

No Chance at State Titles

CG and OG Coaches Reflect on Lost Opportunity and Seniors

The Lima News – Jose Noguerras – March 28, 2020

What could have been.

Area boys' basketball coaches still involved in the postseason knew most likely that the Ohio High School Athletic Association was going to cancel the rest of the postseason but it didn't make it any easier for them to break it to their teams and accept the inevitable.

The word came down Thursday from the OHSAA that the tournaments were canceled and the coaches found it difficult to break it to their players.

Western Buckeye League coach Tyson McGlaughlin said it was tough to break the news to his team but added it provided closure on the season of what could have been. The Division III Titans, who were 25-1 and in the Regional Finals, appeared to be heading to a possible state berth.

"It's tough. When you have a team that can get down to State and possibly bring home a state championship. It's hard," McGlaughlin said. "

Like his coaching counterpart from the Putnam County League and Northwest Conference, Columbus Grove's Chris Sautter also envisioned a possible final four showing as his Division IV team was ranked Number 1 in the state. It sported a 26-0 mark and were poised for a chance at state.

Sautter said because he couldn't meet with the players, he had to text them the word of the cancellation which made it even tougher.

"I didn't really know what to say," Sautter said. "We never thought it would play out the way it did and I apologized to them. It made it hard. They have worked hard to accomplish the goals we set."

Sautter added that the team set three goals after it lost in the Regionals last year, winning the Putnam County League, the Northwest Conference and returning to Regionals for a trip to State.

The hardest part for these teams was how it affected the seniors.

According to Coach McGlaughlin, the seniors of Ottawa-Glandorf helped maintain the proud Titan tradition. The seniors on the team this year were Jarrod Beach, Kamron Maag, Parker Schomaeker, Hayden Dean, Ethan Alt, Ben Westrick and Aaron Rieman.

"It is a special tradition here and they have been part of the program for years. It was their turn to showcase their talents and have their turn at doing something special. That is the toughest part," McGlaughlin said. "The thing I like about these seniors was their camaraderie."

Columbus Grove also featured seniors who played a major role in the team's success. Sautter said that Evan Hopkins, Alex Schneider, Tanner Smith and Owen Macke will be missed.

"Everybody played an important role on this team and, every time they got in a game, they gave their best effort," Sautter said. What I like is these seniors gave our younger players something to shoot for. I have a lot of respect for them. These younger kids see how hard they worked and it gives them something to shoot for. It makes those younger kids want to work hard to reach the expectations these guys have left behind - get back to the Regionals and possibly State."

Even though the teams never had the chance to snare that elusive State title, each coach said their respective squads should be proud of what they accomplished both on and off the court.

"Obviously our record shows that we had success but the biggest thing is this was a team with no egos," McGlaughlin said. "They cared about each other and cared about being the best they could be as a team."

McGlaughlin added that this team was composed of selfless players who were concerned only about winning.

Sautter pointed out that this team worked very hard and should be proud of what it accomplished. "These kids stayed focused and accomplished what they set out to do," Sautter said. "They came into this season determined to make it back to the Regionals and they did. That says a lot about these players."