

**BERTHA
FRANK
TEAGUE
1898-1991**



**LEGENDARY
BASKETBALL
COACH**

There are few basketball legends like Bertha Teague. She built a dynasty second to none at Byng High School from 1927 to 1969, including 98 straight victories in the 1930s. During her 43-year coaching career, she produced eight state championships, seven second-place finishes and a winning percentage of 91%. A pioneer in women's sports, Bertha Teague is a member of every basketball hall of fame for which she is eligible.

Bertha Frank was born in September, 1898 at Carthage, Missouri. She married Jessie Teague in 1926 and moved to Cairo, Oklahoma to teach first grade – and coach girls' basketball because she had a natural affinity for the sport. The next year, they moved to Byng, Oklahoma, where Jess was hired as school superintendent. Although she only had one year of coaching experience, Jess hired her as the girls' high school basketball coach.

Bertha Teague became an early innovator in the sport. She believed that a person did not have to play basketball to coach, because coaching is like teaching any other subject. She had a large role in modernizing the sport. Her methods set the pace in Oklahoma, and her success was soon copied across the nation. She set the standard for high school girls' basketball and proceeded to re-write the book on the game.

Byng won its first state championship in 1936. Teague's team became famous two years later when they won the national AAU tournament against state all-star teams from across America. In the final game, her team whipped the highly touted champion California All-Stars, 34-15. Teague's teams compiled a 1,152-115 record, including 36 seasons of twenty wins or more. She held the national record for the most wins by a girls' high school coach until 1991.

In 1962, she wrote the book "Basketball for Girls", in which she described her philosophy and coaching methods. "A girl wrote me from New York saying they had followed the fundamentals in my book and had won two championships. You couldn't ask for a better book review than that." In 1967, Teague was named Oklahoma Girls Basketball Coach of the Year.

Bertha Teague's final game in 1969 was legendary. Before a huge crowd in Oklahoma City, Byng won 40-39 at the buzzer, putting a storybook finish on the career of Bertha Teague by winning another state championship. Teague's average won-lost record was 26-3 for 43 years!

Bertha's accomplishments included Coach of the Decade for 1930s, 1940s and 1970s by the Jim Thorpe Athletic Awards Committee (1974) and one of the first three women to be inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame (1985). Bertha Teague died at age 92 in June, 1991. She was posthumously enshrined in the 1999 inaugural class of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

Bertha Teague fought hard to change the way girls played basketball. Her efforts led to many changes in the game, and her influence is still felt in high school sports.