



Denny Ray Lutz

“Introduced the jump-shot”

One of the most awe-inspiring basketball players to don the Pirate jersey was Denny Ray Lutz.

Lutz, who played for coaches Letcher B. Norton and John E. Wood in the 1950’s, had an awesome shooting arm. He had flawless moves with the ball on the floor, especially with his impressive long range jumper that sailed through the bottom of the net.

Often times, Lutz had the clutch role of nail-biting matches, especially with a last second shot at the sound of the buzzer. “I don’t really remember *one* great moment,” Coach Wood said. “He had a *lot* of very great moments! He scored in clutch situations and he was a good passer of the ball.”

Boyd Henry, a power forward for the Pirates in 1959 and 1960, said of Lutz, “Denny played what I call ‘modern style’ basketball. He was the first player at the time to shoot a jump shot at Charlestown. Most people don’t realize the jump shot started in the ‘50’s. Players were still shooting set shots until the innovative jumper came along. He was the first!”

Lutz is credited with a career best of 838 points at Charlestown. During his four-year stint with the Pirates, he was in double figures 43 times. He had two career single-game high performances of 25 points, against Providence and New Washington during the season of 1956-57. He had offensive highs of 24, 22, 21, and 20 points and ended his prep career posting a 22-ppga. His single-career offensive output was a Pirate record at the time for a player.

In 1957, Lutz went to North Carolina State (NCS) and played for the Wolfpack’s legendary coach Everett Case. And, even though Lutz saw limited action at NCS, he certainly contributed to the Wolfpack effort. The Tobacco Road fans loved him.

Lutz remains one of the Pirates most inspiring hardwood heroes. The offensive star had a tremendous talent in the basketball arena.

(Read more on Denny Ray Lutz in “Pirates of the Hardwood” and “The Pirates – Centennial” books by Chuck E. Ledbetter, Sr.)



Denny Ray Lutz (Photograph courtesy of North Carolina State)