New Palestine Athletics

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The Schedule

Date	Opponent	JV	Var.
11/23	at Jennings Co.	41-49	57-55
11/26	at New Castle	36-33	44-53
12/3	at Rushville*	38-34	63-51
12/9	GRNFLD-C.*^	42-17	63-19
12/16	MORRISTOWN	46-31	73-61
12/17	at Franklin C.	39-51	64-63
12/21	at Beech Grove	40-28	62-48
12/27	GRNFLD-C.%^	38-22	70-24
12/27	at Mt. Vernon%^	40-29	61-55
1/6	DELTA*	42-35	58-34
1/13	PEND. HTS.*	35-37	53-77
1/20	TRITON C.	50-41	70-45
1/21	at Whiteland	59-48	81-88
1/27	at Yorktown*	49-37	53-64
2/3	SHELBYVILLE*	51-31	72-51
2/4	MOORESVILLE	45-33	63-65
2/9	at Franklin	48-31	54-39
2/14	WESTFIELD	45-31	64-68
2/17	at Mt. Vernon*	46-26	61-38
2/24	at Greenwood	46-26	53-37
Center Grove sectional			
2/28	vs. Franklin		51-45
3/2	vs. Whiteland		61-60
3/3	vs. Franklin Central		58-51
Shelbyville regional			
3/10	vs. Castle		12:00
3/10	BloomS/Jeff (if win AM)		8:00

*-Hoosier Heritage Conference game
%-Hancock County Tournament
^-JV games played at Greenfield-C.

The Dragons

NEW PALESTINE ROSTER

No	Player	Ht.	Pos.	Cl.
14	Ryan Curry	5-7	G	Fr.
20	Josh Penley	6-4	F/G	Sr.
22	Solomon Haynes	6-1	G	Jr.
24	Brandon Collins	6-3	F	Sr.
30	Samson Haynes	5-10	G	So.
32	Justin Ikerd	5-10	G	Jr.
34	Sam Larrabee	6-0	G	Jr.
40	Wade Whitaker	6-4	F	Sr.
42	Brandon Jonas	6-3	F	Fr.
44	Michael Morris	6-6	F	Jr.
50	Reid Clark	6-4	F	Sr.
52	Connor Roach	6-3	F	So.

COACHES

Varsity coach: Adam Barton (Franklin College, Eastern Hancock HS). 7th year at NPHS, record 82-73. Sectional champion coach 2009, 2011, 2012.

JV coach: Jeff Wright

Varsity assistants: Trent Whitaker, Jeremy Large, Doug Darley

Freshman coach: Chris Cherry

Statistician: Jenny Ritchey

Repeat trip to regional

The New Palestine Dragons are rookies to Class 4A, but they have become veterans to winning sectionals, as they will play in the regional for the third time in four years, and the second straight year.

The Dragons won the Center Grove sectional title by outlasting Franklin 51-45 in the opening round and then rallying from a six-point deficit in the last 100 seconds to beat Whiteland 61-60 in Friday's semifinal to get to the sectional title game. The Dragons then pulled away from Franklin Central down the stretch to beat the Flashes 58-51, their second victory over FC this season.

The Dragons, competing in Class 4A for the first time after 14 years as a Class 3A entrant, enter today's regional with a 17-6 record, making this the fifth-winningest season in more than a century of New Palestine boys basketball, which began play in 1909.

Today, the Dragons will face the Castle Knights in the second semifinal. This will be the first meeting between New Palestine and Castle, which enters with an 18-4 record after winning last week's Evansville sectional.

With no seniors on the 2010-11 roster, the Dragons returned nearly their entire rotation from last year's sectional championship team to this year's campaign, and the results are noticeable. The Dragons have posted their best regular season record in nine years and their highest HHC finish in four years. They also won their second straight Hancock County Tournament championship this year. The Dragons have done so with tremendous balance, as four players -- juniors Michael Morris and Justin Ikerd and seniors Josh Penley and Reid Clark -- average at least 8.5 points per game, with Morris the leading scorer on the season with a 15.5 ppg average.

Getting here

The Dragons advanced out of the sectional by using tremendous balance, and by also having their leading scorers step up. Junior Michael Morris averaged 18.7 points and 7.5 rebounds, and Josh Penley averaged 14.3 points per game to lead the Dragons in the tourney, but several other players shone. Justin Ikerd hit double-figures against Whiteland with four 3-pointers. Solomon Haynes had two big steals to turn the tide against Whiteland and hit the game-winning free throw. Reid Clark totaled eight rebounds in the sectional final against Franklin Central.

In the championship game, Morris continued his strong tournament play, scoring 20 points on 7-of-11 shooting and grabbing six rebounds. Penley had 18 points, hitting 5-of-9 from the floor and 8-of-12 from the line. He had six boards and three assists. Clark had a six-point, eight-rebound night. Brandon Collins had seven points. Solomon Haynes added five boards from the guard spot.

The Dragons trailed 25-21 at halftime, but outscored FC 15-9 in the third quarter to take a two-point lead going into the final eight minutes, and began to pull away in the latter half of the fourth quarter. The Dragons' victory was their second over the Flashes this season, having also beaten FC 64-63 on Dec. 17.

In the semifinal, New Palestine trailed 59-53 with less than two minutes to go when Penley hit a 15-foot basline jumper, Haynes forced a midcourt steal that led to an open 3-pointer by Ikerd that cut the deficit to one. After Whiteland split two free throws, Morris hit a 17-foot jumper to tie the game inside the final 30 seconds. Whiteland was holding for the last shot, but Haynes stripped the ball from Warriors' guard in the midcourt circle and was fouled intentionally from behind as he went in for a breakaway layup. He hit one of the two ensuing free throws with 6.7 seconds left for the win.

In the opening round, Morris had 18 points and seven rebounds against the Grizzly Cubs. Penley narrowly missed a double-double with 13 points and nine boards. New Palestine took the lead with a 12-5 third quarter that allowed them to take a 31-25 lead going into the final period. Franklin cut the Dragons' lead to two, but New Palestine pulled away.

Regional schedule

Shelbyville regional schedule

10 a.m.: Bloomington South (13-9) vs. Jeffersonville (20-3)

Noon: Castle (18-4) vs. New Palestine (17-6)

8 p.m.: Championship

Winner to: March 17 semistate at Southport or Seymour, vs. Hinkle regional winner

Broadcast: All of New Palestine's games will be webcast by HancockCountySports.com.

The Knights

Castle won its sectional by beating Evansville Central 67-59, North 68-52 and Harrison 61-47. The victory over Harrison avenged two of the Knights' four defeats on the year. Coached by Brian Gibson (10th year, 148-73), Castle is in the regional for the second straight year. Castle is led by forwards Blake Simmons (20.2 points, 7.3 rebounds), Kevin Brown (12.8 points, 6.8 rebounds) and Shane Seniour (12.1 points, 5.3 rebounds). The Knights shared the Southern Indiana Athletic Conference title with Evansville Harrison.

Probable starters

NEW PALESTINE STARTERS

F 24	Brandon Collins	6-3	Sr.
F 50	Reid Clark	6-4	Sr.
C 44	Michael Morris	6-6	Jr.
G 20	Josh Penley	6-4	Sr.
G 32	Justin Ikerd	5-10	Jr.

KEY RESERVES

G 22	Solomon Haynes	6-1	Jr.
F 40	Wade Whitaker	6-5	Sr.
F 42	Brandon Jonas	6-3	Fr.
G 34	Sam Larrabee	6-0	Jr.

Coach: Adam Barton

Around the HHC

STANDINGS *(teams alive in bold)*	Conf.	GB	Overall
Pendleton Heights (#2 4A)	**7-0**	**--**	**23-2**
New Palestine	**5-2**	**2**	**17-6**
Yorktown	5-2	2	15-8
Mt. Vernon (RV 3A)	5-2	2	13-8
Delta	2-5	5	12-10
Rushville	2-5	5	7-15
Greenfield-Central	1-6	6	3-18
Shelbyville	1-6	6	1-20

Today's games

New Palestine vs. Castle, noon (4A-Shelbyville)

Pendleton Heights vs. Terre Haute North, noon (4A-Hinkle)

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The venue

The Dragons are facing a new tournament field in a very familiar venue, Shelbyville's Garrett Gymnasium. Seating 5,832, it is the 18th-largest gymnasium in Indiana and has been a consistent tournament venue since its construction in the late 1960s.

New Palestine's last win at Garrett Gym came on Jan. 27, 2007, a 68-66 win over the host Golden Bears. New Palestine has lost four straight at Garrett since, including two tournament games.

This is New Palestine's third trip to the Shelbyville regional in four years, and the Dragons also play in Garrett Gymnasium every other year in the regular season. This will be the Dragons' first game at Garrett Gymnasium this year -- the last outing was last year's 56-48 regional loss to Batesville in the 2011 3A Shelbyville regional.

This is Shelbyville's first 4A regional, as the southern regional had been held at Seymour for the previous 10 seasons. Seymour remains one of the two southern semistate venues.

Moving to 4A

With 1,092 students in the 2010-11 school year, the Dragons were five students ahead of the 3A/4A cutoff, and are the second-smallest school in 4A (Roncalli: 1,090 is the smallest). Fellow sectional foe Greenwood (1,167) is also in the bottom 10 of Class 4A enrollment and close to the cutoff line of 1,087 students.

The Dragons will be a 4A school for at least two years before the next reclassification, which will be based on 2012-13 enrollment. New Palestine was one of six schools moving up from 3A to 4A this year, joining Fort Wayne Wayne, Shelbyville, Columbia City, New Haven and Roncalli.

While New Palestine spent the first 14 years of class play in Class 3A, the Dragons are the only one. All of the other 15 schools who comprise the 4A regional field have been in the top enrollment class have been 4A teams since the tournament was divided in 1997-98.

The regional field

New Palestine Dragons
Coach: Adam Barton (7th year, 82-73)
Colors: Red & White
City: New Palestine (Hancock County)
Enrollment: 1102
Record: 17-6, 2nd Hoosier Heritage Conference
IHSAA member since: 1915
Boys basketball sectional titles: 7 (1957, 1980, 1989, 1997, 2009, 2011, 2012)

Castle Knights
Coach: Brian Gibson (10th year, 148-73)
Colors: Blue & Gold
City: Newburgh (Warrick County)
Enrollment: 1915
Record: 18-4, t1st Southern Indiana Athletic Conference
IHSAA member since: 1959 (consolidation of Chandler & Newburgh, added Millersburg 1965)
Boys basketball sectional titles: 7 (1961, 1962, 1987, 1990, 2002, 2011, 2012). Regional champs 2002.

Bloomington South Panthers
Coach: J.R. Holmes (30th year at South, 525-181; 42nd overall, 668-299)
Colors: Purple & White
City: Bloomington (Monroe County)
Enrollment: 1679
Record: 13-9, 5th Conference Indiana
IHSAA member since: 1972 (absorbed Smithville, split into Bloomington North & Bloomington South in 1972. BHHS retained Bloomington High School building, nickname & colors).
Boys basketball sectional titles: 17 (1973, 1975, 1985-88, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2005-07, 2009-12). Regional champs 1985, 1987-89, 2006-09, 2011. Semistate & state champs 2009, 2011.

Jeffersonville Red Devils
Coach: Chad Gilbert (1st year, 20-3, won 2011 girls state title at JHS)
Colors: Red & White
City: Jeffersonville (Clark County)
Enrollment: 2101
Record: 20-3, 1st Hoosier Hills Conference
IHSAA member since: 1904 (absorbed Jeffersonville Taylor 1952)
Boys basketball sectional titles: 36 (1924, 1927, 1933-35, 1941-45, 1947, 1949, 1952-54, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976-77, 1982, 1987-88, 1991-96, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2012). 17 regional titles, 6 semistates. 1993 state champs.

HHC rankings

At 15.2 points per game, Michael Morris finished the regular season ranked third in the Hoosier Heritage Conference in scoring, behind Mr. Basketball candidate Kellen Dunham of Pendleton Heights and C.J. Coleman of Mt. Vernon. At 11.3 ppg, the Dragons' Josh Penley ranked eighth in the conference. At 48 percent from behind the arc, Morris finished third in 3-point percentage (Coleman, PH's Matt Wehner) and second to Dunham in free throw percentage (84%). Clark (7.5) and Morris (6.1) ranked second and third in the HHC in rebounding, behind Shelbyville's Ethan Runnebohm. Penley was third in assists (3.1) and second in steals (1.7).

Trophies in hand

For the second straight year, the Dragons are toting two trophies. In addition to the sectional title, the Dragons defeated Greenfield-Central (70-24) and Mt. Vernon (61-55) on Dec. 27 to win the Hancock County Tournament championship. Michael Morris had a career-high 26 points, many in a 16-1 second-half run that sealed the county title. It was New Palestine's fifth county title in the revived tournament's nine-year history. In 2010-11, New Palestine defeated Eastern Hancock and Greenfield-Central in back-to-back overtime games to win the championship, and then went on to win the sectional at New Palestine later that season. New Palestine also won county championships in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2007-08.

A smashing night

The Dragons have garnered national attention this season for an incident that happened while the team was in the locker room. During halftime of the Dragons' 70-45 victory over Triton Central on Jan. 20, the Indiana Pacers' mascot, Boomer, shattered one of the backboards with a dunk attempt. It was the second time a backboard at NPHS had been shattered: T.J. Ott also did so in the pregame in the mid-1990s, forcing a replacement backboard to be put up. This time, the game was completed in the auxiliary gym.

The Indiana Pacers replaced both backboards and baskets, which were first put into service for the Feb. 3 game against Shelbyville, a 72-51 NP victory. The Pacers also gave several pairs of tickets to NPHS students via Twitter the following week, and hosted a New Palestine Community Night on Feb. 19. Boomer returned to finish his dunk show at a pep rally on Feb. 10.

Win total keeps rising

The Dragons' 17 victories this season mark the seventh-most in school history over the last 75 years, and the most since a 16-5 season in 1997-98 under coach Brian Kehrt. This year also marked the first 15-win season since 1999-2000. The school record for wins in a season is 21, set in the 1988-89 season under coach Carl Hughes.

That team was also the only New Palestine squad to win a regional game, and came within an eyelash of going to the Sweet Sixteen, as the Dragons fell to Muncie South in overtime 86-84 in the regional championship game at New Castle. For the Dragons to equal the 21-win mark of the 1988-89 team, it would have to win the state title. A regional championship would ensure a tie for the second-most wins in school history, equaling teams from 1956-57, 1958-59, 1966-67, 1978-79 and 1995-96.

Top New Palestine seasons since 1937-38 (last 75 years)
1988-89: 21-3, regional finalists (coach Carl Hughes)
1995-96: 19-3 (coach Brian Kehrt)
1978-79: 19-3, BBRC champions (coach Ed Frieje)
1966-67: 19-3, BBRC champions (coach Walt Molinder)
1958-59: 19-3 (coach Wally Cones)
1956-57: 19-6, sectional champions (coach Wally Cones)
1944-45: 18-3, county champions (coach George Davis)
2011-12: 17-6, county, sectional champions (coach Adam Barton)
1997-98: 16-5 (coach Brian Kehrt)
1983-84: 16-5, BBRC champions (coach Ed Frieje)
1957-58: 16-5, county champions (coach Wally Cones)
1999-2000: 16-7, HHC champions (coach Brian Kehrt)

Second place in HHC

The Dragons finished 5-2 in the always-tough Hoosier Heritage Conference this season and split second place with Mt. Vernon and Yorktown. It was the Dragons' highest finish since finishing second to Yorktown in 2007-08, also with a 5-2 mark. The Dragons have won two HHC titles, in 1999-2000 and 2002-03, both under the direction of former coach Brian Kehrt. New Palestine is a charter member of the HHC, which was formed in 1993.

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The Dragons' coach

Adam Barton is in his seventh year as the Dragons' head coach, with a record of 82-73. He is the only coach in New Palestine's 103-year basketball history to win more than one sectional championship, leading the Dragons to 3A sectional titles in 2009 and 2011, both years beating Hamilton Heights and Shelbyville. This year, he added a third sectional title to his resume, having beaten Franklin, Whiteland and Franklin Central to win a 4A sectional.

A graduate of Eastern Hancock High School and Franklin College, Barton was the varsity assistant to Brian Kehrt at NPHS for several years before moving up to the top job in 2005-06.

Barton teaches science and is the science department chairperson at NPHS. He is the fourth-winningest coach in school history. Kehrt (1995-2005, 126-93) is the all-time winningest coach

New Palestine winningest coaches since 1937
Brian Kehrt (1995-2005): 126-93, 2 HHC titles, 1 sectional title
Ed Frieje (1978-86): 116-57, 3 BBRC titles, 1 sectional title
Wally Cones (1954-62): 100-72, 1 sectional title
Adam Barton (2005-12): 82-73, 3 sectional titles
William McNamara (1949-54): 56-49
Carl Hughes (1986-90): 50-36, 1 sectional title

Sagarin says

The Dragons rank 51st in the state and 37th in Class 4A according to Jeff Sagarin's computer rankings. They have played the 94th-toughest schedule in the state so far, but the schedule does include eight games against Sagarin's Top 64. NP is 4-4 in those games, beating No. 50 Mt. Vernon and No. 36 Franklin Central twice each. The losses have come to No. 4 Pendleton Heights, No. 44 Westfield by four points, No. 49 Mooresville on two free throws at the buzzer and No. 45 New Castle on the road. New Palestine is the third-highest rated team in the regional field. Castle ranks No. 34. In the other semifinal are Jeffersonville (No. 14) and defending 4A champ Bloomington South (No. 56).

Series history

New Palestine has never played any of the teams in this year's regional field, either in the regular season or in the tournament.

Excelling on multiple courts

This year's senior class has also been accomplished in other sports. Seniors Brandon Collins and Josh Penley will continue their athletic careers beyond New Palestine on the gridiron. Collins has committed to play at Butler University, which competes in the NCAA Div. I Football Championship Series (formerly I-AA). He holds the school's single-season receptions and receiving yardage leader and is second all-time in school history in receiving yards.

Penley is the school's single-season and career touchdown receptions recordholder. He is currently being recruited by several schools to play football at the next level, and will play in the IFCA North/South All-Star Football Classic this summer as a defensive back. Both Penley and Collins were All-State selections in football this fall as they led the Dragons to an 11-1 record and the No. 1 ranking in Class 4A during the regular season.

Reid Clark is the first Dragon to win an individual sectional championship in tennis in several years, and he plans to play tennis in college. Clark is a two-time All-HHC tennis player. He is also a starting pitcher on the Dragons' baseball team, which has won eight straight HHC titles and spent much of last season ranked in the top five of Class 3A.

Double your pleasure

The Dragons' big frontline of Michael Morris and Reid Clark have poured in the double-doubles this season, combining for eight. Clark has five, including three in a four-game February stretch. Morris has three double-doubles, with two coming in back-to-back nights in December victories over Morristown and Franklin Central.

Dragon double-doubles
Reid Clark (5)
12/3 at Rushville: 10 points, 12 rebounds (W 63-51)
12/21 at Beech Grove: 18 points, 13 rebounds (W 62-48)
2/3 vs. Shelbyville: 15 points, 10 rebounds (W 72-51)
2/9 at Franklin: 11 points, 12 rebounds (W 54-39)
2/14 vs. Westfield: 15 points, 11 rebounds (L 64-68)
Michael Morris (3)
12/16 vs. Morristown: 19 points, 10 rebounds (W 73-61)
12/17 at Franklin Central: 17 points, 10 rebounds (W 64-63)
2/4 vs. Mooresville: 15 points, 10 rebounds (L 63-65)

The 20 club

New Palestine has had great balance this year. Several players have hit 15+ points in a game this season, but junior Michael Morris and senior Josh Penley have topped 20 a total of six times, including both doing so in the same game Jan. 21 at Whiteland.

Michael Morris (6)
26 vs. Mt. Vernon (12/27/11)
24 vs. Shelbyville (2/3/12)
20 vs. Rushville (12/3/11)
20 at Whiteland (1/21/12)
20 vs. Greenwood (2/24/12)
20 vs. Franklin Central (3/3/12)
Josh Penley (1)
23 vs. Whiteland (1/21/12)

Chasing milestones

Several Dragons are chasing milestones this year:

Michael Morris
Season points: 358 (broke 300 vs. Greenwood 2/25, needs 42 for 400)
Career points: 600 (tied 600 vs. Franklin Central 3/3)
Career rebounds: 280 (broke 250 vs. Mt. Vernon 2/18, needs 20 for 300)

Josh Penley
Career points: 663 (needs 37 for 700)
Career steals: 82 (38 this season, broke 80 vs. Whiteland. Needs 13 for post-1990 school record)
Career assists: 154 (67 this season, broke 150 vs. Whiteland 3/2)

Reid Clark
Season rebounds: 165 (hit 150 vs. Greenwood 2/25)
Career rebounds: 313 (broke 300 vs. Franklin 2/28)

Justin Ikerd
Career 3-pointers: 95 (58 this season, needs 15 for 100)

Solomon Haynes
Career assists: 154 (59 this season, broke 150 vs. Whiteland 3/2)

Youth is served

While youth was the order of the day for a Dragon squad that didn't feature a single senior last year, five of the nine rotation players on this year's squad are underclassmen, including the leading scorer (Michael Morris). Like Morris, guards Justin Ikerd and Solomon Haynes, who have also been consistent starters this season -- Haynes has played the role of sixth man in the latter part of the year -- are also juniors. Brandon Jonas, a 6-foot-3 forward who has been a strong defender and rebounder for the Dragons this season, is a freshman. Add that to a 17-3 JV and the Dragons possess a potentially-strong future in addition to the present.

Family ties

The Dragons have one set of brothers in the program, as junior guard Solomon Haynes and sophmomore guard Samson Haynes are brothers. They come from a basketball family, as their father, Noah Haynes, led the state in scoring as a senior at Frontier High School in 1989. Grandfather Bruce Haynes was the Dragons' varsity coach from 1990-95, and aunt Sarah (Haynes) Gizzi is the New Palestine girls basketball program's career scoring leader and lone Indiana All-Star.

The Haynes brothers are not the only players in the Dragon program with siblings who have shone for New Palestine. Wade Whitaker's older sister Kelli was a member of the 2004 state softball championship team and played volleyball at Indiana State University. Josh Penley's older brother Nathan was a key member of the Dragons' 2009 sectional championship football and basketball teams. Michael Morris' twin sister Katie is a middle hitter on the Dragons' volleyball team. In addition, coach Adam Barton's daughter Jordan is a member of the NPHS four-time sectional champion soccer team. She is a manager for the Dragons' basketball team.

Dragon JV goes 17-3

Not only has the Dragon varsity team experienced a strong season, the Dragon junior varsity is doing the same. The New Palestine JV finished the season with a 17-3 mark and the Hancock County championship. The Dragons went 6-1 against Hoosier Heritage Conference foes. Under the direction of veteran coach Jeff Wright, the Dragons finished the year on a nine-game winning streak. Four players who helped lead the JV team to that stellar record -- junior Sam Larrabee, sophomores Connor Roach and Samson Haynes and freshman Ryan Curry -- dress for the varsity team.

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Dragons tourney history

This year, the Dragons will be playing in their seventh regional in school history. NPHS, which fielded its first basketball team in 1909, first competed in the state tournament in 1917 and has competed in it annually since 1920.

New Palestine won its first sectional championship in 1957 in the old Greenfield High School sectional under the direction of coach Wally Cones. It was 23 years before another title came in 1980 under coach Ed Frieje. NP won the last single-class sectional at Greenfield-Central in 1997, and has won three sectional titles in the class era.

Four of the Dragons' last five head coaches since Frieje took over in 1978 have won a sectional title: Frieje (1980, coached from 1978-88), Carl Hughes (1989, coached from 1988-91), Brian Kehrt (1997, coached from 1995-2005) and Barton (2009, 2011, 2012, has coached since 2005).

New Palestine sectional champions

1957: Greenfield sectional (coach Wally Cones). Def. Mt. Comfort 88-71, Franklin Township 78-60 and Charlottesville 67-64. Lost to Elwood 80-68 in Hinkle regional semifinal. *(note: Mt. Comfort is now part of Mt. Vernon. Franklin Twp. is now Franklin Central. Charlottesville is now part of Eastern Hancock).*

1980: Greenfield-Central sectional (coach Ed Frieje). Def. Mt. Vernon 37-34 and Greenfield-Central 61-54. Lost to Muncie Central 63-45 in New Castle regional semifinal.

1989: Greenfield-Central sectional (coach Carl Hughes). Def. Mt. Vernon 80-79 (2OT) and Eastern Hancock 74-71. Def. Greensburg 80-69, lost to Muncie South 86-83 (OT) in New Castle regional.

1997: Greenfield-Central sectional (coach Brian Kehrt). Def. Eastern Hancock 72-47, Mt. Vernon 63-60 and Pendleton Heights 61-46. Lost to Delta in Anderson regional semi 63-51.

2009: 3A Hamilton Heights sectional (coach Adam Barton). Def. Shelbyville 46-41 and Hamilton Heights 59-53. Lost to North Montgomery in Shelbyville regional semi 62-49.

2011: 3A New Palestine sectional (coach Adam Barton). Def. Hamilton Heights 77-74 & Shelbyville 66-55. Lost to Batesville in Shelbyville regional semi 56-48.

2012: 4A Center Grove sectional (coach Adam Barton). Def. Franklin 51-45, Whiteland 61-60 and Franklin Central 58-51. Advancing to Shelbyville regional.

All-time tournament record (1917-present): 64-94
Class era (1998-11): 14-14 (sectional record: 14-12)
All-time record in regional games: 1-6

Cutting the nets: a look back

Last year, New Palestine won the fifth sectional championship in school history when it beat then-No. 4 Hamilton Heights and Shelbyville on back-to-back nights. It was also the first time New Palestine had ever hosted a boys sectional. Against Hamilton Heights, Josh Penley scored 30 points in a 77-74 victory, outdueling HH's Austin Etherington, who scored 27 points in his final high school game. Etherington now plays at Indiana University. Solomon Haynes and Brandon Collins also hit double-figures for the Dragons in that game, which was sealed when Collins rebounded Etherington's missed 3 out of the corner at the buzzer. The following evening, the Dragons avenged a regular-season loss to Shelbyville with a 66-55 victory, led by 19 points from Taylor Rainey, 17 from Michael Morris and 16 points/11 rebounds from Penley. Reid Clark also had 12 boards in that game.

Quoting Coach Barton

New Palestine coach Adam Barton on:

Winning a 4A sectional title: "A 4A sectional title is pretty special on the first trip, but to the kids it is just like last year's sectional. They never seem to get too caught up in who we are playing or the size of the school. Maybe that helped with their poise down the stretch this past weekend. They never get too down because they have played a lot of basketball together and we have been down, way down, before and found a way to battle back."

Poise down the stretch in tournament games: "The Mt. Vernon county tourney final we learned a lot from and I think that showed Saturday night as we managed the clock much better in the fourth quarter." *(note: New Palestine rallied in the second half to beat Mt. Vernon 61-55 in the Hancock County Tournament championship game on Dec. 27).*

Playing in the regional and facing Castle: "I have just started looking at Castle, but they appear to have great size and athletic ability. They play at a quick pace and pressure the ball all over the court. It's a different philosophy then we have played lately, but it looks like fun. I am really looking forward to taking this group back to Shelbyville on Saturday. We have played a lot of games there in the last few years during the season and during our summer leagues so our kids feel pretty comfortable there."

The play of several individual players in the tourney: "I really liked the balance of our team this year. Michael Morris had a great tournament and played with a lot of emotion all week which really led our team. Solomon Haynes made the play of the tournament on Friday night with the steal and free throw *(in the final 10 seconds vs. Whiteland to win 61-60)*, but was clutch throughout the tournament and will be very important against Castle's ball pressure. Reid Clark led our posts on the boards Saturday night as we had one of our best boxout performances of the year as several balls bounced to the floor on rebounds and we had all five spots sealed off. Josh Penley also had a great tournament putting a lot of pressure on defense with his offensive attack. He was solid all three games. We played nine players in Friday and Saturday night's games and they all contributed to our success."

The excitement of winning the sectional: "We are at 17 wins currently and the boys have won two trophies. It has been a great year with a great group of kids, but we have talked about a regional championship since last March so we have more work to do. Our kids were very businesslike on the way home Saturday night. They are ready to make the next step."

Season splits

Dragons' record in/when
Home games: 6-3 **Road:** 8-3 **Neutral:** 3-0
Games vs. 4A teams: 10-5 **3A:** 5-1 **2A/1A:** 2-0
vs. teams still in tourney: 1-1 (win-2A Triton C.; loss-4A Pendleton Hts.)
vs. Conference Indiana: 2-0 **Hoosier Hills/SIAC:** 0-0
vs. Sagarin Top 25: 0-1 **vs. Sagarin Top 64:** 4-4
Games in November: 1-1 **Games in December:** 7-0
Games in January: 2-3 **Games in February:** 5-2
Games in March: 2-0
Current streak: W5
Longest streak: W8 (12/3-1/6, longest since in 1997-98-12 gms.)
Scoring at least 60 points: 11-3 **70+ points:** 4-1 **80+ points:** 0-1
Allowing 30 points or less: 2-0 **40- points:** 6-0 **50- points:** 9-0
Game decided by 5 points or less: 3-2 **Overtime:** 0-0
Dragons have a 20-point scorer: 5-1
Dragons have a double-figure rebounder: 6-2

The last time

NP scored 80+ points: 1/21/12: at Whiteland (L 81-88)
NP scored 90+ points: 12/3/99: at Eastern Hancock (W 93-47)
NP scored 100+ points: 12/15/89: vs. Waldron (W 105-89)
NP allowed 35- points: 1/6/12: vs. Delta (W 58-34)
NP allowed 30- points: 12/27/11: vs. Greenfield-Central (W 70-24)
NP allowed 20- points: 12/9/11: vs. Greenfield-Central (W 63-19)
NP won by 25+ points: 1/20/12: vs. Triton Central (W 70-45)
NP scored 30 points in a quarter: 1/21/12: at Whiteland (38 points in 4th quarter, L 81-88)
NP played in OT: 2/22/11 at Shelbyville (L 78-85)
A Dragon scored 25+: Michael Morris 12/27/11 at Mt. Vernon (26)
A Dragon scored 30+: Josh Penley 3/4/11 vs. Hamilton Hts. (30)
A Dragon had 10+ assists: Solomon Haynes 12/16/10 vs. Morristown (11)
A Dragon recorded a double-double: Reid Clark 2/14/12 vs. Westfield (15 points, 11 rebounds)
Two Dragons scored 20 points in a game: Josh Penley (23) and Michael Morris (20) 1/21/12 at Whiteland.
School record points: T.J. Ott, 44 vs. Hamilton Southeastern 1/24/98.
School record rebounds: Gary Mithoefer, 33 vs. Indianapolis Marshall 1/31/69 (also scored then-school-record 39 points in that game)
School record points (team): 105 vs. Waldron 2/18/89 (W 105-89)
School record points, both teams: 194 vs. Waldron 2/18/89 (W 105-89)
School record biggest victory: 53 vs. McCordsville, 1957-58 (W 101-48)

Elsewhere at NPHS

Academically, New Palestine is one of the state's premier high schools. In December, New Palestine was once again named a Four-Star School, one of fewer than 20 public high schools in the state to receive such designation. NPHS is currently in the running for a national Blue Ribbon School designation, which will be announced in the fall. New Palestine has a four-year cohort 93.5 percent graduation rate, and is consistently above 90 percent.

Athletically, NPHS is also one of the premier schools in East Central Indiana. In the last year, the Dragons have won sectional titles in girls soccer (fourth straight), boys basketball (second straight) and softball (fourth straight). In addition, the boys soccer (third straight), girls soccer (second straight), baseball (eighth straight) and football (second straight) teans won HHC titles. The football team set an HHC record this fall with 20 straight conference victories, and finished the regular season undefeated and ranked No. 1 in Class 4A in the AP poll. The Dragons finished the year 11-1.

In individual sports, the Dragons have also shone. In wrestling, senior Connor Robinson was a state runner-up at 160 pounds.

NP has won state titles in baseball (2004) and softball (2004, 2008, 2009).

2011-12 New Palestine boys basketball roster

20 Josh Penley

6'4, 185 Senior Forward
GP/GS: 23/23 "PEN-lee"
Pts: 11.7 **Reb:** 3.8
Ast: 3.0 **Stl:** 1.7
FG: 46% (99-217) **3pt:** 27% (4-15)
FT: 58% (66-113)
Career highs
Pts: 30, 3/4/11 vs. Hamilton Hts.
Reb: 11, 3/5/11 vs. Shelbyville

22 Solomon Haynes

6'1, 170 Junior Guard
GP/GS: 23/13
Pts: 4.3 **Reb:** 2.6
Ast: 2.6 **Stl:** 1.1
FG: 34% (32-93) **3pt:** 27% (11-41)
FT: 68% (27-40)
Career highs
Pts: 17, 1/22/11 vs. Whiteland
Ast: 11, 12/17/10 at Morristown

24 Brandon Collins

6'3, 185 Senior Forward
GP/GS: 22/9
Pts: 6.2 **Reb:** 3.7
Ast: 1.1 **Stl:** 1.0
FG: 46% (54-117) **3pt:** 0% (0-0)
FT: 52% (29-56) **Coll:** Butler (FB)
Career highs
Pts: 18, 2x, last 1/21/12 at Whiteland
Reb: 11, 12/27/11 at Mt. Vernon

32 Justin Ikerd

5'10, 165 Junior Guard
GP/GS: 23/18 "EYE-curd"
Pts: 8.5 **Reb:** 1.6
Ast: 1.3 **Stl:** 1.1
FG: 35% (69-195) **3pt:** 34% (58-171)
FT: 56% (5-9)
Career highs
Pts: 22, 1/21/11 at Triton Central
Ast: 7, 12/27/11 at Mt. Vernon

34 Sam Larrabee

6'0, 175 Junior Guard
GP/GS: 16/0 "LAIR-uh-bee"
Pts: 0.3 **Reb:** 0.8
Ast: 0.3 **Stl:** 0.1
FG: 17% (1-6) **3pt:** 0% (0-2)
FT: 67% (4-6)
Career highs
Pts: 3, 12/27/11 vs. Greenfield-Central
Reb: 5, 12/9/11 vs. Greenfield-Central

40 Wade Whitaker

6'4, 185 Senior Forward
GP/GS: 23/2
Pts: 1.1 **Reb:** 1.7
Ast: 0.1 **Stl:** 0.2
FG: 22% (8-36) **3pt:** 8% (1-12)
FT: 44% (7-16)
Career highs
Pts: 4, 5x, last 1/6/12 vs. Delta
Reb: 5, 2x, last 12/27/11 vs. Grnfld-C.

42 Brandon Jonas

6'3, 185 Freshman Forward
GP/GS: 23/0 "JOE-nuss"
Pts: 3.9 **Reb:** 2.5
Ast: 0.6 **Stl:** 0.2
FG: 52% (35-67) **3pt:** 0% (0-6)
FT: 50% (20-40)
Career highs
Pts: 17, 12/9/11 vs. Greenfield-Central
Reb: 7, 12/27/11 vs. Greenfield-Central

44 Michael Morris

6'6, 205 Junior Forward
GP/GS: 23/23
Pts: 15.6 **Reb:** 6.1
Ast: 0.8 **Stl:** 1.1
FG: 57% (131-230) **3pt:** 47% (34-72)
FT: 83% (62-75)
Career highs
Pts: 26, 12/27/11 at Mt. Vernon
Reb: 14, 11/24/10 vs. Jennings Co.

50 Reid Clark

6'4, 195 Senior Forward
GP/GS: 21/21
Pts: 8.8 **Reb:** 7.2
Ast: 1.3 **Stl:** 0.8
FG: 56% (80-143) **3pt:** 0% (0-1)
FT: 68% (42-62)
Career highs
Pts: 20, 12/22/10 vs. Beech Grove
Reb: 13, 12/21/11 at Beech Grove

Splitting time

JV players who dress varsity
#14 Ryan Curry
5-7 Freshman Guard
10 GP 0.9 pts
0.1 reb 0.1 ast/stl

#30 Samson Haynes
5-10 Sophomore Guard
11 GP 0.9 pts
0.3 reb 0.4 ast

#52 Connor Roach
6-3 Sophomore Forward
11 GP 0.9 pts
0.8 reb 0.1 stl

Head coach: Adam Barton

Coach Barton is in his seventh year at the helm of the New Palestine basketball program. He is the only coach in NPHS history to lead two different teams to sectional titles, doing the feat in 2009 and 2011. Prior to being named the varsity coach, he was the top assistant to Brian Kehrt. Coach Barton is a graduate of Eastern Hancock HS and Franklin College. He is the NPHS science department chairperson.

The Coaches

Head coach: Adam Barton (Franklin/Eastern Hancock HS). 7th year at NPHS, record 82-73, sectional champs 2009, 2011, 2012
2012: 17-6, county/sect. champs
2011: 11-12, county/sect. champs
2010: 11-10
2009: 9-14, sectional champs
2008: 13-8, county champs
2007: 13-9
2006: 8-14, county champs
Assistants: Trent Whitaker, Jeremy Large, Doug Darley
JV coach: Jeff Wright
Freshman coach: Chris Cherry

Series History

With ALL regional opponents: first meeting in history
New Palestine's regional history
2011 (3A-Shelbyville): Batesville 56, New Palestine 48
2009 (3A-Shelbyville): North Montgomery 62, New Palestine 49
1997 (Anderson): Delta 63, New Palestine 51
1989 (New Castle): New Palestine 80, Greensburg 69; Muncie South 86, New Palestine 83, OT
1980 (New Castle): Muncie Central 63, New Palestine 45
1957 (Indianapolis): Elwood 80, New Palestine 68

The Last Time

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NP won by 25+ points: 1/20/12: vs. Triton Central (W 70-45)
Dragon 30+ points: Josh Penley 3/4/11 vs. Hamilton Heights (30 points)
Double-double: Reid Clark 2/14/12 vs. Westfield (15 points, 11 rebounds)
NP played in OT: 2/22/11 at Shelbyville (L 78-85)

School Records

POINTS
Career: 1,285, Tom Giles, 1975-79
Game: 44, T.J. Ott at HSE 1/24/98
REBOUNDS (since 1990)
Career: 717, Jeremy Yoder
ASSISTS (since 1990)
Career: 328, Mitch Miggenburg
STEALS (since 1990)
Career: 95, Mitch Miggenburg
BLOCKED SHOTS (since 1990)
Career: 371, John Allison (state record)
TEAM (since 1957-58)
Most points: 105, vs. Waldron 2/18/89
Fewest points allowed: 19, 2x, last vs. Greenfield-Central 12/9/11.
Largest margin of victory: 53, 101-48 vs. McCordsville, 1957-58

Tradition

Sectional champs: 1957, 1981, 1989, 1997, 2009, 2011, 2012.
County tournament champs: 1926, 1945, 1952, 1953, 1958, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2007-08, 2010-11, 2011-12 (note: tournament not held in 1927, 1944 and from 1968-2003).
Conference champs: 1967, 1979, 1984, 1986 (Big Blue River Conference); 2000, 2003 (Hoosier Heritage Conference).
Indiana All-Stars: John Allison, 1998
1,000 point scorers
Tom Giles (1979) 1,285
Kent Raymond (2004) 1,134
T.J. Ott (1998) 1,025

Team: Turnovers: **Game totals**

Fouls 1	Fouls 2	Pos	Player	Num	SCORING/SHOOTING BY QUARTERS 1	2	3	4	OT	Rebounds		Assists	Steals	3's M/A	FGs M/A	FTs M/A	Points
Individual Blocks:				Totals:													

Team: Turnovers: **Game totals**

Fouls 1	Fouls 2	Pos	Player	Num	SCORING/SHOOTING BY QUARTERS 1	2	3	4	OT	Rebounds		Assists	Steals	3's M/A	FGs M/A	FTs M/A	Points
Individual Blocks:				Totals:													

Junior varsity score/leading scorers:

Score by quarters:						