

Basketball Star Is No Prima Donna

Bad Day at Garden Leads to Unhappy Time for Brown

By HOWARD M. TUCKNER

THE high school basketball star stands 6 feet 4 inches and wears size 13 sneakers. He is 16 years old and cannot understand why everyone makes a fuss over him. His name is Roger Brown and he plays for Wingate High School in Brooklyn. He does not like being a star. Some of his classmates

High
School
Sports

think he's conceited, he says, and when he has a bad day on the court he is accused of lacking heart

and not trying. Brown had a bad day in the Public Schools Athletic League basketball playoffs at Madison Square Garden last Tuesday.

Wingate, one of the pre-tourney favorites, lost to Manual, 67-53. Brown scored 12 points, 10 less than his normal output.

A few days ago it was implied in a newspaper article that Brown was a prima donna. At Wingate yesterday, some of Brown's classmates asked him when he was going to get some spirit and stop being a prima donna.

Team-Mates Are Upset

Their remarks upset him, his team-mates and his coach, Howie Rosenstein, who does not blame Brown for Wingate's defeat. Wingate's players had called a team meeting to see whether they can square Brown with his classmates.

Why did the star have a bad day? Was he nervous playing in the Garden?

"I wasn't scared," he said, "but I was shook up. Everything Manual did was right. I



The New York Times

Roger Brown

never thought the guy I covered could shoot that good. He's only a sophomore, but he scored on me. I started worrying and my game went bad."

The criticism he received since the game has affected his family as much as himself. He is so hurt, he says, he "can't look at a basketball now."

Brown says some of his classmates think him conceited because he often does not acknowledge their greetings when they pass him in the hall between classes.

Started in Eighth Grade

"They're wrong," he said. "Most of the time I'm in another world thinking about my marks, my mother, my little sister and how I can make money for the family. Sometimes I don't even see the person who says hello to me. My

Wingate Player Has Support of Mates and His Coach

eyesight's bad and I don't like to wear the glasses."

Roger began playing basketball in the eighth grade, three years ago. At the time he was 6 feet 2 inches and wore size 12 sneakers. The game did not come easy to him. At first, all he could do well was block shots "because I was bigger than the other kids."

It has been said that Brown is the finest one-handed shooter in public school competition today. It also has been said that he avoids taking driving-lay-ups for fear of injuring himself. Is this true?

"Some guys try to rough me up and knock me down," he said. "I can't afford to get hurt so I don't drive in much. If I get hurt then I won't get a scholarship to college and I won't be able to play pro ball. I have to play pro ball to make money for my family and to help my little sister. She's got cerebral palsy."

Brown was reminded that professional basketball was rough. Would he make the grade in the play-for-pay league by avoiding under-the-basket skirmishes?

"I won't be afraid to get hurt when I'm a pro," he said. "I'll be making money. I'll be helping my family."