1/87	49-71 L IOWA (#10)
3/5/87	66-93 L Purdue
3/7/87	67-65 W Illinois
! Lady Jayhawk Dial Classic (Lawrence, Kan.)	
% Felpausch/MSU Holiday Classic	
(# — Associated Press ranking)	

During her senior season, Tucker played in 25 games (starting in 20) and averaged 29.2 minutes per game. Her field goal percentage was .529 and her free throw percentage was .829 (team highest). She averaged 5.6 rebounds per game. The Spartans placed 6th (8-10) in the Big Ten with an overall 16-12 record.

Career Statistics as a Spartan

The table below summarizes Tucker's statistics, per game and totals, for her last three seasons (1984-87) on the Spartan varsity squad.

GP-GS	Min--Avg	---TOTAL---			---3-PTS---			---REBOUNDS---									
		FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	FT-FTA	Pct	Off	Def	Tot	Avg	PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl

1984-85

27-20	627	23.2	94-230	.409	0-0	.000	33-51	.647	0	173	173	6.4	84	4	29	51	9	27	221	8.2
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1985-86

27-26	883	32.7	144-284	.507	0-0	.000	89-124	.718	0	233	233	8.6	100	5	31	66	9	45	377	14.0
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1986-87

25-20	729	29.2	129-244	.529	0-0	.000	63-76	.829	31	109	140	5.6	69	2	44	60	5	40	321	12.8
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During her last three seasons playing for the Spartans, Tucker continued to suffer ankle injuries that kept her off the court either for whole games or reduced the amount of time she played during games.

However, Sue credits [Dr. Sally Nogle](#), Head Athletic Trainer for the Spartans, with providing excellent medical and training support to get her back onto the basketball court as quickly as possible. Tucker recalled: "I played the last two games of [the 1986-87] season, against **Illinois** and **Purdue**, wearing an ankle cast on both legs which made it hard to run but also allowed me to play. If it wasn't for trainer Sally Nogle, I wouldn't have been able to recover as quickly as I did from my ankle injuries." (Sue Tucker, personal communication).

Despite the ankle injuries, Tucker made "**Steady Improvement**" (see chart at top of the next page). Indeed, had she suffered fewer ankle injuries and been able to play in more games and more time per game, she would have easily scored enough points to put her over the 1,000-point mark for her Spartan career.

Steady Improvement						
Here's a look at Sue Tucker's basketball career at Michigan State.						
Year	G	FG	FT	Reb.	Pts.	Avg.
■ 1983-84	15	23	21	60	67	4.5
■ 1984-85	27	94	33	173	221	8.2
■ 1985-86	27	144	89	233	377	14.0
■ 1986-87	5	37	23	38	97	19.4

As of December 18, 1986 (5 games into the 1986-87 season)

Laurels

Perhaps the biggest moment of Tucker's 1986-87 season was being selected by the Big Ten conference coaches as All-Big Ten. While Tucker was a varsity basketball letter winner four years in a row (1984-87), the ankle injuries kept her from playing in about 15% of the games. Despite the injuries, 30 years later (2015) Sue still held seven Top 25 MSU Women's Basketball Individual Records – 23rd in scoring; 25th in scoring average; 23rd in field goals made; 15th in field goal percentage; 23rd in free throws attempted, made, and percentage; 19th in career rebounds; and 19th in rebound average.

Does Tucker have any regrets? "Well, one, if I had been able to play a few more games without an injured ankle," she recalled, "I would have scored enough points to join the Spartans 1,000-Point Club." In 1991, Tucker was inducted into the Greater Lansing Area Sports Hall of Fame ([Source](#)).

After Michigan State

After graduating with a BS (Dietetics) from Michigan State, Tucker worked from 1989 to 1999 with Wyeth-Lederle Pharmaceutical as a pharmaceutical sales representative, and from 1999-2001 with Bristol-Myers Squibb as a territory business manager. During this period Tucker also attended Central Michigan University to earn a MS in Administration with a concentration in Sports Administration.

From 2001-06 Tucker worked at Perry High School as Athletic Director. In 2005 she took on an additional role, serving as Assistant Principal through 2007. Recognizing that she needed more skills to be effective in helping students who struggle with mental health and behavioral issues, in August 2009 she enrolled full time at National-Louis University, graduating in June 2012 with an Education Specialist Degree (Ed.S.), with a specialization in School Psychology.

In August 2012 Tucker began working with Waukegan Public Schools, initially as a [Response to Intervention \(RtI\)](#) External Coach for thirteen months. In 2013 she began study at Loyola University of Chicago to earn a Doctorate in School Psychology, with a focus on Mental Health, and completed that degree in 2015. In the meantime, in August of 2013, Tucker began working as a School Psychologist with Waukegan Public Schools. In this job, Tucker works with children who have special needs (being autistic, developmentally delayed, learning disabled, and/or emotionally disabled, to ensure they have all the skills needed to complete their education and lead a more productive and happier life).




Sue Tucker at Waukegan Public Schools

In 2017 Tucker relocated to Florida (Tampa/St. Petersburg) where she now works as a [School Psychologist with the Hillsborough County Public Schools](#).

Looking Back

In 2015 Tucker was inducted into the inaugural class of the Okemos High School Athletic Hall of Fame. The program booklet for the induction of the 2015 class of the Okemos High School Athletic Hall of Fame summarized Sue's passion for sports:

Sue has loved sports – all sports – for as long as she can remember. She played basketball, ran track, swam and not to be forgotten – baseball, softball, volleyball and football. It was not always an easy or straightforward path but nothing of value ever is. Before the modern age of Title 9 and equality in sports, she was told in order to play on the all boys' football team she had to convince 100 community members to sign a petition to allow her to play. Taking on the challenge, with the help of brothers and sisters, Sue knocked on a lot more than 1000 doors and eventually got the endorsement to be the first girl to play football in the all boy league. This early and valuable lesson in perseverance and tenacity taught her how to overcome any obstacle and never give up on your dreams.



CHIEFS
Athletic Hall of Fame

Sue Tucker
Basketball

Four-Year starter at Okemos High School
All-State Selection as Sophomore and Junior
All-League and All-Area Honors
All-American Selection as a Junior and Senior
Michigan's Miss Basketball in 1982
Holds Seven Top 25 Individual Records at MSU

Inducted as a Member of the Okemos High School
Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2015

Looking back on her academic and athletic career at Okemos High, Tucker noted what a positive experience it had been, with high expectations set for students to perform both on and off the basketball court. *"People cared about you,"* Tucker said, *"and wanted you to do your very best. Teachers, counselors, the principal, all were supportive"* (Sue Tucker, personal communication).

Sue recalled that *“playing for MSU State was a tremendous opportunity and a great experience.”* Highlights included *“representing the university, being on seven different all-tournament teams, playing in classic tournaments around the country, and attending summer camps at other Big Ten universities, and even being on the Kelly and Company talk show in Detroit, representing MSU and the lives of the university’s student athletes”* (Sue Tucker, personal communication).

Academically, Tucker noted, *“I was fortunate that Michigan State not only awarded me a full-ride scholarship but also had one of the best schools for dietetics as a preparation for going pre-med. I found it a phenomenal school. It has to be among the top five schools in terms of beauty, especially the campus’ location along the Red Cedar. Beautiful campus! Lots of fun! A great university!”* (Sue Tucker, personal communication).

While Tucker’s work schedule no longer affords time to coach basketball, she is yet supportive of students in their athletic pursuits. One example is the “training booklet” she wrote to guide student athletes in preparing to play their respective sports.