It was a moment that Continental varsity basketball player Brandon Schmidt will never forget, and neither will most of the fans, players and coaching staffs attending Paulding's boys basketball visit to Continental on Friday evening.

And, it was all thanks to the good heart of Paulding head coach Shawn Brewer.

But, then it happened to a very special person, Brandon Schmidt, a Down's Syndrome young man, who has spent his life watching his beloved Continental Pirates from the bench.

Included in those teams have been two older brothers who started earlier on the varsity squad.

In order to be close to team members, the younger Schmidt starting serving with the team in junior high school as a manager on the sidelines. Then, when he entered high school, he not only served as a manager, but also registered as as player to enter a game occasionally as a player.

Last Friday night was Schmidt's first game as a varsity player. Late in the game, with just a few seconds remaining and Paulding on top, 61-47, Continental head coach Kevin Homier decided to put Schmidt into the game. Homier communicated with Brewer on the sidelines that he was going to send Schmidt into the contest.

Immediately, Continental lost the ball and it appeared that Schmidt had lost his first opportunity to score on the varsity. But the quick-thinking Brewer instructed his player to travel on the pass in so that the ball would be turned back over to Continental. The Paulding team deliberated, committed the miscue and turned the ball over. Then, with seconds remaining the ball was passed in to Schmidt. The Paulding defense relaxed and the special young man banked the ball into the basket.

Fans and team members on both teams exploded in an atmosphere similar to that of the Notre Dame movie, “Rudy,” years ago.

Following the game, Continental head coach Homier couldn’t stop singing the praises of Brewer, the Paulding team and all that took place to give a special early Christmas gift to his young player.

“I told him we were putting him in and then we turned the ball over. I thought that it was all over,” said Homier. “He (Brewer) came up with the traveling call that gave the ball back to us. That was his genius; I didn’t even think of that.

“I was hoping that there would be a game where he could score; it meant so much to all of us that it could happen this early in the season,” continued Homier.

“We hadn’t played that well and it really put things in perspective. Both Shawn and I are trying to teach our players that there are things in life so much more important than simply winning the game. This was obviously a special night that Brandon will never forget.

“I can’t say enough about the way that he (Brewer) has turned that whole program around over in Paulding,” added Homier. “I can’t believe what a difference there is in those kids, on and off the floor. This is just one indication of his good heart. He’s a great guy, somebody that represents what the real spirit of sports should be in our area.”