

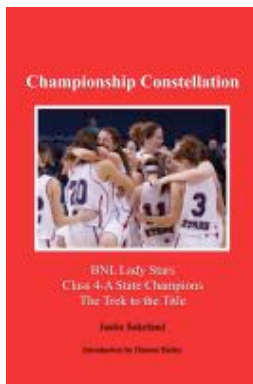
# Championship Constellation



BNL Lady Stars  
Class 4-A State Champions  
The Trek to the Title

**Justin Sokeland**

Introduction by Damon Bailey



*Award-winning sports writer Justin Sokeland followed Bedford North Lawrence, one of Indiana's elite programs, during its journey to the Class 4-A Indiana girls basketball state championship. The season is documented in dramatic detail, from the opening tip to the final celebration. The Lady Stars went 28-0 and won the third state title in school history.*

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2013 Class 4-A State Champions  
The Trek to the Title

Justin Sokeland

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*Dedicated to the best girls in my life (my wife Susan and daughter McKenna), those who have helped me during all the stages of my career, and all those who love the beautiful game of basketball.*



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# Introduction

**By Damon Bailey**

Any time you can set a goal, and achieve that goal, it's a special feeling. Basketball is so much more than just winning, but that's why we play the game and keep score. You're trying to win a game, you're trying to win a state championship. Going through it, with the outstanding group of kids we have, made it even more special. I know the time, effort and sacrifice that was made by the kids, parents and a lot of other people involved. Capping it off with a state championship makes all of that worth it.

Winning a championship is a little bit of everything. It's exhilaration, a little bit of relief, a little bit of joy. There are a lot of different emotions, and a lot of different levels of emotion. To win anything, you have to be good. You have to have the talent to do it. But you also have to have some luck along the way. You have to have the ball bounce your way, some things have to fall in place.

Coach Kurt Godlevske put that goal out there, of winning the state title, and I think it says a lot about his leadership and the direction he wanted to take the program. He didn't hide it or run away from it. We talked about it every day. So it was very satisfying, and it's something that doesn't happen very often.

With this group, the camaraderie was there. I always knew they were close and knew they cared about each other. They have grown up together. We have a lot of kids who are very talented. There were sacrifices that had to be made, whether it was scoring or playing time. This group was truly a team. Does everybody want to play all the time and score 20 points? Yes. But in reality that can't happen. The kids did a remarkable job of accepting roles and doing it to the best of their ability, and that's what it takes. How well the kids like

*Justin Sokeland*

each other and get along is just as important as talent, and this is a group that had that kind of care for one another. It showed in the way they played. They knew they were going to win because they had prepared themselves, they cared about one another, and they were going to do what it took, even if that meant giving up some personal recognition.

To have a season like we had, and to have it chronicled in the way Justin Sokeland did, is really neat. Being a little bit older, I understand and appreciate the effort he gave. And as these kids grow older, it will be something to reflect on and talk to their kids about. Having been involved, and having the open access to the kids and program, Justin captured what the team was all about.

## Together, they were unbeatable

### Godlevske, Stars polished program to original shine

MARCH 5, 2013



Kurt Godlevske, in his seventh season as coach, guided BNL to the Class 4-A state championship.

Godlevske started polishing.

Wow, how it shines now.

Somebody got it right when the hiring of Godlevske was approved. The Class 4-A state championship, the restoration of the program's greatness, proves that. The character and class his team mirrored en route to the title verifies that. The toughness and grit they displayed during tense tournament games confirms that. Take a bow.

In June of 2006, when Kurt Godlevske was hired as the girls basketball coach at Bedford North Lawrence, he spoke of toughness, grittiness. He wanted to “plant roots”, to “teach kids how to be successful in life.”

And he spoke of tradition. BNL had just finished three consecutive losing seasons, and that was not the program Godlevske, growing up here during the glory days of the 1980s, remembered as a kid. Tarnish was blackening the silver.

*Justin Sokeland*

Godlevske and the Lady Stars were called to BNL Fieldhouse for an encore on Monday night. With wit, with touching emotion and humility, with the “joy unspeakable” that NLCS superintendent Dr. Dennis Turner mentioned during his remarks, Godlevske addressed the assembled throng at the school’s community celebration, hoping to thank everyone “for the gift of a lifetime.”

There was no need. The gift his team just presented was far greater. Any debt he felt obligated to repay has been erased. He kept his word. BNL, as former coach and Hall of Famer Pete Pritchett said when he praised Godlevske for his work, is back.

How did they do it? Together.

No man is an island, John Donne wrote almost 400 years ago.



BNL coach Kurt Godlevske wanted his Stars to display toughness and grit.

Godlevske did not accomplish everything alone.

► Together, with his wife Beth (every coach’s wife is instantly anointed for sainthood) and their three children. “This is just as much yours as it is mine,” he said. “I miss an awful lot with three special kids to spend with a whole group of special girls.”

► Together, with his coaching staff, including Damon Bailey and Jeff Allen. “For a wonderful friendship. I’ve learned way more from them than

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I've departed on them, I'm sure of that. From Coach Bailey's ability to dissect and think through about anything. Coach Allen's intense stares and intensity in practice - and girls, you know what I'm talking about."

► Together, with the support and sacrifice of the families involved. "I appreciate how much you let me drag them away from you."

► Together, with a band of sisters who could not be conquered. "I've never seen a group stick and bond together like that. I don't think we could have gotten through Columbus North and Franklin Central, that two-game venue (in the regional), if they did not stick together. I know for a fact, if they were not together, there was no way that we overcome Roncalli in the semistate.



BNL coaches Kurt Godlevske, Damon Bailey, and Jeff Allen celebrate the state championship win over Ft. Wayne South.

"And to be able to stick together one last time, and battle through and win a state championship, speaks volumes about their character, how good a people they truly are. It's an honor to be up here and talk about them."

When Godlevske was hired, he said "I think players assume their coach's characteristics." He was prophetic. He was right. The orchestra plays as the conductor directs.

Together, they formed an unbeatable team.

*Justin Sokeland*





The Regular Season:  
One Game at a Time

*Justin Sokeland*





## Stars open with win over Mitchell

NOVEMBER 11, 2012

Bedford North Lawrence opened the 2012-13 regular season in style Saturday night, rolling to a 69-36 road victory over county rival Mitchell.

The Lady Stars (1-0) had five double-figure scorers. Sophomore center Jenna Allen dominated the paint while scoring 14 points and grabbing 7 rebounds, and outside threat Brittani Rizzi hit four 3-pointers to total her 12 points.

Kennedy Wall came off the bench to add 11, Sammy Dillman had 11 (with three treys), and Dominique McBryde had 10 for BNL, ranked No.8 in Class 4-A.

“We shot the ball really well,” BNL coach Kurt Godlevske said. “We did a nice job of pressuring the ball and played unselfish.”

After a slow start, BNL took control with a 15-0 spurt in the second quarter and rolled to a 41-17 halftime lead. McBryde had 8 of her points during the first-half surge.

The Bluejackets (1-1) struggled on the offensive end, shooting 27.5 percent while committing 27 turnovers against BNL’s full-court press and half-court trap. Mia Burton was the lone bright spot with 16 points and 6 rebounds.

“Mitchell played hard, which is a credit to Coach (Matt) Sowders,” Godlevske said.

BNL will take a serious step up in competition when it faces No.20 Mooresville (1-0) in the home opener on Tuesday night. BNL has lost five straight decisions to the Pioneers. The last win was a 52-47

*Justin Sokeland*

victory in 2006-07 that marked Godlevske's first win with the program.

Mooreville opened with a 59-51 win over No. 6 North Central, the defending 4-A state champion, on Friday. The Pioneers won last year's game with BNL 52-43.



The 2012-2013 BNL Lady Stars hope to restore the program's rich tradition.



## BNL mows down Mooresville

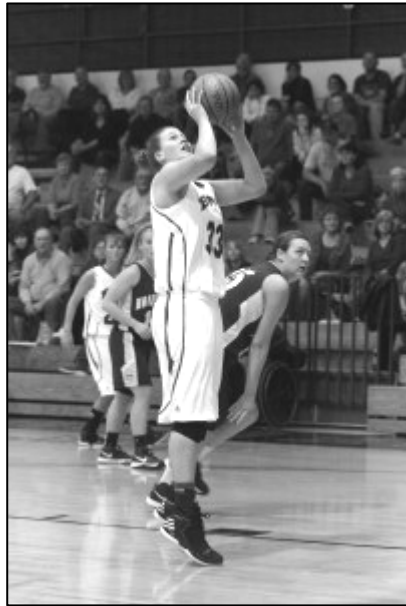
NOVEMBER 14, 2012

Focused and flawless, Class 4-A No.5 Bedford North Lawrence sent a message to the rest of the basketball-bouncing state Tuesday night.

It reads, according to forward Dominique McBryde, “Everybody, watch out.”

The Lady Stars (2-0) were sensational to the point of amazing friend and foe alike. They charged to a 16-0 start and never relaxed while crushing No.14 Mooresville 65-45 at BNL Fieldhouse. Brittani Rizzi and McBryde scored 16 points each and Jenna Allen added 15 as BNL ended a five-game losing streak against a nemesis with a powerful performance.

This was not a blowout of a mediocre, schedule-stuffing rag team.



Mooresville (1-1) started the season with a victory over North Central, the defending Class 4-A state champion. This was a merciless execution, from the opening minutes to the final horn. The Pioneers never got within single digits, never threatened to make BNL sweat.

“We were prepared and had a lot of focus,” BNL coach Kurt Godlevske said. “I think our intensity level was where it should be, where it had been lacking.”

But even that doesn’t explain some

of the numbers:

McBryde and Allen, both sophomores, combined to hit 13 of 13 shots. Perfect.

“Seriously?” Godlevske said when informed. Seriously.

BNL, with Sammy Dillman adding 10 points on 4-of-4 shooting, hit 24 of 37 shots, a crisp 64.9 percent.

“Wow,” Mooresville coach Mark Hurt said. And there was really nothing more to add.

“I thought they beat us on both sides of the ball,” Hurt said. “They ran their offense pretty well, and defensively they did a nice job of just staying in front of us. They executed better than us.”



The opening told the story. Allen and McBryde, the focal points of the offense, worked in the paint and combined for 10 points. Dillman hit a 3-pointer that prompted a Mooresville timeout, and Rizzi buried another for the 16-0 advantage.

Mooresville’s Jessica McFarland finally ended the drought at the 2:17 mark, converting a steal into a layup. But it was too late.

“That was disappointing,” Hurt said. “They got off to a really hot start. We came up empty the first few times, and when you look up it’s 11-0. And then you look up again and it’s 16-0.”

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“Whenever you start off like we did, on a big run, it sure makes things easier,” Godlevske said. “We were active and doing all the right things.”

Rizzi, supremely confident with her shooter’s mentality, got into the act in the fourth quarter by hitting all four of her shots. Her last gave the Stars their biggest lead at 61-36.

“I just focused better,” Rizzi said. “In the locker room at halftime, I was like ‘I’m going to make the next shot.’ That’s what I kept thinking.”

BNL dominated the boards (because there were few rebounds for Mooresville to claim) by a 25-11 margin.

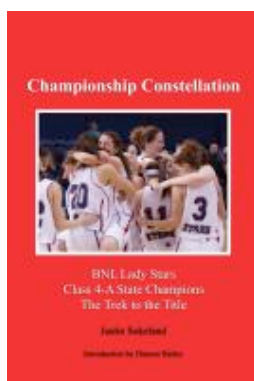
Mooresville’s Sarah Corbin scored 13 points, all but two in the second half. The Pioneers did not throw this one away (with only 10 turnovers), they just got taken apart by a team that might not be able to play much better. If they can, McBryde’s warning isn’t stern enough.

“They have a really strong team,” Hurt said.

BNL, the defending league champion, will start its chase for the Hoosier Hills Conference title when it visits Jeffersonville on Saturday night.

*Justin Sokeland*





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