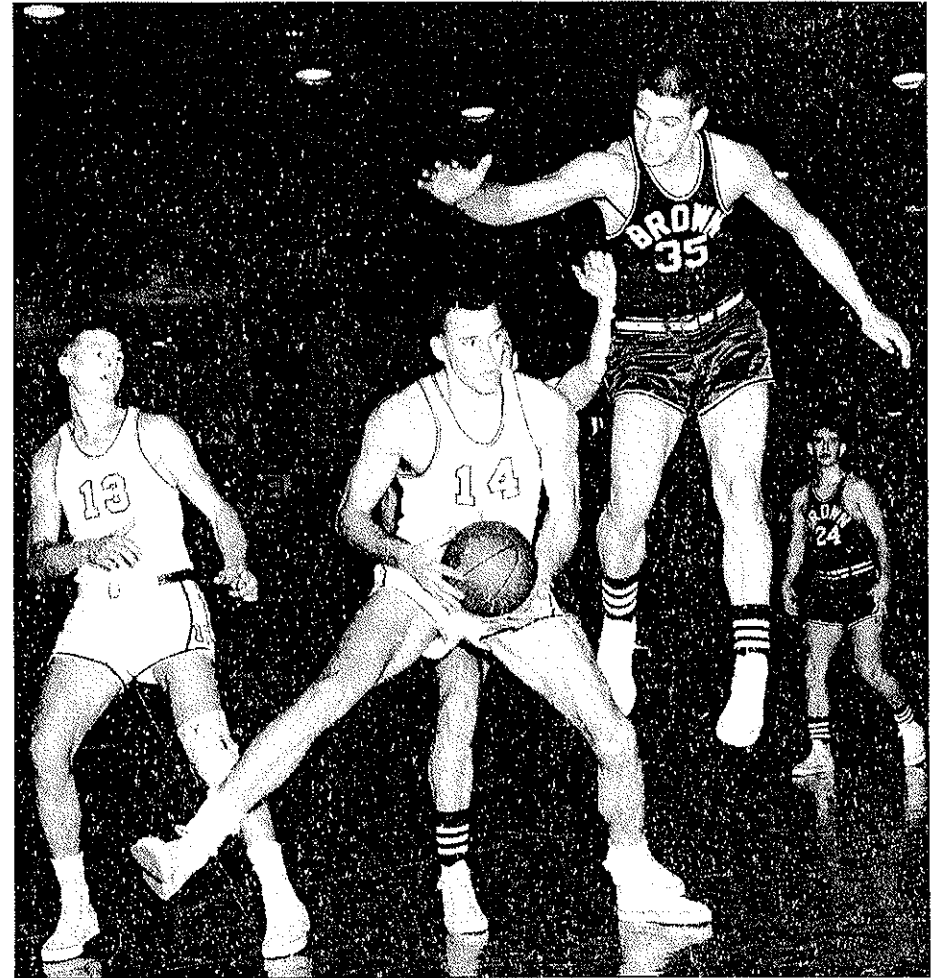


The Fabulous Fifties: The Tony Lupien Era 1951–56



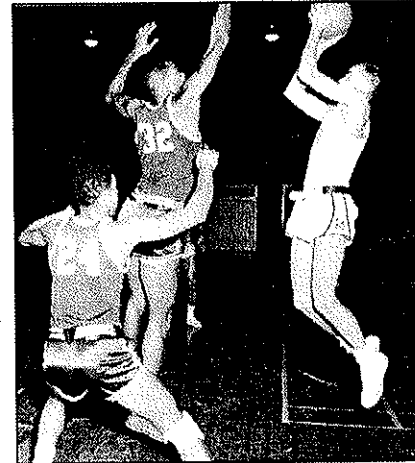
Tom Hart '56 rips down a rebound while Cy Anfudson looks on. #35 for Brown is Gerry Alaimo, their star player, who coached at Middlebury from 1964–69.

*“We had really good teams,”
“I’ll be darned if I know how these great athletes got to Middlebury,
but I was lucky to go there when I did.”*

—Tony Lupien, 2000

At the same time we celebrate the great success of our men's basketball team in the present, we are reminded of an earlier era of glory, some fifty years ago, under **Coach Tony Lupien**.

Lupien coached basketball at Middlebury from 1951 to 1956—and compiled a record of 60–49 with a schedule that took on all comers. The biggest rivalries were with in-state opponents: Norwich, St. Michael's, and the University of Vermont—the State Series. The schedule also featured teams such as Harvard, Dartmouth, Brown, Army, Boston University, and the Universities of Massachusetts and Connecticut.



Guard Scotty Greer '58 hits a jumper

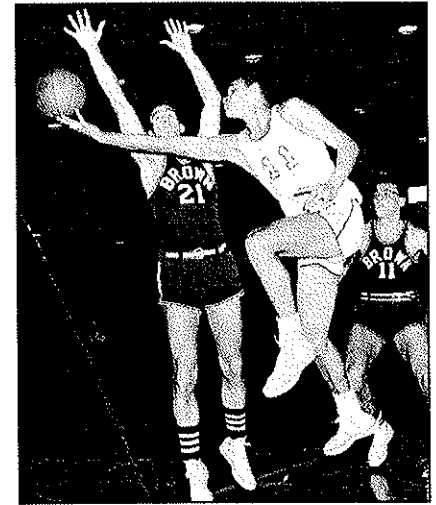
Tony did not attend Middlebury—he was a Harvard man. At Harvard he was captain of both the basketball and baseball teams. After graduating in 1939, he played eight years of professional baseball, starting at first base for the Red Sox in 1942 and 1943. In 1956, Tony left Middlebury for Dartmouth where he became a baseball coaching legend, winning over 300 games in 21 years. Tony lived in his retirement in Norwich, VT and died in 2004 at age 87.

Foremost among those “great athletes” were Tom Hart and Alfred “Sonny” Dennis. **Tom Hart '56** is arguably the greatest rebounder in the history of the collegiate game, averaging nearly 28 boards a game over his three year Middlebury career, still a national career record. He pulled down 46 rebounds in a game twice. In his three years on the team, Middlebury won 40 games and lost 23 with that rugged schedule. In 1955, Hart averaged 18.5 points and nearly 30 rebounds a game. In perhaps his best game, a 76–69 point win against UVM, he scored 36 points, a school record at the time, and pulled down 39 rebounds. Hart played five years of professional basketball, one with the NBA's St. Louis Hawks and four in the Eastern League before starting a family and a career in sales and management. He lives in retirement now in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Sonny Dennis '55 was a star in football, basketball, and track from 1951–55. He too stood over 6'4", weighed about 200 pounds, and ran like the wind. In football, he was good enough to be drafted by the Chicago Bears. As good as he was in football, he was even better in basketball. He was first team All-State all four years at Middlebury, when the State Series was a big deal. In his junior

year, he averaged over 24 points a game and was selected by *Collier's Magazine* as first team All-New England with players from Holy Cross, Boston College, and Dartmouth (beating out a forward from Holy Cross named Tommy Heinsohn).

Sonny had many brilliant games, none more so than the final game of his sophomore year against UVM. With Middlebury down a point with nine seconds to play, Sonny calmly sank two foul shots, his 32nd and 33rd points, to lead Middlebury to a 75-74 win. Sonny finished his Middlebury career with the record among all Vermont schools for most points in a single season (456) and in a career (1544). Sonny Dennis succumbed to cancer in 1995 at 62.



Charley Sykes '57 with a scoop shot

Only slightly less a basketball talent than Hart and Dennis in those years was their teammate, **Charlie Sykes '57**. Tall (6'2") and lithe, Sykes could play anywhere on the court: he was acknowledged as a "scorer, feeder, and rebounder." He was a four year starter, captain of the '57 team and its leading scorer with over 16 points a game. "He plays with the ease of a pro and is the picture of poise and composure," reported the *Campus*. In 1992, 35 years after his graduation, Sykes was awarded an honorary doctorate at Middlebury's Commencement for his extraordinary career in international relief for the CARE organization and development work in some of the poorest nations in the world. Originally from East Baltimore, Charlie now resides in Reston, VA.

The backcourt stalwarts on those Hart-Dennis-Sykes mid '50s teams of Tony Lupien were **Rosario "Zip" (or "Zing") Rausa '57**, **Scotty Greer '58**, and **Johnny Hoops '56**. Charlie Sykes said Zip's "always hustling never give up approach prepared him well for a career as a Navy pilot, author and editor." Johnny Hoops was described by Sykes as "a highly reliable point guard."

In Tony Lupien's first year at Middlebury he coached **Donald "Dee" Rowe '52**, who went on to a brilliant career as a coach first at Worcester Academy, then at the University of Connecticut, where he serves now as a special adviser for athletics. Tony and Dee became lifelong friends. Dee returns to Middlebury each January to lead a Winter Term course on coaching young athletes.

In Tony's final year at Middlebury, he coached **Carl Scheer '58**, a transfer student from Colgate, whose illustrious career in professional sports included positions as the General Manager of the Carolina Cougars in the ABA (American Basketball Association) and the Denver Nuggets and Los Angeles Clippers of the NBA. He now is the owner and CEO of the Charlotte Checkers of the East Coast Hockey League.

Space doesn't allow for biographical introductions of the many other of Tony's players in the 1950s—**Cy Anfindson '56, Art Bass '54, Bob Perkins '54, Jim Hunt '54, Ed '54 & Bob Killeen '57, Jim Wagner '57, Ralph Woodbury '57, Roger Colton '54, Jim Evans '57**, and radio voice **Gerry Gross '55**, among others—who enjoyed Middlebury and went on to successful lives and careers upon their graduation.

2012 is a great time to celebrate basketball at Middlebury, acknowledging extraordinary basketball performances by teams and individuals 50 years apart!

Karl Lindholm '67



Alfred "Sonny" Dennis '55 and Coach Tony Lupien