

## Veteran Blue Hairs Win Orinda Spring League

By Tim Fong



Back row, left to right, Jim Buckley, Rob Fellner, Dan McCormick, Chuck Engs, Bill Jones, Steve Diekmann, Bill Marchant, Gregg Vignos  
Front row, left to right, Dan Michelini, Jeff Julian, Chris Lang, Jeff Allen, John Fernbacher

Photo provided

In the second half of the Orinda Over-35 Basketball Spring championship game, the Blue Hairs (7-2 regular season) were able to separate themselves from Team DB (6-3) en route to a 56-47 victory. The Blue Hairs won its last championship two years ago, and have won four championships since the summer of 2000.

“The game was really close during the first half,” said Blue Hairs forward Rob Fellner. “We didn’t get a good lead until there was about ten minutes left in the game.”

The veteran Blue Hairs knew to stay away from their weaknesses during the game. The Blue Hairs are one of the oldest teams in the league and have good chemistry from playing so many seasons with each other.

“Our team has players that are over forty years old, so we tried to slow the game down so that we could set up an offense and get back on defense,” said Fellner. “We aren’t lightning quick, so we used screens and cut to the hoop to try and get good looks at the basket.”

At the championship game, the

Blue Hairs had its biggest crowd in attendance for the season. Fifteen kids were yelling for their dads from the stands during the game and gave a boost to the players in the second half.

“The fans motivated us and gave us some momentum in the second half of the game,” said Fellner. “It was really great to hear our kids rooting us on and towards the end of the game we fed off of the fan’s motivation.

Coming into the postseason, the Blue Hairs were tied for first and Team DB was only one game back of the three-way tie for first place. In the playoffs the Blue Hairs blew out their opponents with the scoring from Steve Diekmann, who is tied for second with the most points in a NCAA division III game.

“Diekmann really took control in the playoffs,” says Fellner. “Now that he is older he is isn’t as quick as he used to be, but his natural skill really helped us.”

In the championship game, Bill Marchant helped Diekmann on the offensive end and 6’6” Bill Jones stepped

it up on defense.

“Jones was a huge factor for us in the game,” said Fellner. “He had Plantar Fasciitis during the regular season, so he didn’t play until the last game. In the championship game, he shut down Team DB’s tall 6’10” center.”

Although the basketball players like having fun and being competitive in the games, the refreshments after the game may be the reason some of the players stay in the league.