

1954 NIT Champions

HOLY CROSS BEATS TOP-SEEDED DUQUESNE FOR NIT CROWN

Holy Cross 93, St. Francis (N.Y.) 69

March 9, 1954

Madison Square Garden

Holy Cross rolled to a 39-26 halftime lead and never looked back to defeat the Terriers. The Crusaders connected on 35 of 41 free throw attempts and were led by the 25 points of Togo Palazzi. Other double figure scorers for Holy Cross included Ron Perry (14), Joe Liebler (13) and Tom Heinsohn (12).

Holy Cross 75, Western Kentucky 69

March 11, 1954

Madison Square Garden

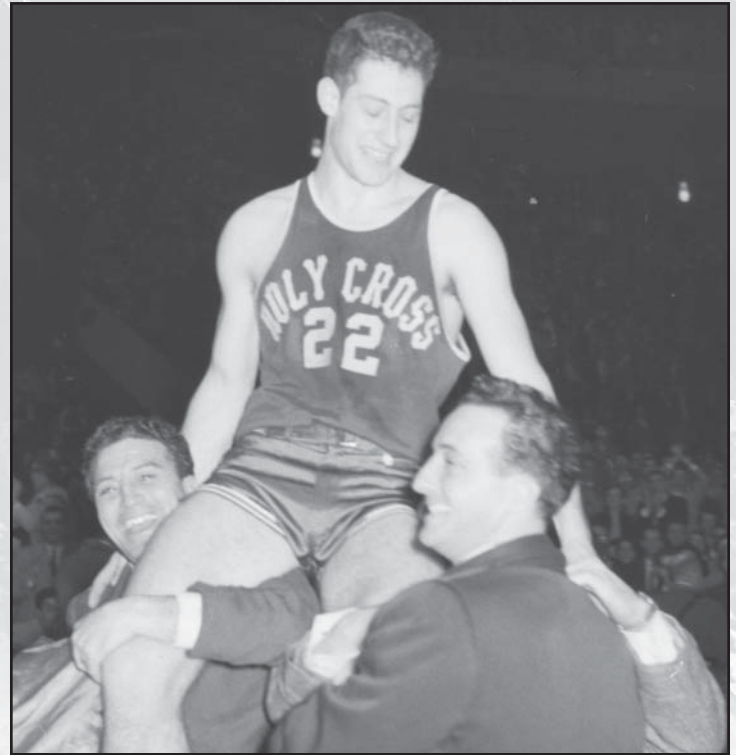
Palazzi continued his spectacular play, scoring 32 points in a semifinal upset of Western Kentucky before 17,525 fans. The much-bigger Hilltopper squad took an 11-point lead in the second quarter, but a 14-1 run by the Crusaders resulted in just a 41-39 Western Kentucky lead at halftime. A Liebler basket with 5:30 to play gave Holy Cross the lead for good at 60-59, and the Crusaders' ball control offense sealed the victory. Liebler tallied 15 points, while Heinsohn added 13 points.

Holy Cross 71, Duquesne 62

March 13, 1954

Madison Square Garden

The Crusaders zoomed to a 19-8 advantage in the first quarter and never relinquished the lead in becoming the first New England team to capture the NIT title. Holy Cross led 34-29 at halftime, then Heinsohn scored 10 consecutive points in the third quarter to keep the Crusaders in command. Heinsohn and Palazzi shared scoring honors with 20 each, while Liebler had 10 and Perry added seven. Holy Cross finished third in the final Associated Press poll (picking up 11 first place votes) and ninth in the United Press International tabulation. A sellout crowd of 18,496 saw Holy Cross become just the third team nationally to capture both the NCAA and NIT championships. Following the game, Togo Palazzi was named the Tournament MVP. Newspaper stories also indicate that an All-Tournament team was selected, with Palazzi and Heinsohn being honored.



Togo Palazzi was named the Most Valuable Player of the 1954 National Invitation Tournament, after scoring 77 points for the Crusaders in the three games.



THE 1954 NIT CHAMPIONS

Front Row: Joe Early, Tom Burke. Middle Row: Assistant Coach Jack Whalen, Frank Kasprzak, Togo Palazzi, Head Coach Lester Sheary, Ron Perry, Ken Snyder, Assistant Coach Albert Riopel. Back Row: Manager Tom McGovern, Don Prohovich, Joe Liebler, Tom Heinsohn, Jim Lewis, Dick Santaniello, Walter Supronowicz, Trainer Bill Samko.

NIT Championship Game March 13, 1954

Holy Cross	FG	FT	Pts
Togo Palazzi	6	8	20
Joe Liebler	4	2	10
Tom Heinsohn	6	8	20
Ron Perry	2	3	7
Don Prohovich	1	3	5
Frank Kasprzak	3	0	6
Walter Supronowicz	1	0	2
Joe Early	0	1	1
Totals	23	25	71

Duquesne	FG	FT	TP
Dick Ricketts	6	1	13
Sihugo Green	6	4	16
Lou Iezzi	0	0	0
Jim Tucker	4	3	11
Fletcher Johnson	0	2	2
Mickey Winograd	4	7	15
Sid Dambrot	2	1	5
Totals	22	18	62

Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Holy Cross	19	15	21	16	71
Duquesne	8	21	14	19	62