



Ray Lewis

“Powerhouse of talent”

A powerhouse of talent, Ray Lewis¹, was a striking athlete for the Pirates at the end of the 1950’s. His competitive nature was fully present on the court for Coach John E. Wood.

Lewis’ spirited aura on the hardwood was nurtured from the immersed culture of his older brothers, Jim, Russell, and Don, who were outstanding Pirates at Charlestown as well. Lewis’ assertiveness on the floor was incomparable, especially around the rim and inside the paint. Underneath, he was intimidating, not to mention his impressive shooting from outside.

In 1956, a time of mastery arrived for Lewis. The card game was the Providence Pioneers. Local sports writers would depict it as the ‘shot heard around the county.’ A one hand jumper by Lewis with seconds left in the final frame sent the game in overtime.

Lewis describes it this way, “We were 2 points behind Providence, and the ball happened to be inbounded to me. I looked at the clock. I think there were 4 or 5 seconds. I dribbled as quickly as I could to our end of the floor and put up a shot and it went in and tied the game,” he said. The Pirates had to come from behind 50-52 and 52-54 in order to take home the victory, 58 to 55. “Anytime you beat Providence is a good moment,” Lewis laughed. “Providence was always a tough team. We had some other great games with them as well.”

In his playing minutes of three seasons (1956-1958), Lewis racked up 458 points. He had double-digits in 24 starts, and is credited with three double-doubles: 21 boards, 13 points in a win over Silver Creek at the 1958 Jeffersonville Sectional (March 1, 1958); 11 points, 20 rebounds against New Washington (February 7, 1958); 20 points, 19 boards against Crothersville (January 31, 1958). He poured in a single-best high performance of 24 points against Providence during the season of 1957-58, and had single highs of 24, 20, 20, 19, and 18.

In 1958, he was recruited by the legendary coach Lawrence J. “Jay” McCreary at Louisiana State University (LSU). Lewis set a single-game record for field goal accuracy at LSU. His excellent performance for the Tigers on the road at Georgia Tech, hitting 11 out 12, netted a victory against the Yellow Jackets.

Ray Lewis’ mastery of the game illustrates his powerhouse talent for the Pirates. - (*Read more on Ray Lewis in “Pirates of the Hardwood” & “The Pirates – Centennial” books.*)

¹ Ray Lewis photograph courtesy of Ray Lewis.