

Metzger on the Mark as Titans win Third State Title

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As a youngster, T.J. Metzger would pretend taking the last shot in the state tournament to win a championship. He often missed as a seven-year old playing against his older brother.

Saturday, with a real state championship on the line in Division III, Metzger, now a senior, could not have been more on the mark.

Metzger set or tied a number of state records in the Division III championship game as the Ottawa-Glandorf Titans rolled to a 67-46 win over Versailles at the Value City Arena before 13,581 fans, and the largest crowd to witness a tournament game over the three days of the state tourney. O-G finished the season at 26-3, while the Tigers fell to 23-6 after the loss.

“We had a hoop in the backyard and I’d be out there shooting with my brother,” Metzger recalled. “I’d say, ‘This is for the state championship,’ but I’d usually miss.”

But playing in the biggest game of his high school career, Metzger was anything but off. He hit five three-pointers in the opening quarter and was 9-of-14 from three-point range in the game as he paced the Titans with a game high 36 points in the win. His nine three-pointers in the game broke the record for Division III title game and tied the overall mark for a championship shared by Lima Seniors’s Demond Lyles. For the two games Metzger connected on 13 three-pointers, a new state record for all divisions.

The 36 points tied the Division III record for the championship game, shared by Sparta Highland’s J.T. Hoying in 1998. Hoying also had the record for most three-pointers in a game until Saturday. The 36 points was a career high for Metzger as his previous best was 30 points in a December game against Kalida when he had nine three-pointers in that game as well.

Metzger hit his first shot of the game, a three-pointer, to match one hit by the Tigers’ Chad

Winner, that had given Versailles an early 3-0 lead. The Tigers later had a 6-5 lead after another Winner three-pointer before O-G took the lead at 9-6 on a four-point play by Metzger. A Kyle Ahrens three tied the game at 9-9 before Metzger canned his third three-pointer of the quarter giving O-G a 12-9 lead. The Titans then went on a 12-2 run to close out the opening quarter as Metzger beat the first quarter buzzer with his fifth three-pointer of the period. Metzger had 18 points in the opening quarter as he scored a two-point basket in the run.

“When you hit that first shot it gives you confidence and that’s what you need in a game like this,” Metzger said. “There are 13,000 people (watching), but you can’t be nervous. You just have to go out and do what you can do, what you’ve got to do. I didn’t expect to come out that hot. I give all the credit to my teammates. They were rebounding and setting screens and finding me when I was open.”

“T.J. was in a rhythm and we always talk about feeding the hot hand,” O-G coach Tyson McGlaughlin said. Don’t try to reinvent the wheel. We wanted to get him the ball. We were running a couple of sets, where we felt our strengths were, where T.J. was coming off a double screen, but the play was set up for Mike (Rosebrock) to get the ball on the weak side. T.J. was getting open all day, more than normal, and they continued to jump at him. There was one time when he came off the screen and they jumped out at him and we were able to get a 12-footer. It was one of those things. T.J. was hot. It speaks volumes for our players to continue that trend, but also for T.J. to hit five or six in a row and be willing to dish it off too. Not a bad night to have a career high.”

Ottawa-Glandorf continued the run into the second quarter as Metzger scored the first five points of the second period to give the Titans a 29-11 lead.

The Titans took a 35-20 lead into halftime, but saw the Tigers open the third quarter with a 6-0 run of their own

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as Rosebrock had a pair of baskets inside. Versailles pulled within 46-36 late in the quarter before O-G ended the quarter with a 5-0 run as Alex Westrick dropped in a shot down low and Metzger canned a three-pointer from the top of the key to beat their quarter buzzer.

“They answered everything we did with one of their own,” Versailles coach Scott McEldowney said. “We got it to nine points in that one stretch, but they would make a run and it was back to 17, 18 points and they were able to maintain it.”

The fourth quarter saw the Titans continue to pull away as they built a 21-point lead at 63-42 on Jake Leopold’s basket. With the big lead O-G started to pull its starters as each was given a big ovation from the large Titan crowd on hand to witness the program’s third state title in the last 10 years.

“Beginning of the year, we talk about goals and the coach talk is always one game at a time,” McGlaughlin said. “From the time we left the Schott last year, the guys had that look of disappointment and rightfully so. Our goal is always to be the last team standing. Walking out of the Schott last year you could see the frustration and we carried that frustration to motivate us in the off-season. They are 17 and 18-year old kids and to have the goal of state tournament or bust, that is not easy. The guys carried that throughout the season – it’s a long season – but the guys continued to battle and get better and you could see the last four games they stuck together. The ultimate goal was to get down to Columbus and finish it off.”

My brother was on the 2008 team,” Rosebrock said. “He was always saying he had a ring and hustling me about it. It drove me to get back this year. With five starters back there was a lot of talk about us getting back here this year. Once we did and got to the final game, we just had to give everything we

had and leave it out on the floor. Now I’ve got a ring, too. And I can tell him I’ve been here twice.”

Rosebrock had eight points and eight rebounds in the title game. Matt “Chewy” Kaufman finished with seven points, six rebounds and five assists while Noah Bramlage grabbed seven rebounds as O-G had a 34-24 edge in boards.

OTTAWA GLANDORF 13-9-43 14-22 67
Kaufman 2-3 7. Rosebrock 4-0-8. Siefker 1-0-2.
Bramlage 1-2-4. Metzger 11-5-36. Beckman 0-0-0.
Westrick 2-1-5. VonSossan 0-2-2. Trampe-Kindt 0-0-0.
Schroeder 0-0-0. Leopold 1-1-3. Kuhlman 0-0-0.
Zender 0-0-0. Alt 0-0-0.

VERSAILLES 12-5-47 7-11 46
Campbell 3-2-8. Richard 2-0-6. Winner 4-0-10.
Ahrens 4-3-12. Heitkamp 1-0-2. Barga 1-2-4. Philpot
2-0-4.

Ottawa-G.	24	11	16	16	67
Versailles	11	9	16	10	46

Three Point Goals: Versailles 5-18 (Richard 2. Winner 2. Ahrens 1.) Ottawa-Glandorf 9-16 (Metzger 9.)

Rebounds: Versailles 24 (Winner 5). Ottawa-Glandorf 34 (Rosebrock 8, Bramlage 7)

Turnovers: Versailles 12 and Ottawa-Glandorf 12