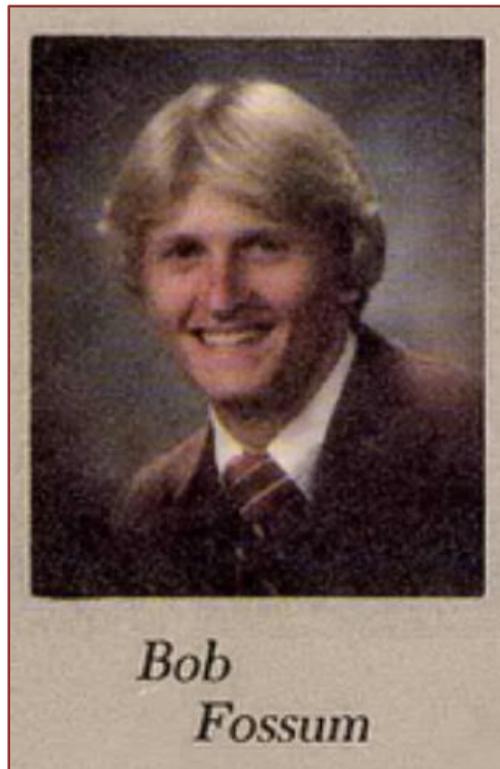


Chapter 🏀 5 - Bob Fossum



Personal

Robert (Bob) Bruce Fossum was born October 23, 1961, the son of Bruce and Mary Fossum. At an early age Fossum began playing golf and basketball. As shown in the photo below, Bob was a member of the 7th grade basketball team.

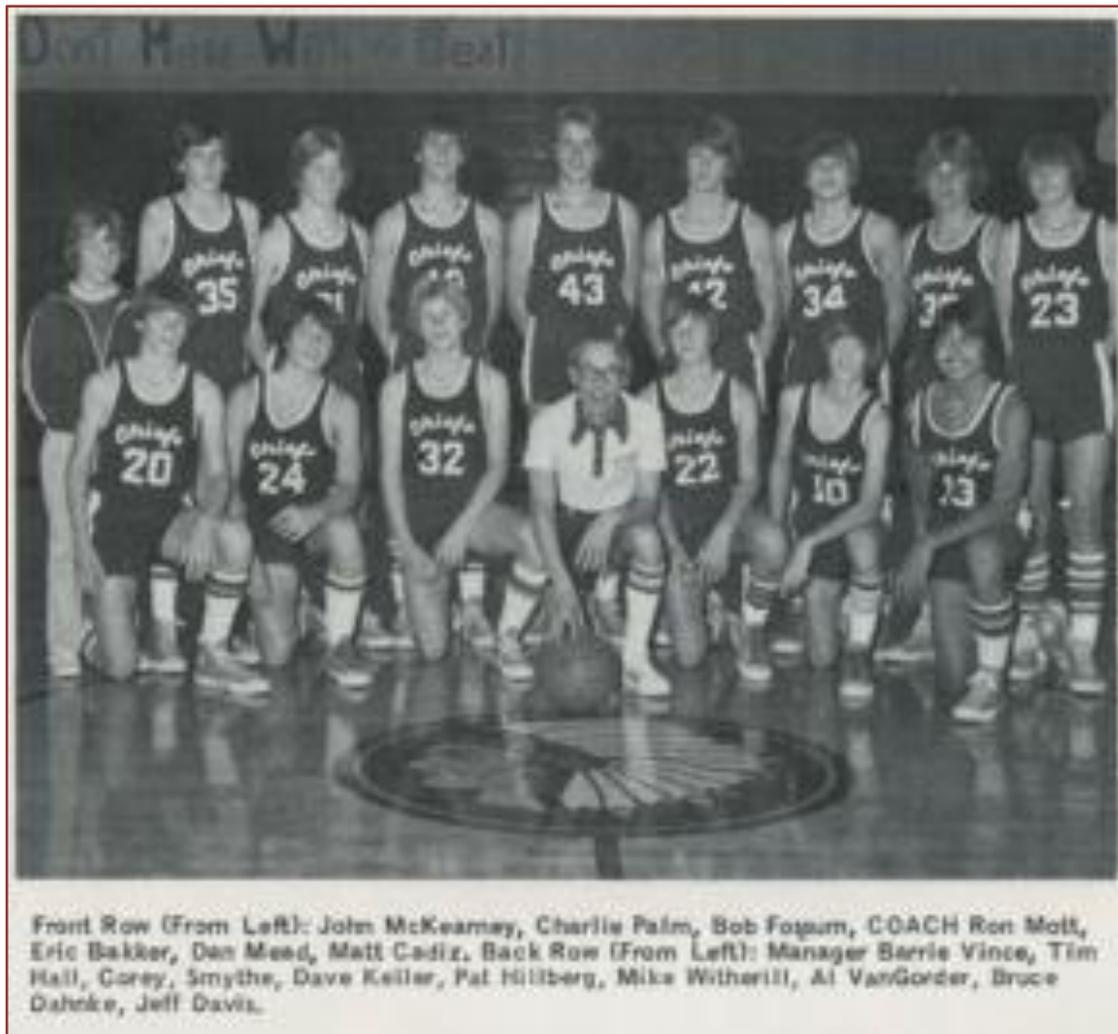


7th Grade (Junior High) Basketball Team

Okemos High School

1976-77

During his freshman year, Fossum was brought up to play on the varsity squad.



Bob Fossum on Freshman Boys' Team

Regular Season

On January 18, Okemos downed **Grand Ledge**, 72-63, with Fossum scoring 10 points ([Source](#)).

On January 21, Okemos defeated **DeWitt**, 67-64, with Fossum scoring 13 points including shooting 5 for 5 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On January 25, **Holt** nipped Okemos, 65-63, with Fossum scoring 12 points, including 6-6 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

Going into Okemos' January 28 clash with **Catholic Central**, *Lansing State Journal* staff writer Lynn Henning wrote: "then there's freshman Bob Fossum who is supposed to look like a rookie, but has not in any way resembled one ([Source](#)). Chieftain Coach Stan Stolz was high on freshman Fossum: "I don't worry about his poise at all.... He's just a solid player, and I don't think he's thrown the ball away once since we brought him up" ([Source](#)).

On February 11, Okemos lost to **Howell**, 74-67, with Fossum scoring only 6 points ([Source](#)).

On February 15, **Waverly** beat Okemos 67-56; the Chieftains were "hurt by the absence of freshman of freshman Bob Fossum, who sprained an ankle late in the Howell game and couldn't play" ([Source](#)).

On February 22, Okemos topped **Catholic Central**, 48-45. Fossum, still on a tender ankle, did not start the game and scored only one basket ([Source](#)). The win kept the Chieftains tied with Howell for first place in the Capital Circuit League with a 11-2 record and an overall season record of 13-4.

On February 25, Okemos fell to **Eaton Rapids**, 55-53, with Gregg Massa and Bob Fossum leading Okemos with 12 points each. The Chieftains finished the regular season 11-3 in the league and 13-5 overall ([Source](#)).

On February 27, just prior to the District Tournament, *Lansing State Journal's* staff writer Bob Gross wrote that freshman Fossum is "destined for stardom" ([Source](#)).

Districts

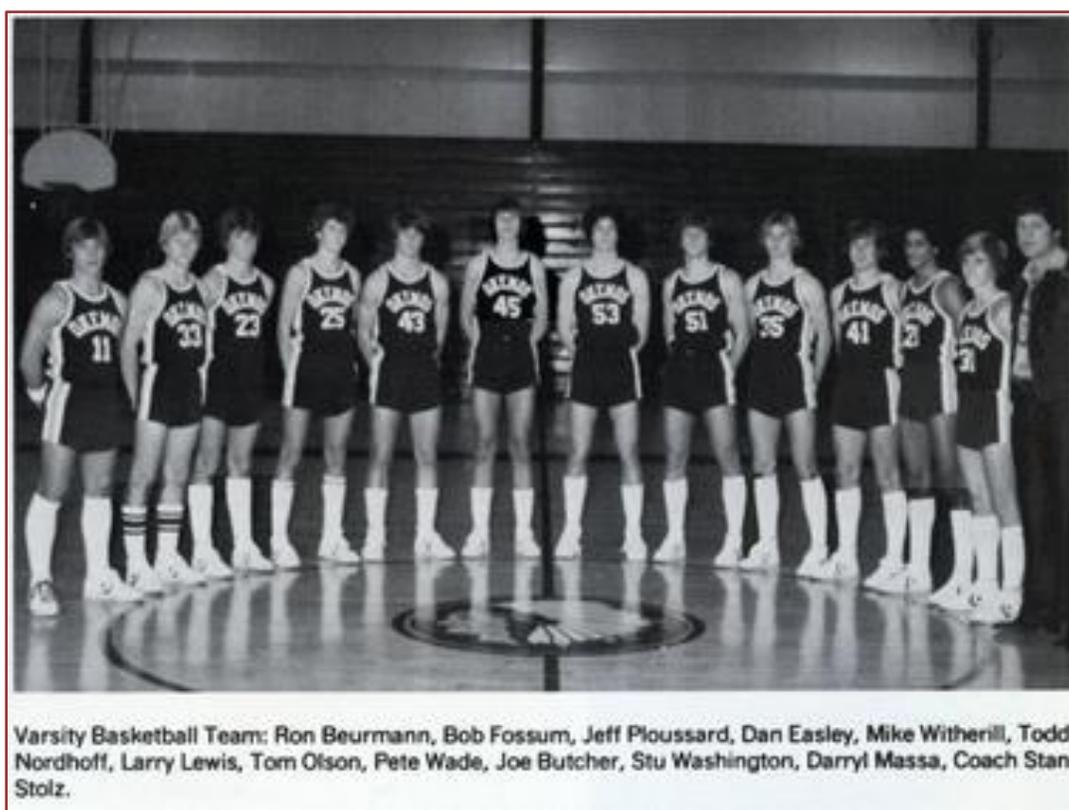
On March 1, the Chieftains beat **Eaton Rapids** in the second round of the state Class B district tournament, 69-47. "Bob Fossum turned in a stellar game with 12 points ([Source](#)).

On March 3, Okemos zipped past winless **Mason**, 76-44, with Fossum scoring 12 points ([Source](#)).

On March 5, **Charlotte** took the Class B district championship, with a 47-46 win over Okemos, in a game in which Fossum scored 8 points ([Source](#)).

1977-78

Going into the 1977-78 season, *Lansing State Journal* staff writer Bob Gross heralded that Okemos' "Ron Beurmann and Bob Fossum may be the best two guards in the league and are good ball handlers" ([Source](#)).



Varsity Basketball Team: Ron Beurmann, Bob Fossum, Jeff Ploussard, Dan Easley, Mike Witherill, Todd Nordhoff, Larry Lewis, Tom Olson, Pete Wade, Joe Butcher, Stu Washington, Darryl Massa, Coach Stan Stolz.

1982-83 Varsity Basketball Team (Bob Fossum #33) (1983 *Tomahawk*)

Regular Season

On December 2, Okemos beat **DeWitt**, 57-51, with 17 points on a basket and shooting just over 50% (9-17) at the free throw line.

The margin may really have come with 1:30 to play...when Okemos' Bob Fossum hit both shots of a one-plus-one plus three out of four shots thanks to two technical on the DeWitt bench. That gave the Chieftains an insurmountable seven-point advantage ([Source](#)).

On December 6, Okemos stepped past **Waverly**, 73-58, with Fossum leading the Chieftains scoring with 18 points on six baskets and 6-6 at the free throw line. Coach Stan Stolz remarked: "Fossum had an outstanding floor game as well as in scoring" ([Source](#)).

Going into the December 9th match against **Lansing Catholic Central**, Fossum was averaging 11 points a game. Coach Stolz commented that "Fossum is playing good ball on both ends of the court" ([Source](#)). The Chieftains defeated **Catholic Central**, 61-53, with Fossum scoring 12 points ([Source](#)).

Next up was a December 16th match against **Haslett** which Okemos won easily, 102-40, a game during which five of the Vikings players fouled out, while Fossum scored 12 points on 3 baskets and shooting 6-7 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 27, **Everett** downed Okemos, 68-62, in the Eastern High Holiday Classic on the Everett's home court (Quakers' Fieldhouse), with Fossum scoring 18 points on five baskets and 8-10 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On December 28, Okemos fell to **Eastern** in the Eastern Holiday Basketball Classic, with Fossum scoring 13 on three baskets and 3-3 on free throws ([Source](#)). For his stellar play during the to Eastern Holiday Tournament, Fossum was named to the All-Tournament Team ([Source](#))



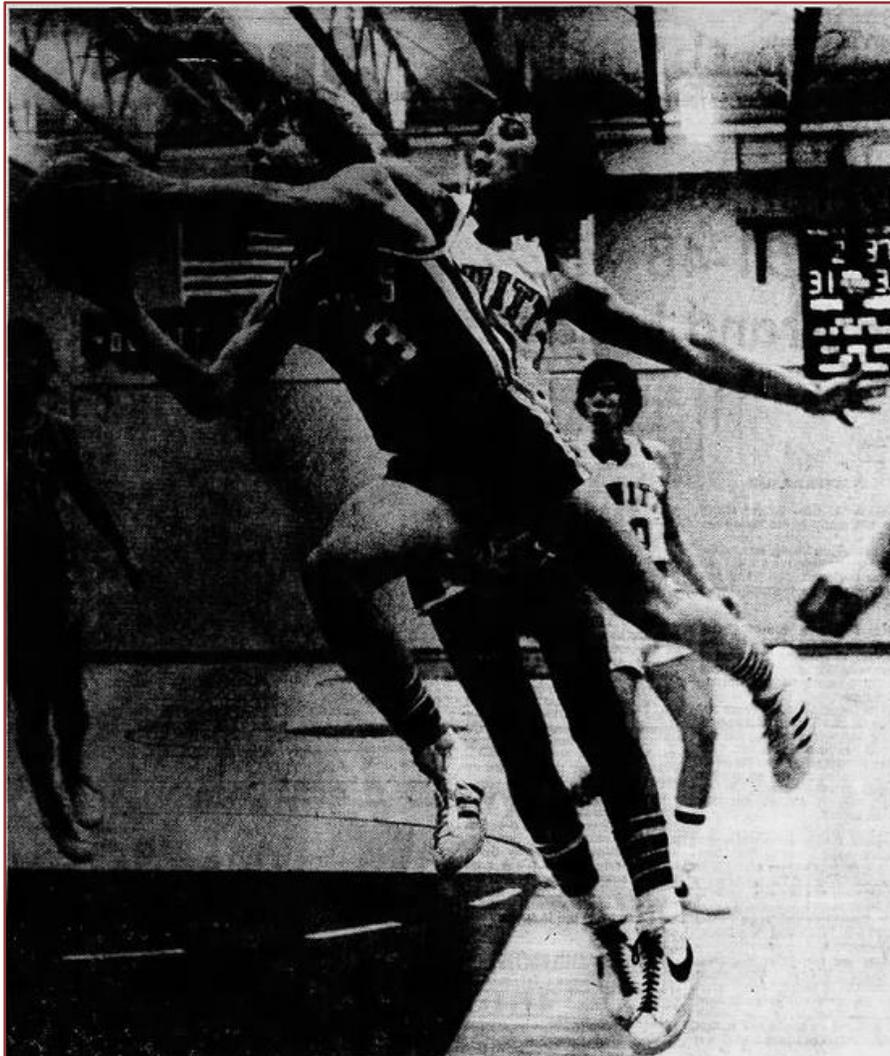
The Chieftains entered the New Year with a January 3rd 52-49 win over **Waverly**, "The game was tied at 42 entering the final period, and the Chieftains took the upper hand for good on...Bob Fossum's three-point play with 6:55 remaining. It was the second three-point play of the night for Fossum, who led the Chieftains with 18 points ([Source](#)). Fossum scored a total of seven baskets and 4-5 on free throws.

On January 6, a balanced Chieftains attack culminated with a 64-62 win over **Howell**, with Fossum scoring 13 points. “The Highlanders owned a 12-point lead in the second period before Okemos stormed back to claim a 12-point lead of its own in the fourth period. Howell brought it back to within two at one point before the contest was eventually decided on Bob Fossum’s basket” ([Source](#)).

On January 10, **Charlotte** downed Okemos, 68-58, though Fossum scored 19 points (14 in the first half) on eight baskets and 3-5 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On Friday the 13th (January 13), the Chieftains rebounded as Okemos beat **Eaton Rapids**, 72-49, with Fossum scoring a total of 24 points on 10 baskets and a perfect 4-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On January 17, the Chieftains downed **DeWitt**, 62-45, with Fossum scoring 21 points on six baskets and 9-13 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).



Bob Fossum (33) of Okemos zips around DeWitt's Mike Church

Staff Photo by BRIAN BURD

On January 21, Okemos toppled **Lansing Catholic Central**, 79-77, with “sophomore whiz” Fossum scoring 22 points one basket and making 10-12 free throws ([Source](#)).



On January 31, Fossum scored 14 of his game-high 24 points during the first quarter as Okemos trounced **Haslett**, 106-58. Fossum's 24 points came on 9 baskets and 6-8 scoring from the free throw line ([Source](#))

Going into the February 10th clash between Okemos and **Charlotte**, the two teams were in a 10-1 tie for first place in the Capital Circuit League. While Okemos claimed the Capital Circuit lead with a costly 52-47 victory over **Charlotte**, a left wrist injury (a cracked bon) forced Fossum to leave the game with only four points (a basket and 2-2 on free throws) ([Source](#)).

	League		Season	
	W	L	W	L
Okemos	11	1	13	4
Charlotte	10	2	13	4
Eaton Rapids	7	5	8	7
DeWitt	6	5	10	6
Howell	6	5	9	7
Lansing Catholic	4	7	6	10
Mason	2	9	2	12
Haslett	0	12	0	17

OKEMOS—Okemos High claimed a big victory here Friday night, but it also suffered a tremendous loss.

The Chieftains moved into sole possession of the Capital Circuit basketball race with a 52-47 victory over Charlotte, but may have lost ace sophomore guard Bobby Fossum for the season.

THE 5-FOOT-10 Fossum fell on his left wrist in the second period on a break-away layup and cracked a bone. It won't be known until next week how long he'll be out. He was averaging 17.7 points in Circuit play.

The win upped the Chieftains' loop record to 11-1 while Charlotte drops back to second at 10-2. Both are 13-4 for the season.

"It was one of the finest team victories since I came to Okemos," coach Stan Stolz said. "Everyone did his share."

State Journal PREP GAME of the NIGHT



Okemos (13-4) at Eaton Rapids (8-8)
Game time: 8:15 p.m.

By **BOB GROSS**
Staff Writer

Bob Fossum's broken wrist wasn't exactly what Okemos High basketball Coach Stan Stolz called good timing a week ago, especially since his Chieftains are clinging to a game lead in the Capital Circuit race over Charlotte.

But if anything, the vacancy in the lineup tonight at Eaton Rapids could have a different type effect on the Chieftains— something called togetherness.

"WE REALIZE that we're in a tougher bind than we were now that Bobby is out," Stolz said, "but we had an excellent week of practice and the kids are really pulling together."

Tonight's State Journal 'Game of the Night' sends Okemos into the game with a 13-4 season record and an 11-1 Circuit mark against new coach Mike Duda's Greyhounds who are pressurefree from the title chase at 7-5 while overall they're 8-8 after Tuesday night's five-overtime loss to Holt.

On February 17, without Fossum (out with a broken wrist), the Chieftains clinched a share of the Capital Circuit crown, with a 68-55 win over **Eaton Rapids** ([Source](#)).

On February 21, the Chieftains clinched the Capital Circuit crown with a 80-57 victory over **Mason** ([Source](#)).

Okemos Circuit champion

CAPITAL CIRCUIT

	League		Season	
	W	L	W	L
Okemos	13	1	15	4
Charlotte	12	2	15	4
Eaton Rapids	8	6	9	9
Dewitt	6	7	11	8
Howell	6	7	9	9
Lansing Catholic	6	7	8	11
Mason	3	10	3	13
Haslett	0	14	1	19

VARSIITY BASKETBALL

The Chieftain Varsity Basketball Team surprised everyone but themselves by winning the League Championship. We were picked to finish 4th or 5th place in the League in a pre-season poll of coaches. The League was well balanced, but Charlotte and Okemos were the only teams in the race toward the end of the season. Charlotte beat Okemos the first meeting at Charlotte, but Charlotte then lost to DeWitt. Therefore, the stage

was set for the showdown for the League Championship — the second meeting between Charlotte and Okemos. Okemos won the game and then went on to beat Mason and Eaton Rapids to wrap up the League Championship.

Chieftain Basketball looks promising for next year with eight of this year's twelve players returning.

Stu Washington

1978 Tomahawk

Districts

On February 8, Okemos played **Charlotte** in Round Two of the Class B prep district basketball tournament. Despite twice holding a ten-point lead over host Charlotte, the Chieftains lost, 51-46. Coming off his broken wrist injury, Fossum was only able to score eight points on four baskets ([Source](#)). Okemos had won its last 10 games since losing at Charlotte earlier in the season.

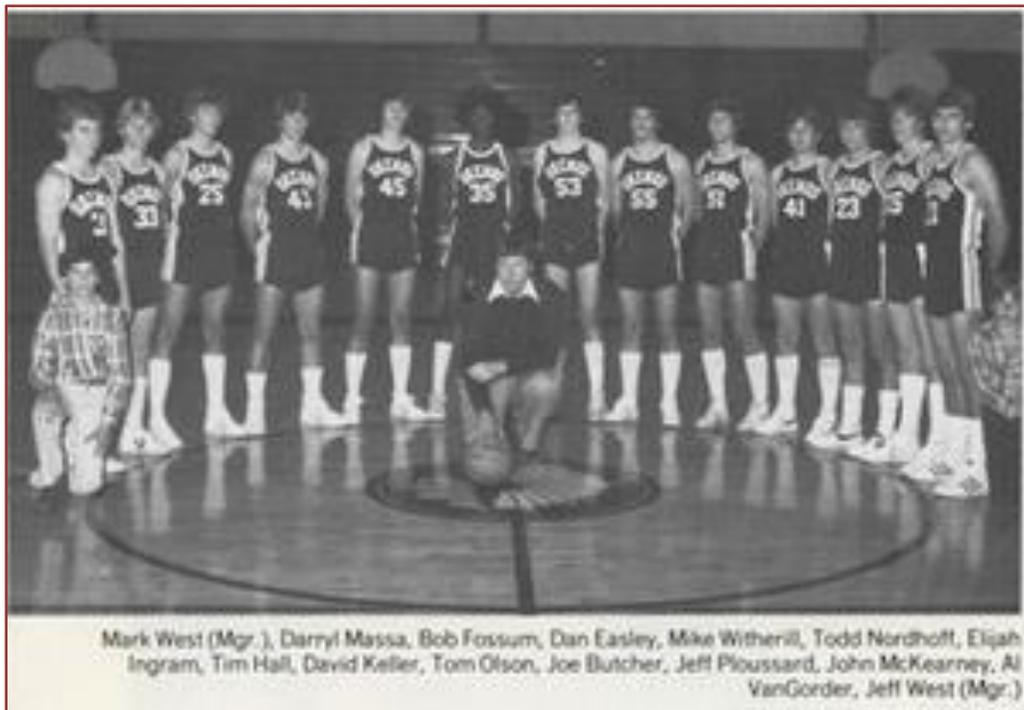


1978 Tomahawk

Laurels

During Fossum's sophomore year, the Okemos Varsity Basketball squad was the Capitol Circuit Champion—and Fossum was named to the Capital Circuit's Second Team (along with teammate Ron Beurmann), while the Chieftains Mike Witherill was named to the First Team.

1978-79



1978-79 Varsity Basketball Team (Bob Fossum #33) (1979 Tomahawk)

Regular Season

The Chieftains opened their 1978-79 season on December 1 with a 63-55 win over Capital Circuit rival **Haslett**. During the second half, Guard Bob Fossum “tallied 11 of his game-high 26 points. The All-League playmaker canned five of six foul shots in the fourth quarter and was eight of nine from the stripe for the game” ([Source](#)).

Five days later on December 5, the Chieftains fell to **Waverly**, 62-47, with Fossum scoring 19 points on seven baskets and 5-5 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On December 8, Okemos rebounded with a 65-51 win over **Howell**. "Okemos used Bob Fossum who scored 13 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and Tom Olson who snagged six of his eight rebounds in that final stanza to secure the victory" ([Source](#)).

On December 12, Okemos' free throw shooting downed **DeWitt**, 73-59:

DEWITT — Okemos took advantage of a lopsided edge at the free throw line to dump DeWitt.

Bob Fossum topped the Chieftains with 23 points, but hit only four field goals for the night. His 15 charity tosses for 16 attempts virtually won it for Okemos since 10 of them came in the fourth quarter. DeWitt committed 26 personal fouls to only nine for Okemos.

Going into Okemos' December 15th game against **Eaton Rapids**, Okemos was in a 3-0 tie with **Lansing Catholic Central** for "top spot in the Capital Circuit" ([Source](#)). Bob Gross, Staff Writer for the *Lansing State Journal* wrote the following about Bob Fossum (including quotes from Coach Stan Stolz):

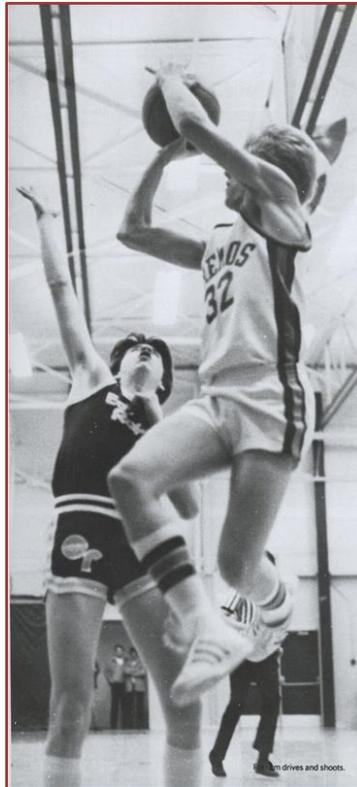
FOSSUM IS the Chieftain leader. He's been a starter four seasons and has finally taken control, something Stolz tried to instill in him last season.

"For two seasons he played with great intensity and emotion and I told him he had to relax and take control of things. Now he's finally blossomed into an excellent player. It's really a great thing to see because he's such a competitor."

Stolz said Fossum's fourth quarter effort against Howell was "the best individual performance for eight minutes by one player I've ever seen at Okemos."

FOSSUM SCORED 13 of his 22 points in that quarter to lead the charge that destroyed the visiting Highlanders.

On December 15, Okemos stomped **Eaton Rapids**, 73-38, with Fossum netting 22 points on ten baskets and 2-4 scoring from the stripe – and upping the Chieftains to a league-leading 5-0 record in the Capital Circuit ([Source](#)).



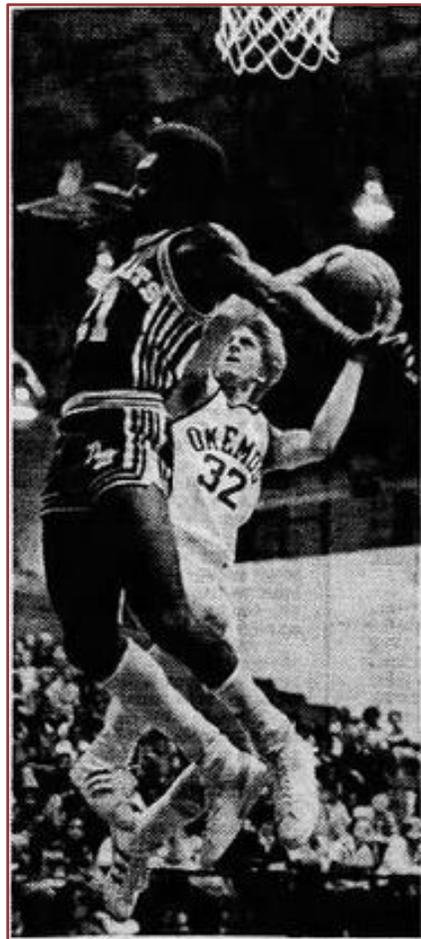
Bob Fossum (#32) Drives and Shoots against Eaton Rapids (1979 *Tomahawk*)

On December 20, Okemos was at home against **Holt**. With the game locked at 61 and the clock running out, Fossum nearly won the game:

FOSSUM TOOK the shot with :04 remaining. It hit the back of the rim and bounced high into the air. . The large and vocal contingent of Okemos supporters sat silent with abated breath as the ball came down. It hit the rim again but deflected wide of the mark and the game went into overtime.

In overtime Okemos outscored Holt, 6-5, resulting in the Chieftains winning, 67-66, and upping their Capital Circuit record to 5-0 and 5-1 overall. Fossum scored 21 points on eight field goals, shooting 5-6 on free throws ([Source](#)).

On December 27, in the Eastern High Holiday Classic Basketball tournament, the Chieftains narrowly lost, 55-54, to **Flint Northwestern**. During the game, Fossum was injured when he was attempting to make a fast break layup, was fouled, and crashed to the floor, suffering a hip pointer. “Despite heavy swelling around the hip, he led his team through the fourth period and the Chieftains never trailed by more than three points” ([Source](#)). **Northwestern** with a narrow lead tried to slow down the game. With 5 seconds remaining Northwestern drew a foul. Leading by only a point, the free throw shooter missed the front end of a one-and-one free throw; on the rebound, an Okemos player grabbed the ball and was able to get the ball to Fossum. Now, for Okemos, the clock was ticking too fast, and “Bobby Fossum’s 60-foot shot at the buzzer caromed off the backboard and rim” ([Source](#)).



Tom Ollie of Northwestern tries to ward off Okemos shooter Bobby Fossum on this shot

On December 28, while Fossum did not play due to the hip pointer, the Chieftains defeated Owosso, **63-58**, and took third place in the Eastern High Holiday Classic Basketball tournament.

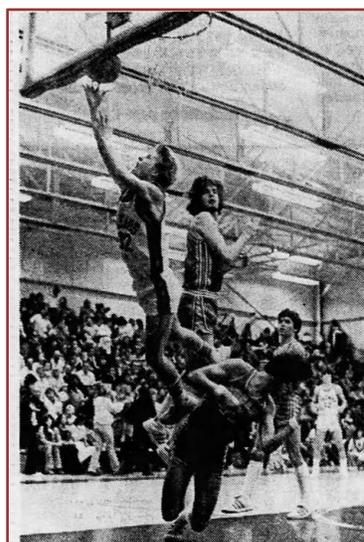
On January 5, in an away game at **Mason**, Okemos sank 13 free throws in a row and downed the Bulldogs, 66-51, pushing the Chieftains to 7-2 on the season and 5-0 in the league. Fossum returned to action from his hip pointer injury and scored 17 points on five field goals and 7 of 8 free throw attempts ([Source](#)).

At this point in the season, with five games played by all of the Capital Circuit teams, Fossum lead the league in scoring.

CAPITAL CIRCUIT					
	GP	FG	FT	TP	PPG
Fossum, Okemos	5	35	40-48	110	22.0
Mack, Howell	5	44	16-26	104	20.8
Witherill, Okemos	5	35	18-29	88	17.6
Church, DeWitt	5	27	24-34	68	15.6
Akers, Mason	5	35	7-14	77	15.4
Tucker, Haslett	5	27	20-31	74	14.8
Shoup, E. Rapids	5	26	16-24	68	13.6
Sinclair, Lan. Cath.	5	25	16-23	66	13.2
Carroll, DeWitt	5	30	5-12	65	13.0
P. Prichard, Lan. Cath.	5	25	15-20	65	13.0
Parker, Charlotte	5	27	6-7	60	12.0
Olsen, Okemos	5	24	12-14	60	12.0

On January 11, Okemos defeated **Charlotte**, 72-55, with Fossum scoring 17 on four baskets and 9-9 free throws, and upping Okemos' league-leading Capital Circuit record to 7-0 ([Source](#)).

On January 19, Okemos defeated **Lansing Catholic Central**, 71-57, upping the Chieftain's league-leading record to 7-0. Fossum scored 21 points in eight baskets and 3-7 shooting from the free throw line ([Source](#)).



Bob Fossum scores a layup in front of Brett Sinclair of Lansing Catholic

On January 23, Okemos burst past **Haslett**, 75-53, with Fossum leading all scorers with 21 points, including six baskets and 9-11 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On January 26, Okemos came from behind to beat **Howell**, 58-52, thanks to a gutsy performance by Fossum who, for the game, scored 27 points on 11 field goals and 5-7 from the stripe.

Trailing 40-31 in the third quarter, Okemos' Bob Fossum took things in hand connecting for seven straight points, the last two coming at the buzzer. Tom Olson popped in the first eight points of the final stanza, three from 20 feet and a slam-dunk, giving Okemos a lead never lost. . . . Fossum meshed 21 second-half points, which was the difference for Okemos which has yet to lose in nine league outings ([Source](#)).

On February 3, Okemos beat **DeWitt**, 68-59, keeping the Chieftains unbeaten in 10 league outings. Fossum scored 25 on nine baskets and shot 7-7 on free throws. "Fossum drove the lane for lay-ups and bothered DeWitt with penetration all evening" ([Source](#)).

On February 9, Okemos sent **Eaton Rapids** packing, 76-43, assuring the Chieftains at least a share of the Capital Circuit title. "Fossum...helped build a 44-22 rebound edge with his game-leading 12 rebounds and provided offensive spark with seven assists and 19 points [on five baskets and 9-10 from the free throw line]" ([Source](#)).

With only a week to go in the regular season, Fossum had dropped to second in the race for leading scorer in the Capital Circuit league.

CAPITAL CIRCUIT					
	GP	FG	FT	TP	PPG
Mack, Howell	12	115	52-71	282	23.5
Fossum, Okemos	12	86	91-112	263	21.9
Carroll, DeWitt	12	80	36-50	196	17.8
Akers, Mason	12	88	24-42	200	16.6
Witherill	12	77	36-62	190	15.8
Tucker, Haslett	12	70	46-70	186	15.5
Sinclair	12	61	41-58	163	13.5
Olsen, Okemos	12	68	27-40	163	13.5
Shoup, Eaton Rapids	12	51	27-41	153	12.7
P. Prichard, Lan. Catholic	12	61	30-46	152	12.6

On February 14, Okemos fell to **Grand Ledge**, 53-50, in a non-conference game, upping the Chieftains' losses for the season to 3, all at the hands of Class A foes. Fossum scored 13 points on six field goals and going 1-1 at the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On February 16, Okemos clinched the Capital Circuit crown with a 64-51 win over **Mason**, upping the Chieftain league record to 12-0 and 14-3 overall. Fossum scored 23 points on seven baskets and 9-13 from the free throw line. Commenting on his 5-10 junior guard, Stolz said: "He's an All-State guard if I've ever seen one" ([Source](#)).

On February 23, Okemos defeated **Charlotte**, 54-45. “Strong first and third periods combined with Bobby Fossum’s 24 points proved too much for Charlotte High as Okemos coasted to a nine-point win” ([Source](#)). Fossum’s 24 points came on seven baskets and 10-10 from the free throw line.

On March 2, at **Lansing Catholic Central**, the Cougars stunned the Chieftains with a 79-66 win over Okemos that had clinched the league title just a week ago with a 13-0 record. The Chieftains were flying high with an Associated Press Class B state high school ranking for the team’s 15-3 record – now 15-4 overall and 13-1 in the Capital Circuit. Fossum scored 19 points on seven field goals and 5-6 shooting from the stripe ([Source](#)).



Bob Fossum (#33) heads downcourt after making a steal

Lansing Catholic forward Brett Sinclair, who scored a game-high 30 points, got six in a row midway through the second quarter on two three-point plays off Okemos fouls. The resulting 24-18 lead looked to be the beginning of the blowout but Cougar Coach Jerry Tripp was not convinced.

"You don't blow Okemos out because they're too disciplined," sighed a relieved Tripp at game's end. "They just couldn't keep up with our height. If Stan Stolz had a big man there wouldn't be a stronger team in Class B. He's already got the best guard in the state."

THAT LAST accolade was directed toward Chieftain senior guard Bob Fossum whose bullseye outside shooting kept gutty Okemos coming back for more. Fossum followed a flashy turnaround jump shot from the top of the key at the first half end by canning his first four shots of the third quarter and drawing his team to within four at 38-34.

Cougar Coach Jerry Tripp Comments on Bob Fossum

Varsity Basketball		
Okemos	Opponent	
63	Haslett	55
47	Waverly	62
65	Howell	51
73	Dewitt	59
73	Eaton Rapids	38
67	Holt	66
54	Flint N.W.	55
63	Owosso	58
66	Mason	52
72	Charlotte	55
71	LCC	57
75	Haslett	53
58	Howell	52
68	Dewitt	59
76	Eaton Rapids	43
50	Grand Ledge	53
64	Mason	51
66	LCC	79
54	Charlotte	45
Overall 15-5		

Districts

On March 6, Okemos (15-4) hosted **Eaton Rapids** (1-16) in the Class B District tournament, downing the Greyhounds, 45-28. Fossum scored 20 points on eight of 14 from the floor and 4-4 from the free throw line, plus had five rebounds and several steals and assists ([Source](#)). Following the game, Coach Stolz spoke highly of Fossum: “He’s a heckuva player, isn’t he? . . . He can do it all, at both ends of the floor. He’s a treat to watch, I’d even pay to watch him play” ([Source](#)). Greyhound Coach Ed Dutcher also dished out praise for Fossum: “He’s as good a guard as there is in the area. . . . He’s smart and does exactly what his coach wants him to do” ([Source](#)).

On March 8, the Class B District tournament continued with Okemos (16-4) hosting **Holt** (12-6). With five seconds left and the Rams two points behind at 61-59, “Holt intentionally fouled Bobby Fossum...and the 5-10 junior guard hit the second free throw toss to ice the game. [The Rams] Jeff York scored at the buzzer on a layup to cut the final margin to one point” ([Source](#)) – the final score, 62-61. Of special note, “Okemos’ starting lineup has to get the ‘Iron Men’ award after Stolz stuck to the same fivesome the entire game” ([Source](#)). While three other Chieftains scored more points, Fossum tallied 11 points on four baskets and shooting 3-4 on free throws.

On March 10, Okemos (17-4) downed **Charlotte** (10-11), 53-42, for the Class B District championship, with Fossum scoring 16 on six field goals and 5-7 from the stripe. Reflecting on the game, Coach Stolz said Fossum “was about a step slower than usual but there was a reason. ‘He pulled a groin in the **Holt** game and didn’t even practice Friday,’ Stolz said. “But he’ll never complain and I can’t tell you how valuable he is. To our team he’s like Earvin [“Magic” Johnson] is to Michigan State” ([Source](#)).

Regionals

On March 13, Okemos (18-4) played **Ovid-Elsie** (23-0) in the first game of the Class B Regional. “Okemos...pulled off one of the biggest upsets in the state, shocking undefeated and Associated Press No. 2-rated **Ovid-Elsie**, 61-57. Fossum led the Chieftains at both the start and end of the game. “Okemos jumped out to a 4-0 lead when Fossum hit a jump shot and two free throws” ([Source](#)).

“In a game where the lead changed hands 15 times and was tied on four occasions, it was finally decided with 1:15 to play when junior guard Bobby Fossum sank two free throws, giving Okemos a 59-57 lead. [Ovid-Elsie’s 6-8 Ed] Kaminski, held to 12 points, six in each half, missed a jump shot with 35 seconds to play with Okemos getting the rebound.

But Ovid-Elsie’s Mike Hudecek forced a jump ball with [Okemos’] Tom Hall and Hall won the tip. Okemos went into a stall and Fossum was fouled with eight seconds left and made both ends of a one-and-one bonus. Ironically, Fossum, who averaged 24 points a game, scored only four points in the last half but they were golden” ([Source](#)).

By game's end Fossum had scored 16 points on four baskets and shooting 8-8 from the free throw line.

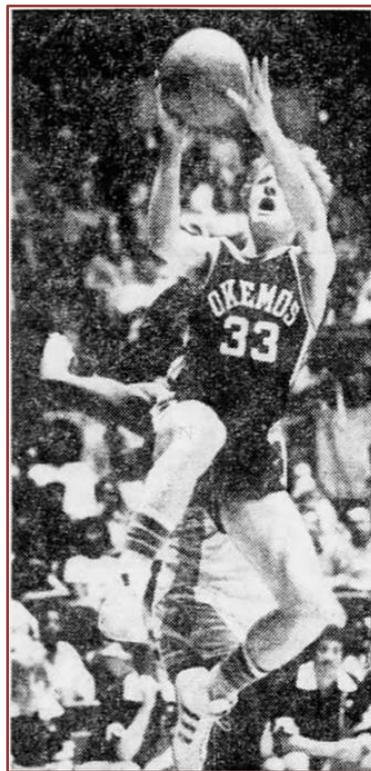
On March 16, Okemos (19-4) won the Regional championship, blasting **Jackson Parkside**, 61-48, with Fossum scoring 14 points on two baskets and a perfect night (10-10) at the free throw line ([Source](#)).

Quarterfinals

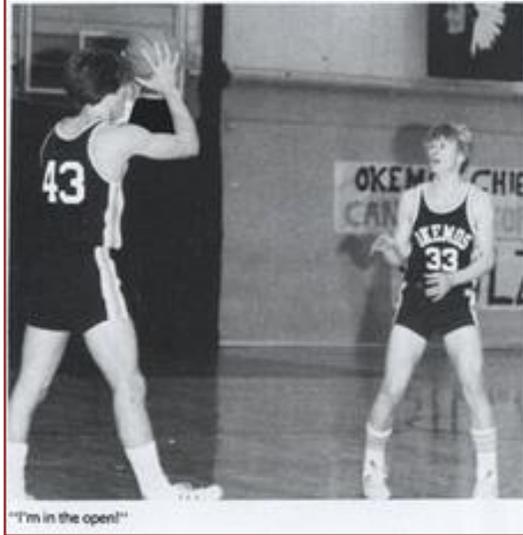
On March 21, Okemos (20-4) took on **Flint Beecher** (19-6) in the Class B quarterfinal. "Tied at 31 after three periods of play, Okemos connected on 11 of 16 free throws in the final period to capture a 48-43 triumph" ([Source](#)). It was Fossum's jumper at the start of the fourth period that finally gave Okemos its first lead of the game. Coach Stolz had his starting five play the whole game and Fossum chipped in 13 of the Chieftains' 48 points, scoring four baskets and 5-9 from the stripe.

Semifinals

On March 23, Okemos (21-4) took on **Muskegon Heights** (24-2) in the Class B semifinal, with the Chieftains falling, 78-45, and never leading in "the worst defeat ever for a Stolz-coached team" ([Source](#)). Fossum scored 15 points on four baskets and shooting 7-9 from the free throw line.



Bob Fossum Soars to the Hoop



The 1978-1979 Okemos Varsity Basketball team dribbled through a very successful season, bettering last year's performance and raising hopes for another fine team next year.

Okemos started off on the winning foot in the first game, beating Haslett 63-55. Waverly eliminated the Chieftains' hopes for an undefeated season the following week, 62-47. All hope was not lost; Okemos' persistent spirit prevailed and the Chieftains won all games up until the Christmas tournament, including a close one-point clincher over Holt, 67-66. Okemos certainly fired up for the entire Capital Circuit League play, winning all League games up until the final showdown between them and LCC, where the powerful Chiefs were upset 66-79. Nevertheless, Okemos remained sole possessor of the Capital Circuit title; the upset only humbled **Coach Stan Stolz's** warriors into realizing next year brings a new season and the chance for an undefeated Capital Circuit record. Okemos cagers consisted primarily of juniors, another plus for next season as the team definitely shows both spirit and an unquenchable drive to win.

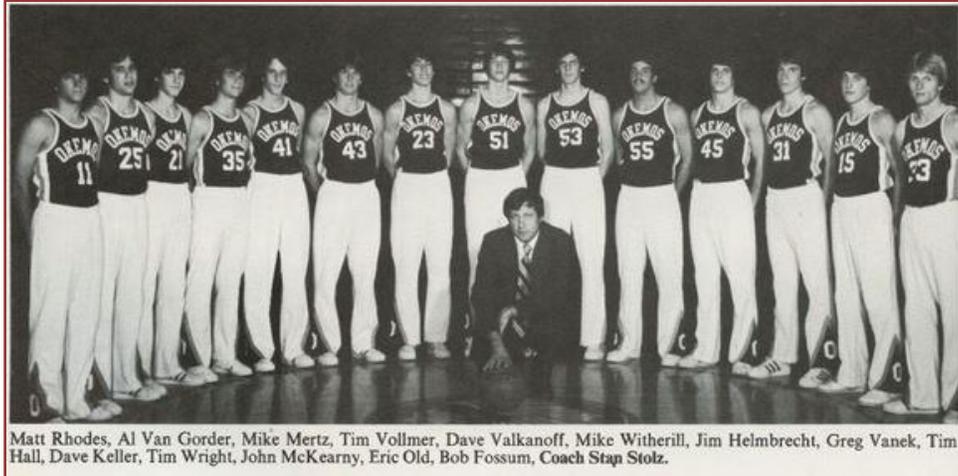
Bob Fossum (#33) 1979 Tomahawk

Laurels

During Fossum's junior year, the Okemos Varsity Basketball squad was again the Capitol Circuit Champion and won the Regional title. At the end of the 1978-79 season, Bob Fossum along with teammate Mike Witherill were named to the First Team of the *State Journal* Class B All-Area team, while teammate Tom Olsen was named to the Second Team ([Source](#)).

1979-80





Matt Rhodes, Al Van Gorder, Mike Mertz, Tim Vollmer, Dave Valkanoff, Mike Witherill, Jim Helmbrecht, Greg Vanek, Tim Hall, Dave Keller, Tim Wright, John McKearny, Eric Old, Bob Fossum, Coach Stan Stolz.

1979-80 Okemos Varsity Squad – Bob Fossum (33) on Far Right

Regular Season

On December 7, Okemos kicked off the 1979-80 season with a 69-50 “romp” over **Holt**, with Fossum scoring 26 points. Rams’ Coach Al Inkala commented that Fossum “is just an outstanding guard. We forced him to take the outside shot with a hand in his face, but he just kept popping them in” ([Source](#)). Fossum’s 26 points were scored on nine baskets and shooting 8-8 from the free throw line.

On December 11, Fossum’s 19 points on eight baskets and 3-3 at the stripe led the Chieftains to an 88-56 win over **Howell** ([Source](#)).

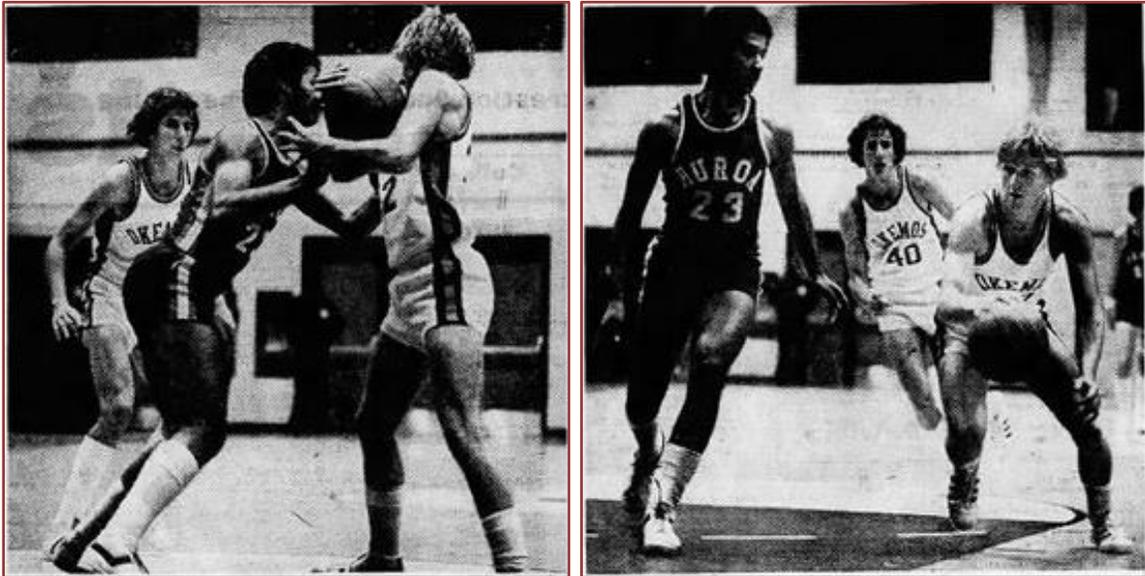


Staff photo by GINGER SHARP

Okemos High is off to a fast start in the boys' basketball season with victories in its first two games. These six lettermen return to contend for another Capital Circuit title. Front row, from left: **Bob Fossum**, John McKearny and Dave Keller; back row, from left: head coach Stan Stolz, Al VanGorder, Tim Hall and Mike Witherill.

On December 14, Okemos romped to a 67-33 victory over **Haslett**, with Fossum leading the Chiefs' scoring with 16 points on seven baskets and 2-2 at the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On December 27, Okemos defeated **Ann Arbor Huron**, 70-47, in the first round of the Eastern Holiday Classic, with "twin 22-point performances by Bob Fossum and Mike Witherill" ([Source](#)), setting up a finals match between Okemos and Eastern. Fossum's 22 points were scored on ten baskets and 2-7 from the stripe.



Okemos' Bob Fossum snatches the ball away from Sherman Baker (23) of Ann Arbor Huron and immediately sets sail for the basket in this action sequence

On December 28, **Eastern** and Okemos met.

"With only one second left in double overtime..., sixth man Greg Vanek knocked home a rebound to give the Chieftains a tremendously thrilling 51-49 triumph over previously unbeaten Eastern and the championship of the Eastern Holiday Classic. It was pure poetic justice that Vanek's only field goal of record should supply the winning points. Just a few minutes before, he had seemingly made Okemos a winner with two seconds to go in the first overtime, only to be judged guilty of traveling before the shot" ([Source](#)).

While the Chieftains' win was a combined effort of the team's starting five plus sixth man Greg Vanek (the subject of our next vignette), Fossum contributed 14 points on four baskets and 6-6 from the free throw line, coming in second in total points to Witherill's 19 points.

On January 4, Okemos whipped **DeWitt**, 87-46, with Fossum scoring 22 points on ten baskets and 2-2 from the free throw line ([Source](#)).

On January 11, the Chieftains downed **Eaton Rapids** by a score of 89-41. Fossum scored 24 points on nine baskets and 6-9 from the stripe. "Fossum's 1,000th career point with 1:18 to go in the third quarter stole the show. The Chieftains' All-State guard finished the night with 24 points, six assists and five steals" ([Source](#)).

On January 18, Okemos topped **Mason**, 95-72, again paced by the shooting of Mike Witherill and Bob Fossum who scored 28 and 25 points, respectively, with Fossum dishing out seven assists, hitting 11 hoops and downing 3-5 at the free throw line ([Source](#)).

In a *Lansing State Journal* feature story on the "Bobby and Mike Show," Fossum and Witherill spoke highly of their coach, Stan Stolz:

"I've never played two freshmen on one team," said Stolz, "but they happened to be the exception. Any post-season honors they've gotten have been well-deserved."

Fossum and Witherill both agreed that any honors they received had to be shared.

"It takes everybody, not just one or two players," said Witherill who would like to play for a Mid-American Conference school. "I don't think it's fair to single out myself or Bobby. The coaches stress team play all the time. This year's basketball team is very close and we work as hard in practice as we do in a game."

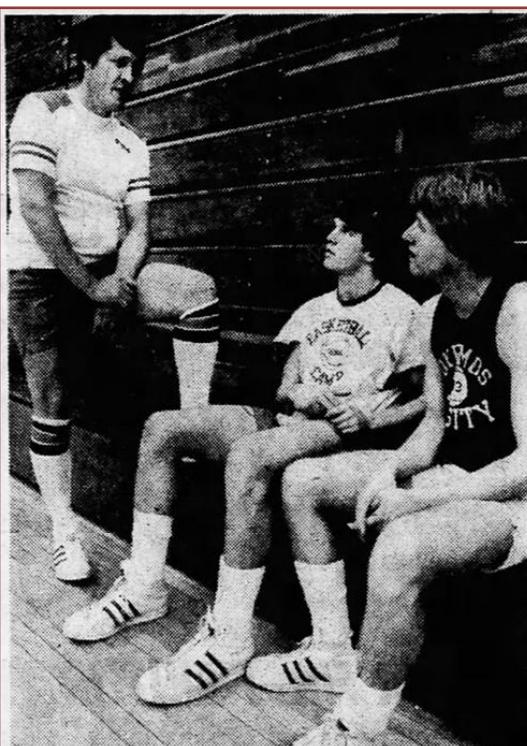
FOSSUM SAID: "Regardless if it's one-on-one competition or maroon against yellow in scrimmage, you just hate to lose."

Asked what it was like playing for Stolz, Witherill said he didn't think there is a better coach.

"He goes out of his way to bring out the best in every player," he said. "I'll never forget the game we played in the tournament last year against Flint Beecher. We were getting beat real bad the first half. He designed a new offense and we won the game. He's just a super man all the way and such a pleasure to play for."

Fossum echoed the same sentiments.

"I really look up to the man," he said. "We all have such great respect for him. He's tough but he's fair and gets just as excited about winning as we do. We never think about losing and, when we get behind in a game, he reminds us who we are."



Staff photo by BRIAN BURD

Bob Fossum (right) and teammate Mike Witherill discuss No. 1 ranking with Coach Stan Stolz

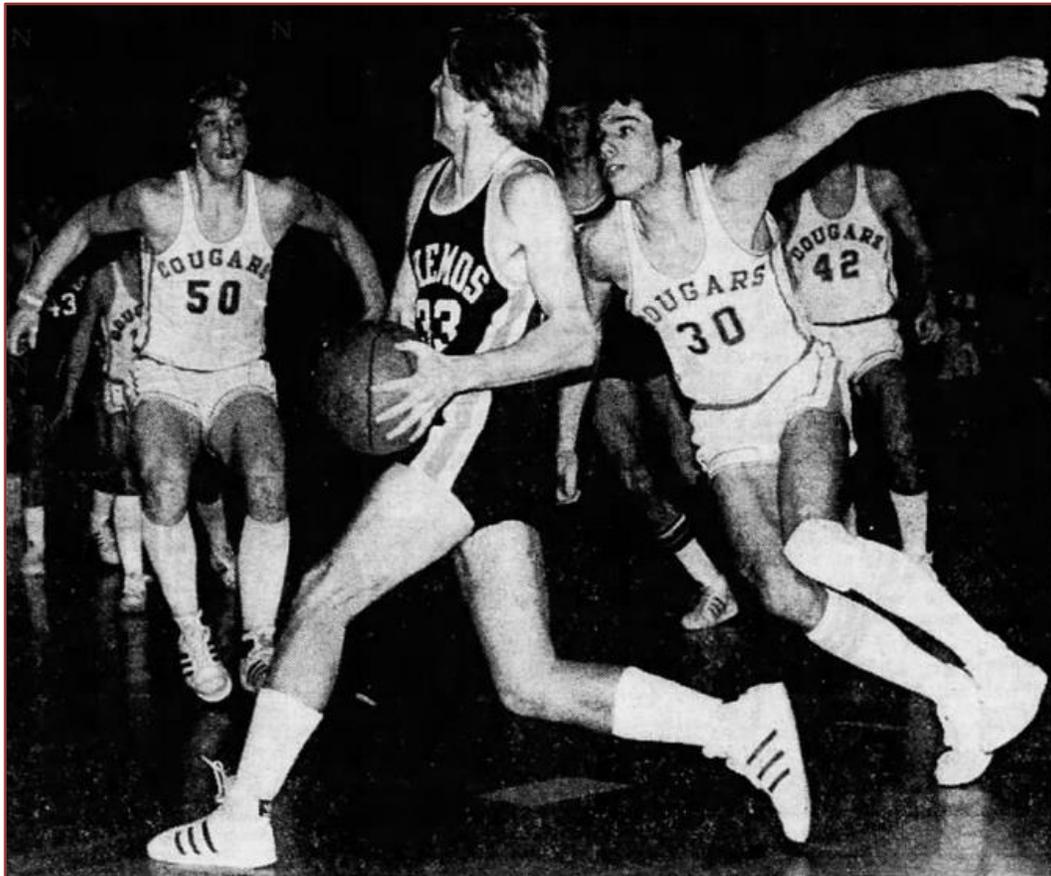
Next up was a January 22nd game between Okemos and **Charlotte**, with the Chieftains winning, 93-47, in which Fossum and Witherill poured in 22 (on 11 baskets) and 20 points, respectively, Teammates Greg Vanek and Tim Hall also contributed 16 and 14 points, respectively.

After Okemos beat Lansing Eastern it moved into the No. 1 ranking in Class B until this week's poll came out. To the surprise of everybody, the Chieftains had been replaced by Willow Run.

"It's hard to figure," Stolz said. "In college, a team ranked first keeps that spot until it's beaten. My kids are puzzled because we have won impressively. I don't think it's fair and it's certainly hard to explain to our fans."

Source: Bob Gross, Staff Writer, *Lansing State Journal*, January 24, 1980

On January 25, Okemos, with the support of the Chieftains' bench, beat **Lansing Catholic Central**, 62-49. Fossum scored 15 on six baskets and 3-5 from the stripe. When Coach Stolz had to sit center Tim Hall because of foul trouble, sixth man Greg Vanek came into the game and, in the fourth quarter, scored 8 points on three hoops and 2-2 from the free throw line.



Staff Photo by BRUCE CORNELIUS

Bob Fossum of Okemos roars past John Romsek, as Pete Cassel prepares to dispute the territory closer to the basket

On January 29, the unbeaten Chieftains slithered past **Waverly**, 60-59. Indeed, as *Lansing State Journal* staff writer Dave Matthews wrote, “if Bob Fossum hadn’t gone on a brief but decisive scoring binge in the middle of the fourth period, the Warriors might have [pulled out a win]” ([Source](#)).

“I’ll tell you what,” [Coach] Stolz said, “I’ll bet John (Holms, bossman of the Warriors) sure wishes that official hadn’t called that technical on Bobby.”

Fossum’s surge happened right after a technical foul whistled against him had enabled Steve Schmidt to pull Waverly within one at 48-47.

Fossum instantly stole the ball and raced in for a layup to restore the Okemos lead to three points. Waverly retaliated with Dean Holland’s long jumper, so Fossum scored again, on a jump shot from the top of the key.

He wasn’t done yet. Fossum added another basket, his third straight, assisted on a five-foot jumper by Mike Witherill, and in no time at all, the Chieftains were on top by eight, 58-49 ([Source](#)).

By game’s end, Fossum had scored 24 on 12 baskets, with Greg Vanek chipping in six points on three baskets.

On February 1, Okemos rolled past **Haslett**, 66-47 even though star guard Fossum, who had scored only two baskets in the game’s first quarter, was forced to leave the game due to a sprained ankle. Other players, including Greg Vanek with 12 points on four baskets and 4-5 from the stripe, picked up the slack. The victory raised the Chieftains record to 7-0 in the Capital Circuit league and 11-0 overall ([Source](#)).

On February 8, despite Fossum’s ankle injury seven days before during the game with Haslett, the Chieftains defeated **DeWitt**, 60-47, with Fossum scoring 10 points on three baskets and 4-6 from the stripe ([Source](#)). Coach Stolz gave this assessment of Fossum:

“He’s such an under-rated player,” Stolz said. “He gets the toughest man on the other team every time. And he does just a heckuva job for us, no matter who he has to go against. I thought he was outstanding tonight.”

On February 12, the Chieftains lost their first game of the season to **Grand Ledge**, 63-57. Bob Barker, the Comets coach, provided this assessment:

“We felt (Bob) Fossum was the key. If we could control him, keep him from hurting us too much, we’d be in the ball game all the way. He didn’t really hurt us until the last quarter, and by then, we had the upper hand.”

Until the final period, when he erupted for 12 of his 19 points, Fossum really wasn't a strong factor. Grand Ledge's defensive attention probably had something to do with it. But Fossum was playing hurt, after reinjuring an ankle in practice on Monday.

Stolz also noted before the game that he hoped to be able to keep his artful senior guard on the bench most of the night. But it was not to be. Fossum's services, even at less than full speed, were too badly needed.

Okemos fouls also played a big part, not only allowing the Comets to cash in 14 free throws in the fourth quarter alone, and 27 for the night, but sending three of the Chieftains' starters, forward Tim Hall, center Greg Vanek and guard Dave Valkanoff, to the sidelines.

Hall and Vanek were both gone by the mid-point of the period, when Okemos was only three points behind.

"Getting those big kids out of the ball game really helped," Barker said. "From there on in, we had control of the backboards" ([Source](#)). ...

The Chieftains now are 13-1. ... It was the second straight year Grand Ledge has blemished an otherwise dazzling Okemos record ([Source](#)).

On February 15, the Chieftains bounced back, Okemos defeating **Eaton Rapids**, 93-54. Witherill led the Chieftains with 28 points, with Fossum contributing 10 (on five field goals) and Greg Vanek 3 points on a field goal and 1-5 on free throws ([Source](#)). The win upped the Chieftains to 14-1 overall and 9-0 in the Capital Circuit.

On February 19, Okemos clobbered **Mason**, 123-74 with Mike Witherill having a career high performance:

MASON — Mike Witherill poured home a school-record 57 points in a dazzling offensive display to power Okemos High School to a 123-74 Capital Circuit basketball rout over Mason Tuesday.
The 6-foot-1 forward was unstoppable in the first half, connecting on 18 of 19 shots and outscoring Mason with 41 points as the Chieftains surged to a 75-33 lead.
"He hit any angle of shot you can name, jump shots, tip-ins, outside or inside; he just hit everything," said Okemos Coach Stan Stolz. "It was the best offensive show I've ever seen."

Also running up the Chieftains' scoring was Fossum's 20 points on eight field goals and 4-4 in free throws ([Source](#)).

The Chieftains continued on a roll with a February 22nd win over **Charlotte**, 91-46, mauling Charlotte 34-2 in the third quarter. While several other Chieftains made their expected scoring contributions, Fossum chipped in with 17 on six baskets and 5-6 from the charity line ([Source](#)).



Catholic Central's Dave Beachnau (left) gets key defensive assignments for his team and one came in earlier game this year when he had task of guarding Bob Fossum of Okemos. The two seniors will face each other again Friday night.



Bob Fossum
Okemos

On February 29, Okemos cruised to its third straight Capital Circuit crown with an 80-57 defeat of **Lansing Catholic Central**. "Fossum scored the first basket of the night on a 10-foot jumper to start the fireworks, Dave Valkanoff and Mike Mertz followed with two-pointers and Fossum came back with another to put Okemos up 8-0. The Chieftains showed no mercy after that" ([Source](#)). At halftime, Fossum received a certificate of nomination to the McDonald's All-American Prep Team. On the night Fossum scored 23 points on ten baskets and 3-4 on free throws. The Chieftains ended their regular season 18-1 and Michigan's #2 Class B power.

Districts

On March 3, Okemos crushed **Mason** for the third time this season, 74-46. Early in the game Fossum scored seven points in a row and the Chieftains never looked back; indeed, Coach Stan Stolz pulled his starters from the game with four and a half minutes to go. During the game, "Fossum pumped in 19 points [on eight baskets and 3-4 on free throws] and played traffic cop like he has all season. He dished off seven assists ([Source](#)).

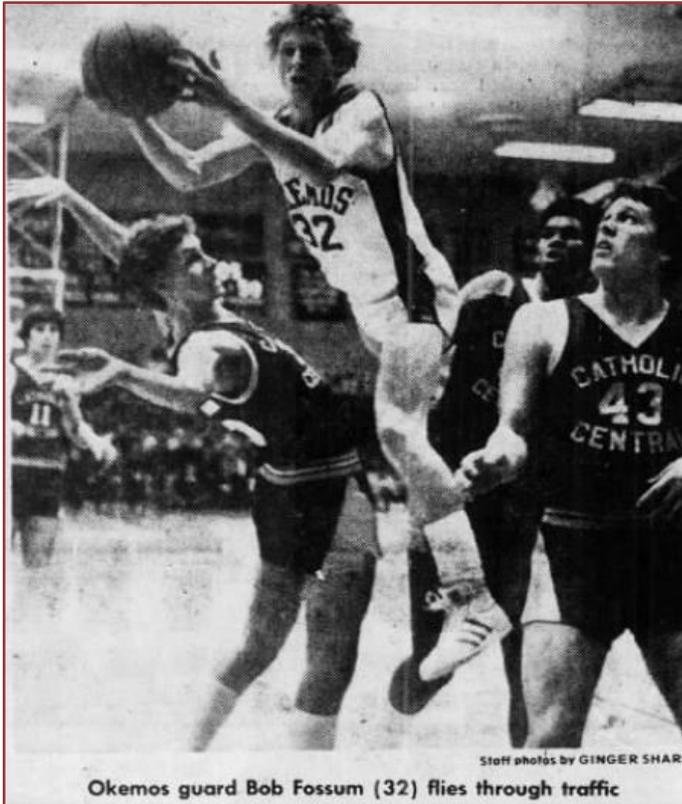
On March 7, Okemos won the Class B District championship, downing **Holt**, 73-59. Fossum scored 19 on seven baskets and 5-5 from the free throw line. Teammate Greg Vanek contributed 8 points on three baskets and 2-2 from the charity stripe ([Source](#)).



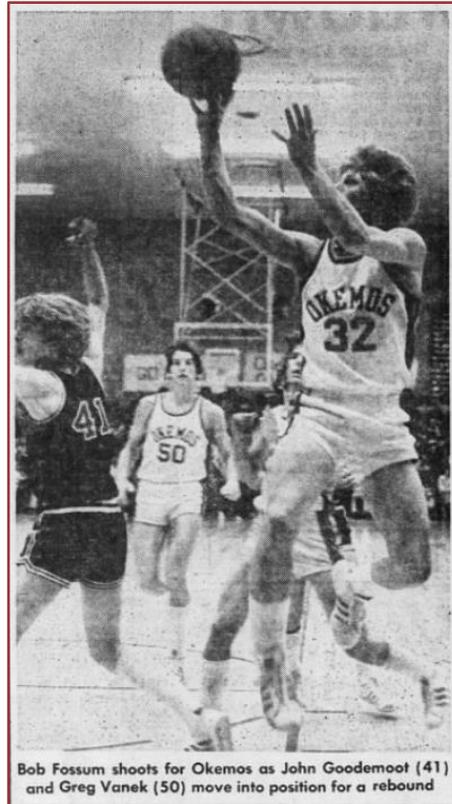
Just before the game started, Coach Stolz received the news that the Michigan High School Coaches Association had named him Class B coach of the year ([Source](#)).

Regionals

On March 11, Okemos topped **Grand Rapids Catholic Central**, 71-59 ([Source](#)), with Fossum contributing 19 points on seven field goals and 5-9 shooting from the free throw line. Sixth man Greg Vanek came off the bench to chip in an additional 13 points on six baskets and making one of his two free throw attempts ([Source](#))



Okemos guard Bob Fossum (32) flies through traffic



Bob Fossum shoots for Okemos as John Goodemoot (41) and Greg Vanek (50) move into position for a rebound

On March 15, Okemos won the Class B Regional, downing **Lake Odessa-Lakewood**. With 3:45 to play and **Lakewood** leading 58-47, Okemos went on a 17-point scoring streak to win the game 64-50. Fossum led Okemos' scoring with 20 points on eight field goals and 4-4 on free throws ([Source](#)).

Fossum, an All-Stater on this year's Associated Press Class B squad, paced the Chieftains with 20 points, half of them after intermission. When Okemos worked its delay, he was on the dribbling end of it. Witherill finished with 19 points, including 11 in the second half, most of those down the stretch. Greg Vanek came off the bench for the second game in a row and pumped in 15 points.

"I HAVE THOUGHT about starting him, but in practice he doesn't do well so I use him as the sixth man," Stolz said. "He seems to do much better in that role."



Okemos guard Bob Fossum soars toward the basket around Lakewood defender John Goodmoot



Bob Fossum with Coach Stan Stolz

Quarterfinals

On March 19, Okemos' season came to an end with a 61-57 loss to **Flint Beecher**, a season in which the Chieftains racked up a 21-2 record. Beecher's defense put a brake on normally high scoring Okemos, with only two Chieftains scoring in double figures: Fossum with 16 points on five baskets and 6-6 on free throws and Vanek, in a starting role, with 10 points on three baskets and shooting 4-4 at the stripe ([Source](#)).

Chiefs		Opponent	
69	Holt		50
88	Howell		56
67	Haslett		33
70	A. A. Huron		47
51	Eastern		49
87	De Witt		46
89	E. Rapids		41
95	Mason		72
93	Charlotte		47
61	L.C.C.		49
60	Waverly		59
66	Haslett		47
60	De Witt		47
57	Grand Ledge		63
93	E. Rapids		54
123	Mason		74
91	Charlotte		46
80	L.C.C.		59
Districts			
74	Mason		46
73	Holt		59
Regionals			
71	Grand Rapids		
	Catholic Ctl.		59
64	Lakewood		50
Quarter Finals			
57	Flint Beecher		61

What more can be said? Again, this year the Okemos Varsity Basketball squad reigns as Capitol Circuit Champs for the third year in a row, and are possessors of their second straight Regional title. The Chiefs had but one major setback through the course of the season, that being a disappointing loss to Grand Ledge. The Chiefs, however, seemed to take strength from the loss and went on undefeated until a loss in the quarter-finals to a strong Flint Beecher team.

The Chiefs were a surprisingly strong team. Team leaders, **Bob Fossum** and **Mike Witherill**, standouts since their freshman and sophomore years, worked virtual magic as two of the steadiest, yet explosive, players that have ever passed through the portals of Okemos High. **Dave Valkanoff** and **Greg Vanek**, in their debut season, made a great contribution to the team as a whole, as did the rest of the first year men. As for the old veterans of the team, what more can be said? The play of Seniors **Tim Hall**, **Al Van Gorder**, **Matt Rhodes**, and **John McKearny** made the extreme success of the team possible.

In the Christmas Tournament, Okemos defeated Class "A" Champs, Lansing Eastern, in double overtime, 59-58, and gave the Quakers their ONLY loss of the season.

When all things are considered, the final analysis can have but one conclusion. The 1979-1980 Okemos Varsity Basketball team was "AWESOME."

1979-80 Okemos Varsity Record (21-2) (1980 Tomahawk)

Awesome



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1980 Tomahawk

Laurels

During his senior year, Fossum contributed to the Okemos Varsity Basketball squad reigning as Capitol Circuit Champs for the third year in a row, plus winning a second straight Regional title, losing only once in the regular season to Grand Ledge. The team then went undefeated until a loss in the state quarterfinals. During the Christmas Tournament, Okemos defeated the Class "A" Champ, Lansing Eastern, in double overtime, 59-58, the Quakers their only loss during the regular season.

Fossum and Mike Witherhill were named co-MPVs of the Varsity Basketball Team. Bob was named to the All-State and All-Region teams and was a unanimous All-Conference choice ([Source](#)). The Lansing *State Journal* selected Bob for the paper's 1980 Dream Team (Fabulous Five).



Bob Fossum, a four-year standout at Okemos and one of the best guards ever to play in mid-Michigan, set a school record for most assists, started the most varsity games and was the second leading scorer in history. The 5-11 senior not only gained All-State and All-Capital Circuit honors but is also an All-State golfer for the Chieftains. His father, Bruce, is the head golf coach at Michigan State and his mother, Mary, coaches the Spartan women.

The *Detroit Free Press*, *Detroit News*, and Associated Press recognized Fossum as 1980 1st team All State Class B ([Source](#)). Okemos High's 1980 *Tomahawk* provided further recognition:

"Team leaders, **Bob Fossum** and **Mike Witherill**, standouts since their freshman and sophomore years, worked virtual magic as two of the steadiest yet explosive players that have ever passed through the portals of Okemos High" (1980).

In the Michigan vs. Ohio High School All Star Game, Fossum was selected as MVP.

Fossum would reign for 26 years as OHS' all-time leading scorer until his record was broken by Jonathon Jones. While at OHS, Fossum also set records for games played and assists.

Michigan State University

On graduating from Okemos High, Fossum had two scholarship offers, one to play golf at Michigan State, the other to play basketball at **Central Michigan**. However, because his heart was with golf, he chose MSU over CMU, majoring in telecommunications and graduating in 1985. In a May 1980 interview with the *Lansing State Journal*, Fossum stated:

“It was hard not to play basketball, but here (at MSU) I’ll be able to concentrate on one sport and school. Basketball would just last for four years. I think I have a better future in golf.” . . .

How about basketball at MSU? Fossum said if he played for the Spartans, his [golf] scholarship would count against the 15 allotted for basketball. Spartan Coach Jud Heathcote has used his limit of scholarships and Fossum would give the program one too many signers.

Fossum said MSU’s basketball staff had shown no interest in him, and he has no plans to try out for that sport (*Lansing State Journal*, May 1, 1980).

However, as summer moved into fall, two of the Spartan basketball team’s scholarship players, forwards Rob Gonzalez and Don Brkovich, transferred to **Colorado** and **New Mexico**, respectively, leaving the Spartans with two open scholarship spots against the allowed maximum of 15. This led the *Lansing State Journal* in its September 12 issue to write:

The extra scholarships may mean Okemos’ Bob Fossum, who will attend MSU on a golf scholarship this fall, will be invited to try out for the team. Since the basketball program is now under the limit, it could add Fossum to its list of scholarship athletes. Fossum, an all-stater in basketball, was recruited by Central Michigan as a basketball player, but took the offer of a golf scholarship at MSU. Bruce Fossum, Bob’s father and the MSU golf coach, said no decision has been made on whether Bob will try playing two sports at MSU ([Source](#)).

1980-81

As things turned out, Fossum was able to join the Spartans basketball team, with his golf scholarship counting as one of the two scholarship slots that had become available when two of the MSU basketball players on scholarship transferred to other universities.

As documented below, Fossum would garner only limited playing time on the varsity squad, appearing in 18 of 27 games but getting only a minute or two of playing time in each game (though in one game he got five minutes of time on the court). This largely was due to Fossum being a freshman competing against more experienced and in some cases taller teammates. Also, Coach Jud Heathcote had Fossum splitting time between playing on the Junior Varsity (JV) squad, coached by John Holms, while also

practicing with the Varsity squad where his role, in today's parlance, was to play on the scout team as illustrated further below when Fossum helped the Spartans to prepare to play their first Big Ten game of the season against **Indiana**. Yet Fossum did appear in and play, albeit limited minutes, in 18 of the 27 Varsity games, though he may not have traveled to some of the away games.

The chart below lists the members of the Spartans 1980-81 basketball squad.

1980-81 Michigan State Spartans men's basketball team							
No	Name	Pos	Year	Height	Pts	Reb	Ast
5	Kevin Smith	G	JR	6-2	13.5	2.3	4.8
10	Tim Gore	G	FR	6-4	1.1	0.8	0.3
12	Mike Brkovich	G	SR	6-5	8.2	2.2	2.4
15	Bob Fossum	G	FR	5-9	0.2	0.2	0.2
20	Ben Tower	F	FR	6-8	5.0	3.8	0.7
22	Bill Cawood	G	SO	6-7	0.8	0.5	0.2
23	Randy Morrison	G	FR	6-2	3.4	1.1	1.6
24	Richard Mudd	F	FR	6-9	0.0	1.5	0.0
30	Kurt James	F	SR	6-7			
31	Jay Vincent	F/C	SR	6-8	22.6	8.5	1.9
41	Derek Perry	F	SO	6-6	7.5	3.9	0.7
42	Richard Kaye	F	SR	6-6	3.3	1.8	0.4
44	Herb Bostic	F/G	SO	6-4	2.4	1.0	0.7
45	Kevin Radelet	G	JR	5-11	0.2	0.0	0.0
45	George Cooper				2.7	0.3	0.0
52	Steve Bates	C	JR	6-10	0.6	0.7	0.0

Non-Conference

On November 28, hosting the Spartan Cutlass Classic semifinal, the Spartans defeated **Western Michigan**, 89-77. Appearing in his first varsity game, Fossum scored no points (0-1 on free throw attempts) ([Source](#)).

On November 29, the Spartans lost to **Central Michigan**, 89-66, with Fossum playing in the game but scoring no points ([Source](#)).

On December 4, at **Long Beach State**, the Spartans won, 71-60, with Fossum playing but going scoreless ([Source](#)).

On December 6, at **Cal State Fullerton**, the Spartans won, 58-42. While Fossum likely played in this game, the game's box score was not reported by *LSJ*.

On December 12, MSU defeated **Eastern Michigan**, 73-63. Fossum played a minute and had a rebound and a foul but did not score ([Source](#)).



Bob Fossum (#15) in Action vs Eastern Michigan University (Dec. 12, 1980)

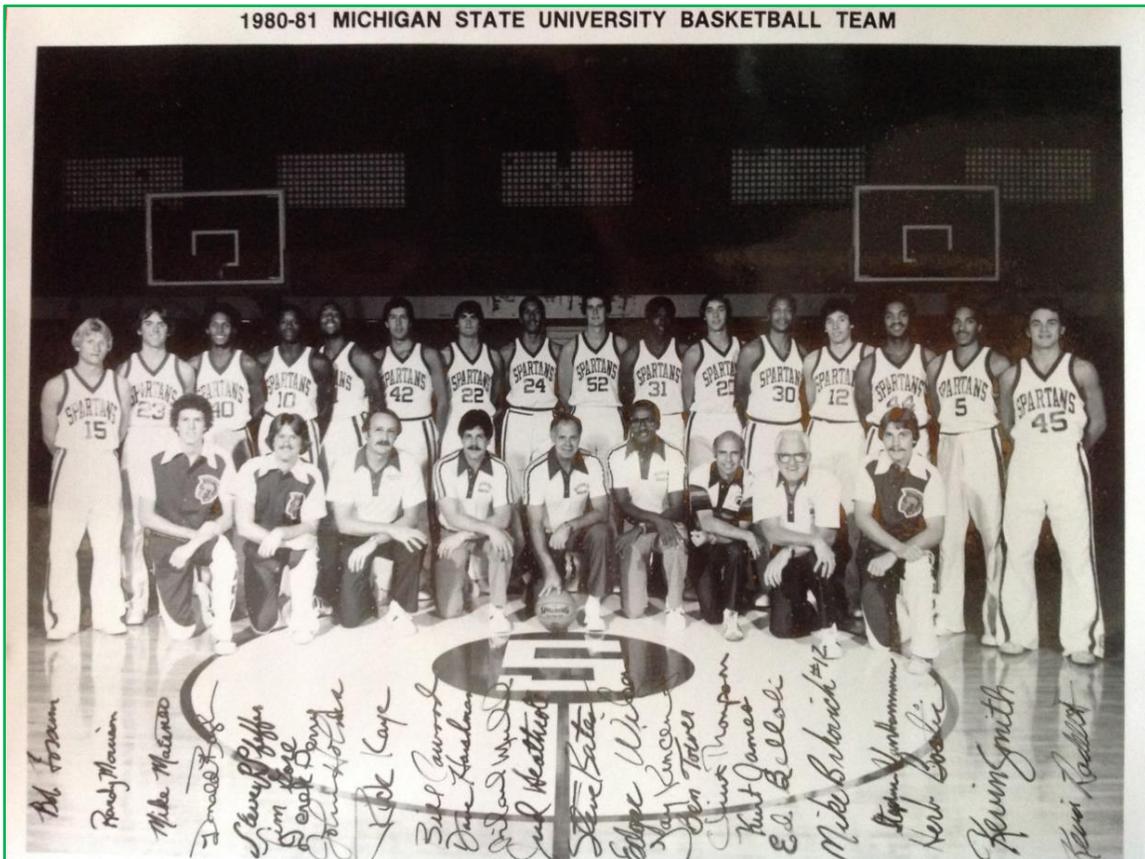
Courtesy: MSU Archives

On December 16, at **Brigham Young University**, the Spartans lost, 82-50, a game in which Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)). On December 19, in the Industrial National Classic semifinal at the Dunkin' Donuts Center in Providence, Rhode Island, the Spartans lost to **Utah State**, 74-70, a game in which Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)). On December 20, playing for third place in the Industrial National Classic, the Spartans beat **Providence**, 77-76, a game in which Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)). On December 27, the Spartans defeated **St. Joseph's**, 71-67, though Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)). By the end of the non-conference season, as the box below shows, Fossum had appeared in six games.

MICHIGAN STATE BASKETBALL STATISTICS
(9-game totals)

Player-Pos.	GP-GS	Min	FG	FGA	Pct	FT	FTA	Pct	Reb	Avg	Pf-D	A	Bl	St	TP	Avg	HG
JAY VINCENT-f	9-9	315	73	149	.490	30	46	.652	79	8.8	34-3	15	7	9	176	19.6	24
DEREK PERRY-c,f	9-9	286	51	70	.729	20	26	.769	50	5.6	19-0	8	4	7	122	13.6	25
MIKE BRKOVICH-g	9-9	321	34	70	.486	29	34	.853	19	2.1	23-0	37	0	7	97	10.8	23
KEVIN SMITH-g	9-3	230	27	55	.491	23	28	.821	17	1.9	28-2	33	1	10	77	8.6	13
RANDY MORRISON-g	9-9	301	27	57	.474	8	10	.800	17	1.9	20-1	28	0	11	62	6.9	9
BEN TOWER-f	9-5	123	13	21	.619	3	4	.750	22	2.4	15-0	4	3	0	29	3.2	10
HERB BOSTIC-f,g	8-0	63	6	16	.375	4	4	1.000	5	0.6	6-0	2	0	1	16	2.0	4
BILL CAWOOD-g	9-0	40	4	8	.500	7	9	.778	5	0.6	10-0	2	0	1	15	1.6	5
RICK KAYE-f	8-0	40	5	8	.625	2	3	.667	5	0.6	8-0	0	0	0	12	1.5	7
GEORGE COOPER-g	3-0	17	4	6	.667	0	0	.000	1	0.3	2-0	0	0	1	8	2.7	4
TIM GORE-g	6-0	21	3	8	.375	1	3	.333	5	0.8	3-0	4	0	1	7	1.2	5
STEVE BATES-c	7-0	15	1	1	1.000	0	0	.000	4	0.6	2-0	0	0	0	2	0.3	2
BOB FOSSUM-g	6-0	15	0	1	.000	2	3	.667	2	0.3	3-0	1	0	0	2	0.3	2
KEVIN RADELET-g	4-0	4	0	0	.000	0	1	.000	0	0.0	3-0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
RICHARD MUDD-c	2-1	19	0	0	.000	0	0	.000	3	1.5	7-1	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
SPARTANS	9-9	1800	248	470	.527	129	171	.754	271	30.1	183-7	134	15	49	625	69.4	89
OPPONENTS	9-9	1800	235	510	.461	160	213	.751	283	31.4	156-3	140	15	54	630	70.0	89

1980-81 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL TEAM



Bob Fossom (#15 on left in back row)

Big Ten Conference

As MSU prepared in practice for its first Big Ten game of the season at **Indiana**, the Spartans had Fossom playing “stand-in” for Hoosier star Isiah Thomas.

Halt Isiah is cry of Spartans

By **JAMES TINNEY**
Staff Writer

Sometimes Tim Gore plays the starring role, sometimes it's Bob Fossum. But the game is always the same for the Michigan State's Green team.

It's called "Stop Isiah."

During Spartans' practices, Gore and Fossum are the stand-ins for Indiana sophomore guard Isiah Thomas, who will lead his Indiana Hoosier teammates against the Spartans in the Big Ten opener for both teams Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at Bloomington's Assembly Hall.

GORE AND FOSSUM, a pair of freshmen, can't duplicate the kind of havoc Thomas can raise both offensively and defensively. But that's no real reflection on their abilities. According to MSU Coach Jud Heathcote, Thomas is one of a kind.

However, on January 8, the Spartans lost to **Indiana**, 55-43, with Fossum getting a minute of playing time but without any stats in the box score ([Source](#)).

On January 10, at **Iowa**, the Spartans suffered their second Big 10 loss, 65-57, a game in which Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)).

On January 15, while the Spartans fell to **Minnesota**, 86-77, Fossum tallied an assist during two minutes of playing time ([Source](#)).

On January 17, the Spartans defeated **Northwestern**, 84-70, a game in which Fossum likely didn't play (*LSJ's* report on the game did not include a box score) because on that same day, as a member of Spartan JV team, the Spartans played **Lansing Community College**, with Fossum tallying 12 points, six assists, and five steals.

Spartan JVs stop Stars

Donald Bough scored 18 points and Tim Birtsas snared 12 rebounds as Michigan State University's junior varsity basketball team held off Lansing Community College 64-55 Saturday at Jenison Field House.

Bough helped the Spartans, 5-5, increase their one-point halftime lead and claim their second straight victory.

Birtsas also scored 13 points, while former Okemos standout Bob Fossum tallied 12 markers, six assists and five steals. Guard Dwayne Robinson chipped in with 10 points.

MIKE INGRAM tied Bough for game scoring honors, collecting seven steals in the process. Ingram was backed by center Maurice Gossett, who scored 12 points and pulled down 10 rebounds before fouling out.

Coach Art Frank's Stars now sport an 11-4 season mark.

MSU JUNIOR VARSITY (64)

Adamic 1 6-8 8, Bough 9 0-0 18, Birtsas 4 5-6 13, Fossum 4 4-6 12, Robinson 3 4-4 10, Burke 0 0-0 0, Thomas 1 1-2 3. Totals 22 20-26 64.

LANSING C.C. (55)

Kimball 2 0-0 4, Bragg 3 3-3 9, Ingram 5 8-8 18, Gossett 5 2-2 12, Warren 3 0-0 6, Royal 0 0-0 0, A. J. Jackson 3 0-1 6, Carroll 0 0-0 0. Totals 21 13-14 55.

Michigan State	32	32	—	64
Lansing CC	31	24	—	55

Fouled out — Bragg, Gossett. Total fouls — Michigan State 15, Lansing CC 26.
Technical — Bragg.

On January 22, at **Wisconsin**, the Spartans lost, 63-62, though Fossum had limited playing time as his name appears in the box score but without stats ([Source](#)).

On January 24, at **Purdue**, the Spartans “shocked” the Boilermakers, winning the game by a score of 74-68, though Fossum’s name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)).

On January 29, the Spartans (at home) narrowly lost to **Illinois**, 71-70; Fossum tallied one minute of playing time but no other stats ([Source](#)).

That same day, on January 29, the Spartan JV squad lost to **Henry Ford Community College**, 62-60, a game in which Fossum attempted a last-second buzzer beater that, bouncing off the rim, failed to tie the game.

Bob Fossum's 80-foot throw at the buzzer bounded off the rim and left Henry Ford Community College with a **62-60** victory over the Michigan State junior varsity basketball team Thursday at Jenison Fieldhouse.

Fossum, an Okemos freshman who doubles as a substitute for the Spartan varsity team, scored on a short jumper in the final minute to cap an MSU comeback from a 15-point deficit and tie the game at 60. But Jay Jahn sank an 18-foot jump shot with only two seconds left to give Henry Ford the win.

Center Tim Birtsas led MSU with 23 points. Fossum added 16 and Dwayne Robinson 20. Jahn led Henry Ford with 20 points and center Dave Leshor scored 16.

On January 31, the Spartans defeated **Ohio State**, 60-54, though Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)).

On February 5, at **Michigan**, the Spartans fell to the Wolverines, 79-77, in overtime. The box score shows Fossum appeared in the game tallying a minute of playing time but no other stats ([Source](#)).

On February 7, at **Ohio State**, the Spartans lost, 73-61. Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)).

On February 12, the Spartans fell to **Purdue**, 63-48, with Fossum getting five minutes of playing time and a rebound but going 0-1 on field goal attempts ([Source](#)).

MICHIGAN STATE		(48)					
	min	fg	ff	reb	ast	pf	pts
Tower	29	1-2	0-0	1	1	3	2
Perry	30	5-8	0-0	5	1	2	10
Vincent	39	6-18	4-5	9	0	4	16
Brkovich	37	5-11	0-0	2	0	5	10
Smith	29	1-6	0-0	0	3	2	2
Cowood	3	0-1	0-0	0	0	2	0
Bostic	5	2-4	2-2	3	0	0	6
Bates	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Morrison	8	0-1	2-2	1	0	0	2
Gore	6	0-1	0-0	0	1	4	0
Kaye	4	0-1	0-0	0	0	3	0
Fossum	5	0-1	0-0	1	0	0	0
Rodelet	1	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0
Totals		20-55	8-9	25	6	25	48

On February 14 at **Michigan**, the Spartans topped the Wolverines, 70-66, with Fossum getting a minute of playing time but no other stats ([Source](#)).

On February 19, the Spartans downed **Wisconsin**, 74-65, though Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)).

On February 21, at **Illinois**, the Spartans lost, 82-62, with a box score showing Fossum as having appeared in the game but going stat-less ([Source](#)).

On February 26, at **Northwestern**, the Spartans won, 74-61, with Fossum getting a minute of playing time but going 0-1 on his one field goal attempt ([Source](#)).

On February 28, at **Minnesota**, MSU lost, 92-89, though Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)).

On March 5, the Spartans defeated **Iowa**, 71-70, a game for which Fossum's name does not appear in the box score ([Source](#)).

On March 7, the Spartans fell to **Indiana**, 69-48, though Fossum did appear in the game as the box score reflects ([Source](#)). That same day the Spartans JV squad squeaked by **SW Michigan Junior College**, 61-59, with Fossum scoring 18 points.

MSU JV 61, SW Michigan JC 59

Michigan State's junior varsity withstood a strong second half comeback by Southwestern Michigan Junior College Saturday evening to claim a narrow 61-59 basketball victory in Jenison Field House and finish the season with a 12-8 record.

The Spartans held a commanding 33-21 advantage at halftime, but a tenacious pressing defense helped Southwestern Michigan chop 10 points off the margin before the final gun.

Don Bough and Bob Fossum each supplied MSU with 18 points. Mike Dunnuck recorded a game-high 19 points for the visitors, who have an 8-16 record.

Michigan State's varsity squad ended the season 13-14, finishing eighth in the Big Ten (7-11). The team's most notable player was Jay Vincent (#31 - 6'8" Forward/Center - 22.6 PPG) who won the 1980-81 Big Ten scoring title and went on to play in the NBA.

Career Statistics as a Spartan

The charts below summarize the 1980-81 statistics for the Spartan Varsity Squad, including Bob Fossum.

1980-81 MICHIGAN STATE BASKETBALL STATISTICS (Final)													
Overall Statistics (13-14)													
No.	Player-Pos.	GP-RS	MIN/AVG	FG- FGA/ FG%	FT-FTA/ FT%	REB/ AVG/HG	PF- D	A	BL	ST	PTS/ AVG/HG		
31	Jay Vincent-f/c	27-27	1001/37.1	259- 522/.496	91-141/.645	229/ 8.5/16	96- 6	50	11	26	609/22.6/37		
5	Kevin Smith-g	27-21	889/32.9	145- 266/.545	74-101/.733	62/ 2.3/ 7	88- 5	130	2	38	364/13.5/28		
12	Mike Brkovich-g	25-23	782/31.3	75- 159/.475	56- 65/.862	54/ 2.2/ 6	57- 2	60	5	16	206/ 8.2/23		
41	Derek Perry-f/c	27-16	580/21.5	83- 139/.601	36- 50/.720	104/ 3.9/11	52- 0	18	6	12	202/ 7.5/25		
20	Ben Tower-f	27-20	628/23.3	61- 104/.587	14- 28/.500	103/ 3.8/ 7	76- 7	18	16	11	136/ 5.0/14		
23	Randy Morrison-g	27-12	497/18.4	39- 86/.453	13- 15/.867	29/ 1.1/ 4	43- 3	44	0	16	91/ 3.4/ 9		
42	Rick Kaye-f	26-10	467/18.0	32- 64/.500	23- 29/.793	46/ 1.8/ 6	50- 1	10	3	15	87/ 3.3/ 9		
44	Herb Bostic-g/f	26- 4	306/11.8	23- 55/.418	16- 24/.667	25/ 1.0/ 3	23- 0	19	2	8	62/ 2.4/10		
10	Tim Gore-g	23- 0	92/ 4.0	10- 26/.385	5- 9/.556	18/ 0.8/ 8	24- 0	6	1	5	25/ 1.1/ 6		
22	Bill Cawood-g	23- 0	74/ 3.2	5- 13/.385	8- 11/.727	11/ 0.5/ 3	15- 0	5	1	2	18/ 0.8/ 5		
52	Steve Bates-c	23- 1	98/ 4.3	5- 12/.417	3- 5/.600	15/ 0.7/ 5	11- 1	0	0	0	13/ 0.6/ 4		
45*	George Cooper-g	3- 0	17/ 5.7	4- 6/.667	0- 0/.000	1/ 0.3/ 1	2- 0	0	0	1	8/ 2.7/ 4		
15	Bob Fossum-g	18- 0	40/ 2.2	0- 4/.000	3- 5/.600	4/ 0.2/ 1	6- 0	4	0	1	3/ 0.2/ 2		
40	Kevin Radelet-g	9- 0	10/ 1.1	0- 2/.000	2- 3/.667	0/ 0.0/ 0	5- 0	0	0	1	2/ 0.2/ 2		
24	Richard Hudd-c	2- 1	19/ 9.5	0- 0/.000	0- 0/.000	3/ 1.5/ 3	7- 1	0	0	0	0/ 0.0/ 0		
Team					0- 1	98 (Deadball)	Rebounds: MSU--69; OPP--74)						
MICHIGAN STATE		27-27	5500/203.7	741-1456/.509	344-487/.706	802/29.7/49	555-26	364	47	152	1826/67.6/89		
OPPONENTS		27-27	5500/203.7	717-1479/.485	448-612/.732	849/31.4/44	475-15	382	60	149	1882/69.7/92		
Big Ten Statistics (7-11, 8th place)													
31	Jay Vincent-f/c	18-18	686/38.1	186- 373/.499	61- 95/.642	150/ 8.3/16	62- 3	35	4	17	433/24.1/37		
5	Kevin Smith-g	18-18	659/36.6	118- 211/.559	51- 73/.699	45/ 2.5/ 7	60- 3	97	1	28	287/15.9/28		
12	Mike Brkovich-g	16-14	461/28.8	41- 88/.466	27- 31/.871	35/ 2.3/ 6	34- 2	23	5	9	109/ 6.8/18		
20	Ben Tower-f	18-15	505/28.1	48- 83/.578	11- 24/.458	81/ 4.5/ 7	61- 7	14	13	11	107/ 5.9/14		
41	Derek Perry-f/c	18- 7	294/16.3	32- 68/.471	16- 24/.667	54/ 3.0/11	33- 0	10	2	5	80/ 4.4/10		
42	Rick Kaye-f	18-10	437/24.3	27- 56/.482	21- 26/.808	41/ 2.3/ 6	42- 1	10	3	15	75/ 4.2/ 9		
44	Herb Bostic-g/f	18- 4	243/13.5	17- 39/.436	12- 20/.600	20/ 1.1/ 3	17- 0	17	2	7	46/ 2.6/10		
23	Randy Morrison-g	18- 3	196/10.9	12- 29/.414	5- 5/1.000	12/ 0.7/ 3	23- 2	16	0	5	29/ 1.6/ 7		
10	Tim Gore-g	17- 0	71/ 4.2	7- 18/.389	4- 6/.667	13/ 0.8/ 8	21- 0	2	1	4	18/ 1.1/ 6		
52	Steve Bates-c	16- 1	83/ 5.2	4- 11/.364	3- 5/.600	11/ 0.7/ 5	9- 1	0	0	0	11/ 0.7/ 4		
22	Bill Cawood-g	14- 0	34/ 2.4	1- 5/.200	1- 2/.500	6/ 0.4/ 3	5- 0	3	1	0	3/ 0.2/ 2		
40	Kevin Radelet-g	5- 0	6/ 1.2	0- 2/.000	2- 2/1.000	0/ 0.0/ 0	2- 0	0	0	1	2/ 0.4/ 2		
15	Bob Fossum-g	12- 0	25/ 2.1	0- 3/.000	1- 2/.500	2/ 0.2/ 1	3- 0	3	0	1	1/ 0.1/ 1		
Team					0- 1	61 (Deadball)	Rebounds: MSU--49; OPP--46)						
MICHIGAN STATE		18-18	3700/205.6	493- 986/.500	215-316/.680	531/29.5/49	372-19	230	32	103	1201/66.7/89		
OPPONENTS		18-18	3700/205.6	482- 969/.497	288-399/.722	566/31.4/44	319-12	242	45	95	1252/69.6/92		

Per Game [Share & more](#) [Glossary](#)

Rk	Player	G	GS	MP	FG	FGA	FG%	2P	2PA	2P%	3P	3PA	3P%	FT	FTA	FT%	ORB	DRB	TRB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PF	PTS
1	Jay Vincent	27	27	37.1	9.6	19.3	.496							3.4	5.2	.645			8.5	1.9	1.0	0.4	3.6	22.6	
2	Kevin Smith	27	21	32.9	5.4	9.9	.545							2.7	3.7	.733			2.3	4.8	1.4	0.1	3.3	13.5	
3	Mike Brkovich	25	23	31.3	3.0	6.3	.475							2.2	2.6	.862			2.2	2.4	0.6	0.2	2.3	8.2	
4	Derek Perry	27	16	21.5	3.1	5.1	.601							1.3	1.9	.720			3.9	0.7	0.4	0.2	1.9	7.5	
5	Ben Tower	27	20	23.3	2.3	3.9	.587							0.5	1.0	.500			3.8	0.7	0.4	0.6	2.8	5.0	
6	Randy Morrison	27	12	18.4	1.4	3.2	.453							0.5	0.6	.867			1.1	1.6	0.6	0.0	1.6	3.4	
7	Rick Kaye	26	10	17.6	1.2	2.5	.500							0.9	1.1	.793			1.8	0.4	0.6	0.1	1.9	3.3	
8	George Cooper	3	0	5.7	1.3	2.0	.667							0.0	0.0				0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.7	2.7	
9	Herb Bostic	26	4	11.8	0.9	2.1	.418							0.6	0.9	.667			1.0	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.9	2.4	
10	Tim Gore	23	0	4.0	0.4	1.1	.385							0.2	0.4	.556			0.8	0.3	0.2	0.0	1.0	1.1	
11	Bill Cawood	23	0	3.2	0.2	0.6	.385							0.3	0.5	.727			0.5	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.8	
12	Steve Bates	23	1	4.3	0.2	0.5	.417							0.1	0.2	.600			0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6	
13	Bob Fossum	18	0	2.2	0.0	0.2	.000							0.2	0.3	.600			0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.2	
14	Kevin Radelet	9	0	1.1	0.0	0.2	.000							0.2	0.3	.667			0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.2	
15	Richard Mudd	2	1	9.5	0.0	0.0								0.0	0.0				1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	

Totals [Share & more](#) [Glossary](#)

Rk	Player	G	GS	MP	FG	FGA	FG%	2P	2PA	2P%	3P	3PA	3P%	FT	FTA	FT%	ORB	DRB	TRB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PF	PTS
1	Jay Vincent	27	27	1001	259	522	.496							91	141	.645			229	50	26	11	96	609	
2	Kevin Smith	27	21	889	145	266	.545							74	101	.733			62	130	38	2	88	364	
3	Mike Brkovich	25	23	782	75	158	.475							56	65	.862			54	60	16	5	57	206	
4	Derek Perry	27	16	580	83	138	.601							36	50	.720			104	18	12	6	52	202	
5	Ben Tower	27	20	628	61	104	.587							14	28	.500			103	18	11	16	76	136	
6	Randy Morrison	27	12	497	39	86	.453							13	15	.867			29	44	16	0	43	91	
7	Rick Kaye	26	10	457	32	64	.500							23	29	.793			46	10	15	3	50	87	
8	Herb Bostic	26	4	306	23	55	.418							16	24	.667			25	19	8	2	23	62	
9	Tim Gore	23	0	92	10	26	.385							5	9	.556			18	6	5	1	24	25	
10	Bill Cawood	23	0	74	5	13	.385							8	11	.727			11	5	2	1	15	18	
11	Steve Bates	23	1	98	5	12	.417							3	5	.600			15	0	0	0	11	13	
12	George Cooper	3	0	17	4	6	.667							0	0				1	0	1	0	2	8	
13	Bob Fossum	18	0	40	0	4	.000							3	5	.600			4	4	1	0	6	3	
14	Kevin Radelet	9	0	10	0	2	.000							2	3	.667			0	0	1	0	5	2	
15	Richard Mudd	2	1	19	0	0								0	0				3	0	0	0	7	0	
School Totals		27			741	1456	.509	741	1456	.509				344	487	.706			802					555	1826

The tables below summarize Fossum's statistics, per game and totals, for the 1980-81 season that he played for the Spartans.

Per Game

Season	School	Conf	G	GS	MP	FG	FGA	FG%	2P	2PA	2P%	3P	3PA	3P%	FT	FTA	FT%	ORB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PF	PTS	SOS
1980-81	Michigan State	Big Ten	18	0	2.2	0.0	0.2	.000							0.2	0.3	.600	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.2	8.47	
Career	Michigan State		18	0	2.2	0.0	0.2	.000							0.2	0.3	.600	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.2	8.47	

Totals

Season	School	Conf	G	GS	MP	FG	FGA	FG%	2P	2PA	2P%	3P	3PA	3P%	FT	FTA	FT%	ORB	AST	STL	BLK	TOV	PF	PTS
1980-81	Michigan State	Big Ten	18	0	40	0	4	.000							3	5	.600	4	4	1	0	6	3	
Career	Michigan State		18	0	40	0	4	.000							3	5	.600	4	4	1	0	6	3	

During the 1980-81 season, Fossum played in 18 varsity games (including 12 Big Ten games), averaging 0.2 points, 0.2 rebounds, and 0.2 assists per game, and earning a varsity letter. Whether Fossum could have continued to play basketball with the Spartans after his freshman season is a moot issue since what he really wanted to do, having come to MSU under a golf scholarship, was to play golf.

Laurels

After the 1980-81 season Fossum left the basketball team to join the Spartans Men's Golf team, playing golf for the Spartans during the 1982-85 seasons under the coaching of his father, Bruce, the Spartans head Men's Golf coach from 1966-99. Bob Fossum's golf career at MSU was marked by being a four-year letter winner ([Source](#)) and being the 1985 recipient of the Dr. James Feurig Achievement & Service Award, presented annually to a graduating senior for athletic and academic success, and involvement in community and school activities ([Source](#)).

After Michigan State

After graduating from Michigan State, Fossum played golf professionally for five years but then realized he "wasn't quite as good as some of the guys [he] was competing against (Lehman, Stricker, etc.)" (Bob Fossum, personal communication). Bob recalled:

"I was a pro for five years and worked for Freddy Muller at Crystal Downs," Fossum said of the private club at Frankfort.

"I found there were too many good players and I didn't have time to work on my game. So I got my amateur card back in 1994." ([Jack Saylor, Michigan Golfer](#))

In July 1997, Fossum participated in the 40th renewal of the Michigan Medal Play championship and Horton Smith memorial tournament at the Detroit Golf Club.

Bob Fossum of East Lansing captured the Horton Smith, the 36-hole portion in which the host club honors the memory of its legendary former pro and serves as the first half of the 72-hole spring event luring most of the state's foremost amateurs.

Fossum shot 73-68 to place his name on the trophy bearing an old putter used by Horton Smith, the first-ever Masters champion. ...

It would have been shocking if Fossum, 35, had not become a good golfer.

His father, Bruce, was the long-time coach at Michigan State, for whom Bob played as a Spartan from 1981-85. Mary Fossum, Bob's mother, sports an even flossier playing resume than her husband.

She was a pioneer of women's professional golf with one of her accomplishments a victory over the vaunted Babe Zaharias.

"I guess I have good genes," Fossum said with a laugh. "Really, I was blessed to have two great people to learn from.

"To this day, my Mom is the best putter I've ever seen. But my dad usually had the last word on my game. If I had a problem, I'd usually go to my dad with it.

"They've got pictures of me hitting balls with plastic clubs when I was about 1-1/2 years old." Fossum was almost literally born to be in golf. ...

Fossum reached the Sweet Sixteen of the Michigan Amateur last year and finished 15th in his first MMP a year ago, before winning the Horton Smith this time around." ..

Fossum doesn't rank among the big hitters. "I don't hit it very far, but my short game keeps me in the ball game," he said. ([Jack Saylor, Michigan Golfer](#)).

During most of his working career, Fossum worked in the financial area (mostly futures trading). He recalled enjoying "the thrill of competing in the markets on a daily basis" and that this "probably [came] from my sports upbringing and background" (Bob Fossum, personal communication). In recent years, Fossum also has been involved in real estate, also getting "back into golf through...the process of purchasing a local golf club"—also, he noted, "it was exciting trying to put together the right mix of people, marketing, and finance to make this club go (not an easy task in Michigan these days)." He also got into selling golf equipment and golf carts, leading to buying a golf driving range (Fossum Family Golf Range) in 2014 in Okemos. This facility has been open since early May 2014 and his kids take an active role in the business. Since November 2014 Fossum has been an officer at the Abood Law Firm, providing research and logistics support ([LinkedIn](#)).



Bob Fossum in 2017

In 2015, Fossum was one of the original inductees into the [Okemos High School Athletic Hall of Fame](#), in recognition of being an All-State basketball player ('80) and boys' golf individual state champion ('79).



Looking Back

In November 2018 this writer had the opportunity to meet Bob Fossum in East Lansing. We had a really interesting discussion following a list of questions that had been sent to Bob in advance.



Bob Fossum & Kerry Byrnes (November 2018)

Bob agreed that he would reflect further on the questions and send his answers to me via email. His responses follow.

What were the most exciting moments of your basketball career at OHS?

There were many but here are a few that come to mind:

- *Finding out from Coach Stolz and my running mate Ronny Beurmann that I was being brought up to start on the varsity team as a freshman six games into the season.*
- *Winning Okemos' first regional title ever my junior year ('79) for Coach Stolz.*
- *Beating Flint Beecher that next game in the quarterfinals to advance to Crisler Arena for the semis.*
- *Our victory over Lansing Eastern in the holiday tournament my senior year. Giving us Okemos' first number one ranking in basketball ever (also that was the only loss Eastern had all year on their way to winning the Class A title.*
- *Winning our 3rd straight conference title at home against rival Catholic Central 80-59 as my best friend Mike Witherill (27 pts) and I combined for 50 points.*
- *Winning our second straight regional title against number 1 ranked Lakewood on their home court (we were ranked #2).*
- *Being voted first team Class B All State my senior year by the AP, Detroit Free Press and Detroit News.*

In what ways did your OHS coach Stan Stolz help you to improve your skills and IQ as a basketball player?

Coach Stolz gave me a lot of confidence when I played for him. He understood my abilities. He knew I could lead our team and he gave me more freedom to do things on the court. That prepared me for college ball but it didn't prepare me for [MSU Coach] Jud Heathcote.

What were the biggest challenges for you personally during your basketball career in making the transition from high school-level completion to university-level completion?

The biggest challenge was trying to adjust to the larger size of everything. Not only the players but the arenas, the egos, crowds. It was sometimes a bit overwhelming. Speed was never a problem, height was. It was difficult adjusting to Jud's way of coaching coming from coach Stolz. Coach Heathcote was a bit more negative about things than Stan ever was. That was tough.

What other memories do you have as you “look back” on your one-season playing basketball as a Michigan State Spartan?

Playing-wise there weren't very many. I didn't play a whole lot but there are a few special memories:

- The first couple weeks were a bit tough. All these guys wondering what this little white guy was doing on the team.*
- I wasn't sure if I was going to make the West Coast trip with the team to play Cal Long Beach and Cal Fullerton. When I did make it I ended up scoring my first 2 points on free throws against Fullerton. That week was when I started to feel a part of the team.*
- I recall our game at Wisconsin. For some reason Jud thought I could help defensively with my quickness so I played more that game than any other one. I FOULED OUT pretty quickly but it was nice that coach had some confidence in me (we lost 63-62 on a play late in the game that should have been a charge but they called a block on me for my fifth foul)*
- I only had one point at Jenison Fieldhouse but what made it special was after I made the first of two free throw attempts, the official handed me the ball and said “I'm sure your Dad is very proud of you.” The official was a good friend of my dad who was up in the press box watching that day.*
- Getting to know the guys on the team throughout the year. It was great to meet new friends and it was really great to get to know Jud. As tough as he was on the court to everyone, he might have been just as nice off the court. And probably one the funniest people I've ever known.*



Bob Fossum Still Recalling How Funny Jud Heathcote Was

Occasionally, Bob appears on media outlets, nowadays mostly talking about golf.



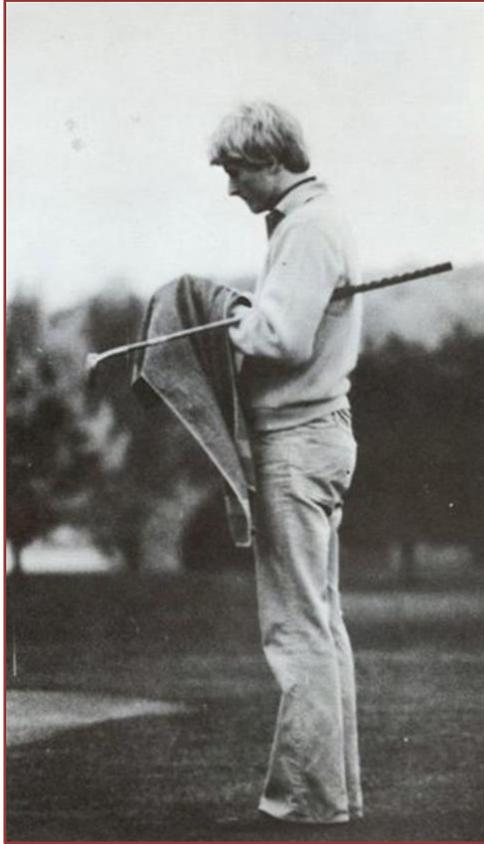
“Fun night on Press Pass All Stars talking US Open golf with Jack Ebling last night! Paul Davis and Darien Harris also were there.” (Bob Fossum on [Instagram](#))

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“Another fun night on Press Pass with Jack Ebling. Always enjoy contributing to the program.” (Bob Fossum on [Instagram](#))

https://www.instagram.com/p/BllvdHdnhA5/?utm_source=ig_share_sheet&igshid=hp57a2nkcyts

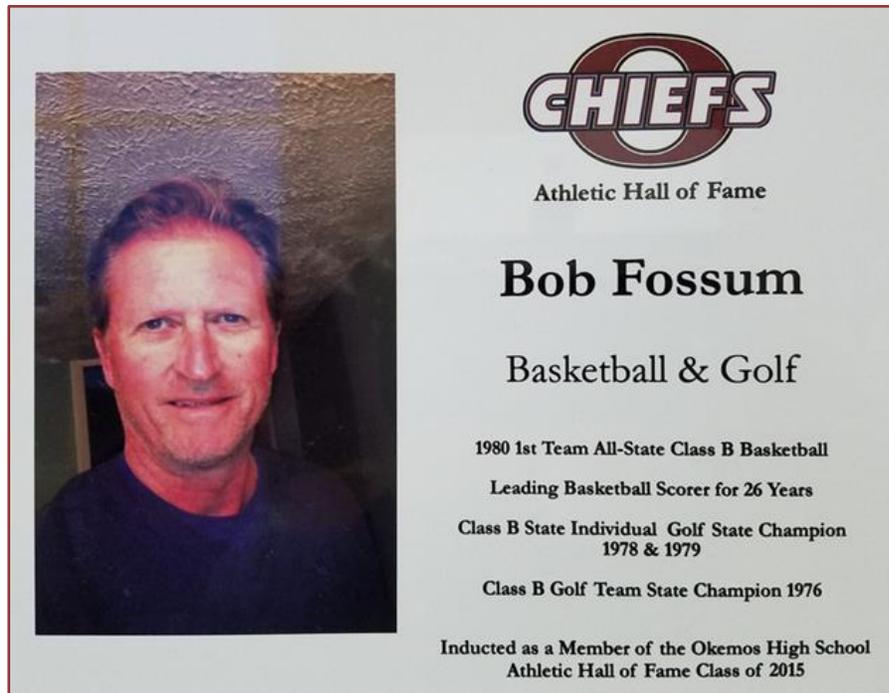


A Golfer's Game Is Never Done!

Okemos Tomahawk (1980)



In closing, as noted, in 2015 Fossum was one of the initial inductees to the Okemos Athletic Hall of Fame, with a plaque honoring him now hanging on a wall in the Okemos High School hallway along with the plaques for the other inductees.



But another part of Fossum's Chieftain-cum-Spartan legacy is that, as of 2019, all three of his children were attending Michigan State University.



Fossum with His Three Children

["Love that all three will be with each other as Spartans this year!"](#)



[Bob Fossum at Graduation of Jack and Claire](#)