NEWPORT NEWS’ 1957 CHAMPS FLANK LEADING SCORER BUCKY KELLER
Typhoon Regulars Include (From Left) Jack Tesh, Don Ellis, Keller, Kenny Roberts And Bobby Jones

Driesell, Noe Praise Keller

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any game, but I’d say three-quarters of the ones he did get in high school were when the team needed them the most,” continued Noe.

Although Julie Conn never coached Keller while he guided the basketball fortunes of Newport News, the retired Typhoon coaching great in track and basketball asserts, “Bucky was one of the greatest basketball players I’ve ever seen without a doubt.”

Conn stepped down the year before Keller entered Newport News High. “He led NN to the State semifinals his freshman year, and then led them to three straight championships,” added Conn.

One of Keller’s teammates during the championship streak was Don Ellis, now a Peninsula District basketball official.

“He was a good person to play with. In fact, he and my brother Chris were the best players I ever played with,” said Ellis. Chris also ranks among the Typhoon greats.

“There’s no question Bucky was a team player all the way. You could always depend on him. He was the best shooter I’ve ever seen.

“Chris may have been a better passer, but Bucky was the shooter. He could really shoot the eye out of a basket.”

“I can remember playing in the recreation league a while back. Bucky had been away from the game for a couple of years, and one night he came out to play and threw in around 25 points in the game. Playing basketball came natural to Bucky,” added Ellis.

Keller, who helped coach at Tech one year after graduating while working on his masters degree, had an opportunity to play professional ball.

“He had a chance to go with the Lakers, but didn’t,” said Ellis. “Bucky told me he wanted to play and not sit on the bench. But with Jerry West, who was one of the Lakers’ top point producers at the time, it didn’t look promising.

“I think he probably would have made it in the pros. Even if the Lakers had him, they probably would have traded him to another club where he would have played,” surmised Ellis.

Of all his coaches and teammates, Driesell, although his coach for only one season, became very close to Keller.

“He was like a son to me. He came up to see me about three weeks ago. We used to visit each other quite often. I’m upset over the whole thing,” said Driesell, who visited his hospitalized former star last week.