

# SPORTS

## OVAC girls tourney pairings set

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**BELLAIRE** – The path to an Ohio Valley Athletic Conference girls basketball championship is officially set.

The pairings for the 11th annual Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Championship, which opens Monday at the higher seeds

gymnasium, were officially set Tuesday morning at the conference office.

Along with the championship pairings being finalized, all of the teams which didn't qualify in the top four of their respective class received their consolation tournament assignments.

The survivors of Monday's 10 semifinal games will trek to Ohio

University Eastern on Feb. 10 to play for the championship. The order of those games is Class 2A (10 a.m.), Class 3A (12:15 p.m.), Class 4A (2:30 p.m.), Class 5A (4:45 p.m.) and Class 1A (7 p.m.).

Here's a look at each class:

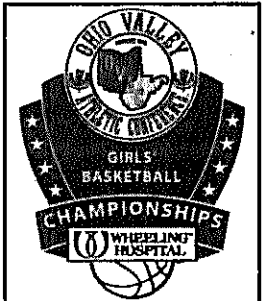
**CLASS 5A**

Some very interesting matchups are slated for the big-school division. Indian Creek, which has been

one of the area's Cinderella stories of the season, pocketed the top seed by virtue of a 14-3 record.

Creek won the first three big-school titles under this format, but hasn't reached the title game since.

The Redskins won't have an easy task of getting to the final this season as defending champion and tal-



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**OVAC Girls**

**Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Championship**

**Championship Semifinals**

**Monday**

**Class 5A**

No. 4 Wheeling Park at No. 1 Indian Creek

No. 3 Parkersburg South at No. 2 Brooke

**Class 4A**

No. 4 St. Clairsville at No. 1 Cambridge

No. 3 Steubenville at No. 2 Buckeye Local

**Class 3A**

No. 4 Buckeye Trail at No. 1 Bellaire

No. 3 Fort Frye at No. 2 Wheeling Central

**Class 2A**

No. 4 River at No. 1 Steubenville Central

No. 3 Shadyside at No. 2 Shenandoah

**Class 1A**

No. 4 Madonna at No. 1 Cameron

No. 3 Trinity Christian at No. 2 Beallsville

**Championship Game Schedule**

10 a.m. – Class 2A

12:15 p.m. – Class 3A

2:30 p.m. – Class 4A

4:45 p.m. – Class 5A

7 p.m. – Class 1A

**Consolation Pairings**

**Monday**

Marins Ferry at Southern Local

Magnolia at Morgantown

University at John Marshall

Harrison Central at Oak Glen

East Liverpool at Toronto

Linsly at Edison

Frontier at Clay-Battelle

Caldwell at Bridgeport

Monroe Central at Union Local

Valley at Barnesville

St. John at Paden City

Conotton Valley at East Richland

Beaver Local at Weir

**Wednesday, Feb. 7**

Hundred at St. John

**Thursday, Feb. 8**

Morgantown at Union Local

Clay-Battelle at Magnolia

Weir at University

Oak Glen at Marins Ferry

John Marshall at Beaver Local

Edison at Harrison Central

Southern at East Liverpool

Monroe Central at Linsly

Barnesville at Frontier

Toronto at Conotton Valley

Bridgeport at Hundred

Paden City at Caldwell

East Richland Christian at Valley



AP Photo

West Virginia's Jevon Carter (2) tries to get to the ball before Oklahoma's Jamuni McNeace (4).

75-73 win over the 17th-ranked Sooners on Monday night.

Esa Ahmad and Sagaba Konate each scored 14 and Jevon Carter added 10 points, eight assists and six steals for the Mountaineers (18-6, 7-4 Big 12), who swept the regular-season series and moved within a half-game of conference co-leaders Kansas and Texas Tech.

Young, the freshman who leads the nation in scoring and assists, had just



seconds. Carter sliced through Oklahoma's defense for a layup at the first-half buzzer to give West Virginia a 50-40 lead. The Mountaineers shot 57 percent from the field and made 8 of 13

Virginia's lead to 74-73 with 24.3 seconds to play. Oklahoma struggled to get the ball upcourt after Ahmad made one of two free throws with 13 seconds remaining, and Odomes missed under duress in close in the final

deficit to 50-45. West Virginia got it going again, and a dunk by Konate put the Mountaineers up by 11. Young hit two 3-pointers to help the Sooners cut West Virginia's lead to 63-57 midway through the second half. He made a layup that nearly hit the top of the backboard to get the Sooners within 66-63, and the game was close the rest of the way.

**BIG PICTURE**

West Virginia: The Mountaineers had lost five of seven and got the big win they needed to move back into the

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## Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls' Basketball Tournament

### Patriots Rattle Redskins

Park back to defend its Class 5A crown

By AARON PETCHAL  
For The Intelligencer

WINTERSVILLE — The Indian Creek girls' basketball team has relied on its defense all season, but it was Wheeling Park's defense that made the difference Monday night.

The Redskins battled, but the veteran and talented Patriots were too much to overcome as No. 4 seed and state-ranked Wheeling Park defeated No. 1 seed Indian Creek, 56-34, in the Class 5A semifinals of the 11th annual Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls' Basketball Tournament on the road.

"Wheeling Park is the defending 5A champion in the OVAC," Indian Creek (16-4) coach Jackie Rossi said. "To go from being next to last in the OVAC to where we are this year is a

Please See PATRIOTS, Page 12

### Panthers Prevail At Buzzer

By ANDREW GRIMM  
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CONNORVILLE — Two days removed from stunning Steubenville in overtime inside the Crimson Center, the Buckeye Local girls' basketball team did it again on its home court to advance to the Class 4A title game of the 11th Annual Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Tournament at Ohio University Eastern on Saturday against No. 1 seed Cambridge.

After Big Red (8-11) led most of the game, Alaire Destifanes' shot as the clock hit zeros got nothing but net to lift the Panthers to a 50-48 victory and send the Buckeye Local High School gym into a wild frenzy.

"I wanted to make that shot for my teammates," Destifanes said. "We've gotten so close the last few years, and we are ready to take the next step."

Destifanes finished with 13 points in the game.

"It's unbelievable," Buckeye Local

Please See PANTHERS, Page 12



Photo by Josh Strope

Cameron's Autumn Gossett (4) ties up Madonna's Kasey Canei during an OVAC Girls' Basketball Championship semifinal Monday night in Cameron. The Dragons' Kelsie Meintel is defending on the play as Kori Scott (13) looks on.

## Dragons Advance to Class 1A Championship Contest

Meintel powers Cameron with 19 points, 11 boards

By JOSH STROPE  
Sports Editor

CAMERON — Cameron hasn't been challenged much this season so when Madonna jumped out to a 13-4 first-quarter lead, Dragons coach Roger Cain didn't panic. He didn't even call timeout. He wanted to see what his team was made of.

Cain definitely liked what he saw.

Senior leader Kelsie Meintel powered her way to eight straight points to give Cameron a lead and it never looked back en route to a 40-30 victory in a Wheeling

Hospital OVAC Girls' Basketball Championships semifinal.

The Dragons are in the Class 1A title game for the first time and will seek their initial title Saturday at Ohio University Eastern in a 7 p.m. showdown with Beallsville, a 40-36 winner against Trinity.

"It was a tough, physical game," Cain said. "If you qualify for the OVACs, you know you are going to be facing a quality opponent."

"We had the slow start and I believed in our veterans. I let them play a little bit and I didn't call timeout because I wanted to see how we faced adversity. We did really well battling back with that veteran group and finally got our stuff together. Few shots were falling, but we definitely struggled to make some shots."

Meintel showed why she is a returning all-stater by using her size and quickness

inside to drive to the hoop. She ended the first and began the second with a free throw before three straight field goals gave Cameron a 14-13 lead.

On defense, she wasn't shy from getting into the thick of the action and made things tough on any Blue Don that dare entered the paint.

Cameron held Madonna to two points — an Andrea Alimario basket at the 2-minute mark — in the second quarter.

The Dragons built a comfortable lead, but late in the third quarter, Madonna used a 7-0 to close to within one.

Meintel's putback at the end of the quarter stretched the lead back to three and set the tone for the fourth.

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## Wheeling Central Takes Down Fort Frye in Semis

A 14-0 run to start the third is key to victory

By KYLE LUTZ  
Staff Writer

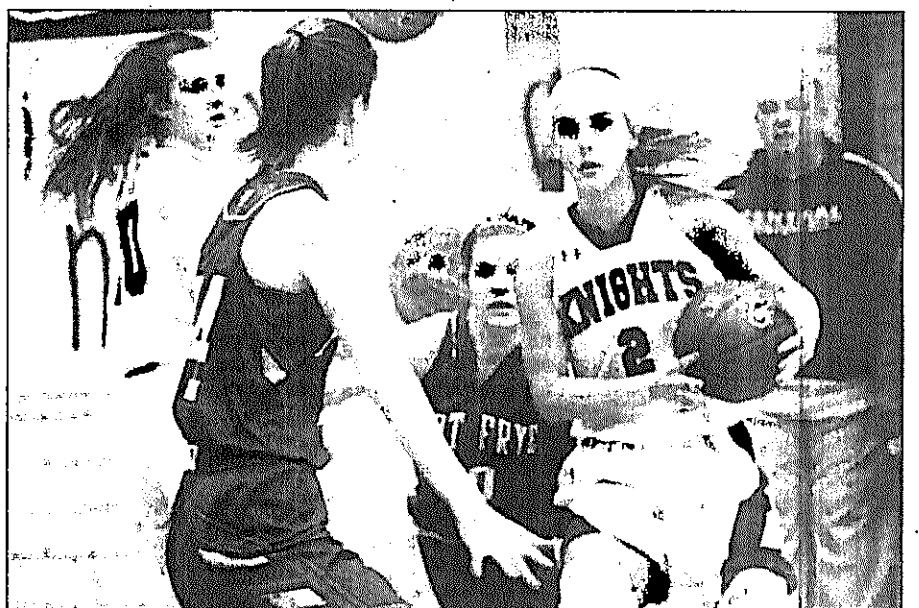
WHEELING — Every minute counts when it comes to basketball, and the first three of the third quarter was the difference in an OVAC 3A semifinal battle between Wheeling Central and Fort Frye.

The Maroon Knights came out after halftime and used a full-court press that gave the Cadets headaches. Wheeling Central used that to its advantage and scored the first 14 points of the quarter en route to a 50-45 victory over Fort Frye on

first half, taking away the dribble penetration, taking away Kaylee (Reinbeau)," Wheeling Central coach Penn Kurtz said. "So we ran a little different in the second and third quarter. That seemed to open things up. Once we got the lead, we could spread them out a little bit and got some easier shots."

"They're a great defensive team, they really play well defensively. We had to figure something to do to speed up the game."

And at the start of the third quarter, the Maroon Knights did just that. Reinbeau hit a 3-pointer 39 seconds into the frame and the pressure was on. Reinbeau tallied another basket with 6:01 left in the third.



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The Maroon Knights came out after halftime and used a full-court press that gave the Cadets headaches. Wheeling Central used that to its advantage and scored the first 14 points of the quarter en route to a 59-45 victory over Fort Frye on Monday night.

Wheeling Central advances to the OVAC championship game where it will play the winner of the Buckeye Trail-Bellevue game at 12:15 on Saturday at Ohio University Eastern.

"We changed it up. They were doing a great job of collapsing in the paint in the

first half, taking away the dribble penetration, taking away Kaylee (Reinbeau)," Wheeling Central coach Penn Kurtz said. "So we ran a little different in the second and third quarter. That seemed to open things up. Once we got the lead, we could spread them out a little bit and got some easier shots."

"They're a great defensive team, they really play well defensively. We had to figure something to do to speed up the game."

And at the start of the third quarter, the Maroon Knights did just that. Reinbeau hit a 3-pointer 39 seconds into the frame and the pressure was on. Reinbeau tallied another basket with 6:01 left in the third, followed by a Riley Bennington layup just nine seconds later. Hannah White got in on the action as she hit her third 3-pointer to make it 31-18. With 4:45 left in the third quarter, another Reinbeau basket capped the run and the score read 35-18 in favor of Wheeling Central.

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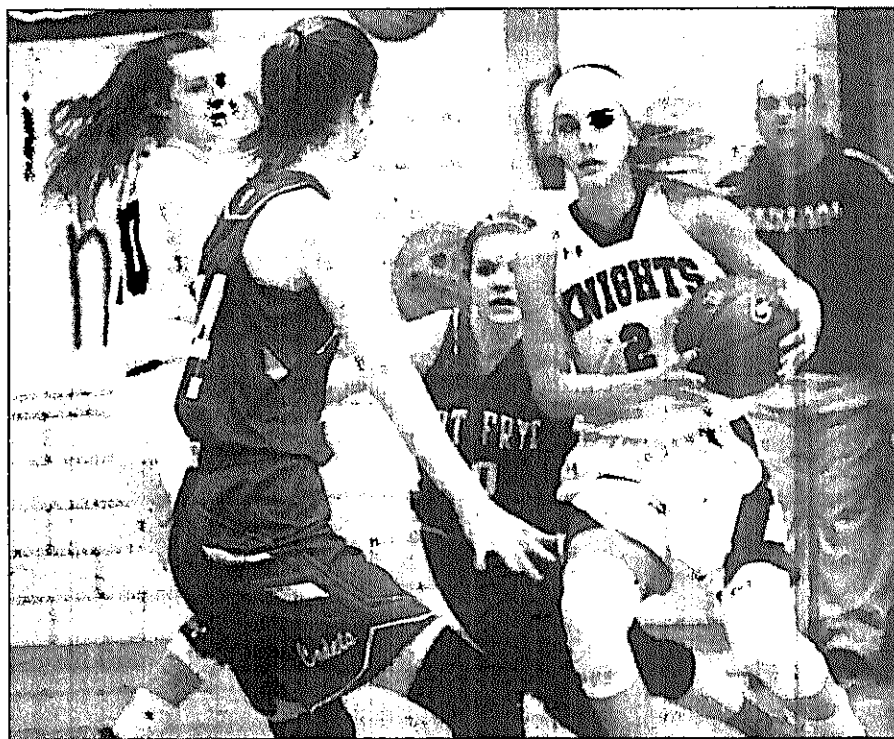


Photo by Kyle Lutz

Wheeling Central's Riley Blaha (2) tries to get around the defense of Fort Frye's Morgan Borich during their game Monday night in Wheeling.

## PATRIOTS

(Continued from Page 11)

huge accomplishment. The kids' effort was great. They never gave up. We are down two varsity players.

"I don't believe in moral victories, but Wheeling Park is one of the elite programs in the OVAC. We are going against an elite school, and we are just little Indian Creek. We were the OVAC dormat last year."

Wheeling Park's defensive pressure resulted in plenty of turnovers, which resulted in some easy baskets.

"We pride ourselves on our defense," Wheeling Park (14-5) coach Ryan Young said. "We have all year. We have a lot of girls we can put in, so we can keep our legs fresh. We are able to keep the pressure up."

With the win, Wheeling Park will play No. 3 seed Parkersburg South in the conference final at 4:45 p.m. Saturday at Ohio University Eastern. Parkersburg South defeated No. 2 seed Brooke, 53-42, in Monday's other semifinal.

"We are very familiar with South, and they are very familiar with us," Young said. "We did not play well against them the last time we played them. It is nice to get another shot at them. It is a rematch from last year. They are well coached. They have good senior leaders. Both teams are going to be primed and ready to go."

Last year, Wheeling Park defeated Parkersburg South, 68-54, in the final.

Three players scored in double digits to lead the way for Wheeling Park. Laurel Robb recorded a game-high 16 points, Bella Abernathy tallied 14 and Kylie McKennen collected 10.

"We scrimmaged Indian Creek, so we knew about them," Young said. "Their coach is doing a great job. They have gotten a lot better since that scrimmage. They took care of the ball well. They just struggled to score in the halfcourt. We did a good of rebounding and limiting them to just one shot."

Ashley Yaich and Mackenzie Orban net-

ted six points apiece for Indian Creek, while Taylor Jones and Makenzie Taylor each ended up with five.

"We did scrimmage them, and they ran the table on us for two straight hours," Rossi said. "Their coach told me after the game — and it was a huge complement — he said we have improved a lot from that scrimmage. That's what we want to do. We want to improve. Our goal coming into this season was to improve every day. The girls have nothing to be ashamed of. Now, we are fighting for third place in 5A in the OVAC."

The Redskins scored the first points of the game, but it was the only time they led. The Patriots' biggest lead was 23.

Wheeling Park led 13-6 at the end of the first quarter and extended its advantage to 32-13 at halftime. Indian Creek, as good teams do, made a run in the third quarter, but the deficit was too much to overcome. Wheeling Park led 40-23 entering the fourth.

"We treated this game like we did the Bellaire the game," Rossi said. "Wheeling Park is just more experienced and have had more success as a program. We just wanted to come in and give it our best shot. We did the best we could. We stuck to our game plan."

"Give Wheeling Park credit. They are better. There is nothing wrong with admitting that. Our goal is to improve, and if we keep on improving we can compete at that level. Honestly, we are a 4A school competing in 5A if you look at the enrollment, and we did not back down. We just have to work even harder to compete at that level."

Indian Creek will play Brooke in the consolation final Thursday night at home. It will be the third meeting of the season between the two schools. The Redskins have won the first two.

"We both know each other well," Rossi said. "It should be a really good game."

## DRAGONS

(Continued from Page 11)

weren't getting any movement offensively," Cain said. "She did a heckuva job of taking care of business. That run she went on was a big turning point for us and helped us stay in front and get confidence."

With Madonna back in striking distance, Cameron finally separated itself from the pesky Blue Dons with two big 3-pointers — one each from Jordyn Hughes and Courtney Walker.

A Walker floater that banked in and two Meintel free throws gave Cameron its first double-digit lead and the Dragons were able to run out the clock from there.

"We came in and played a very disciplined, seasoned team," Madonna coach Rodney Boniti said. "We only had one game film, but they didn't surprise us. Everything we saw in that one game was what we prepared for. They got a few shots to drop in the second and same in the third."

## CENTRAL

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"In the first half we played good defense, number 14 (Morgan Borich) was killing us," Kurtz said. "We put Taylor (Duplaga) on her in the second half. I don't think she scored in the third quarter. Overall, I'm pretty happy with the effort."

Four Maroon Knights scored in double figures as Reinbeau led the way as she compiled 17 points while Duplaga netted 13 points. Bennington was also solid as she contributed with 11 points. White, who has been starting for the injured Eden Gainer, netted 16 points including hitting three long range shots. The sophomore hit a clutch 3-pointer to break an 18-18 tie with about four seconds to go in the second quarter.

"She's been playing great since Eden's been out," Kurtz said about White. "She hit a couple of big 3-pointers, especially the one at the half to give us the lead. She was in foul trouble, so we just ran her in there and she made the shot. You can't ask for much more than that."

The Cadets, however showed some life as they cut the deficit to 11 as they reeled

"We have had so many injuries and I don't think some of my girls had their legs under them. We are going to match up with Cameron again in the sectionals and I am excited to see how we fare when we get all these girls healthy. We are looking forward to that second challenge. This is a pretty competitive section and region."

Walker chipped in with 10 points for the Dragons (19-1).

Alimario had a monster game for the Blue Dons (8-11) with 16 points and 15 rebounds.

Next up for the Dragons is a date with history in the final championship game of the weekend.

"First one in school history, we are really excited for this opportunity," he said. "We don't really know a lot about Beallsville, but we expect a hard-fought game. We will be prepared."

off eight of the next 10 points to put the score at 37-26 with 1:32 to go in the third. In the fourth quarter, Fort Frye was able to get within 10 on two occasions, but that was as close as it would get. After a Borich bucket to put the score at 49-39, Wheeling Central scored six consecutive points to put the game out of reach with 2:33 to play.

"I think if we would have been a little bit more prepared for that (the press in the third), it could have been a little bit different," Fort Frye coach Dan Liedtke said. "We kind of got knocked back on our heels there a little bit. They took advantage of it. You're playing against a really good team, that's the thing but when you're playing a caliber of Wheeling Central, you can make mistakes, but you can't make very many mistakes. I really felt our girls, all in all, did a nice job as far as playing that caliber. We're very young. Very, very young, but we stepped up to the challenge."

Borich led the way for the Cadets as she compiled a game-high 23 points as she netted five shots from behind the arc. Karlee Ross tallied 10 points for the Cadets.

## PANTHERS

(Continued from Page 11)

coach Tom Figurski said. "Big Red led most of the game. We knew we were going to get their best after Saturday. For playing five games in eight days, I couldn't ask for any more from this crew."

"They play with a lot of heart. They never quit. They never give up. That is Buckeye Local basketball."

Buckeye Local will play in its second OVAC title game in three years looking

the game all we could ask of them is to go out there and play as hard as they can. I love our kids and they did that. They competed hard after a tough loss on Saturday. For the most part we were in control for most of the game.

"Emily (Holzopfel) is really hard to stop. We wanted to make someone else beat us and give Buckeye Local credit, they had a couple of girls step up at the

# Tigers Eliminate Zeps

By SETH STASKEY  
For The Intelligencer

SARASVILLE — Shadyside had become pretty much a constant in the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Class 2A Girls Basketball Championship game.

After appearing in five of the first six title games, the Tigers have found themselves at home on championship Saturday each of the last five years.

That is about a change.

The third-seeded Lady Tigers fought off a talented Shenandoah squad Monday evening, 54-51, to earn a spot in the 2A title game, which will be played Saturday morning at 10.

"One of the goals we set the start of the season was to be playing on Saturday at OUE," Shadyside coach Serge Gentile said. "I am really proud of the girls for the amount of work and sacrifice they put in. Getting to this point isn't easy. All eight people in our rotation played a pivotal role in this game at some part."

Next up for Shadyside is a rubber match meeting with fourth-seeded River, which went on the road and knocked off top-seeded Steubenville Catholic.

"I don't think we'd want it any other way," Gentile said of the upcoming meeting with the Pilots. "It's a rivalry game and anytime Shadyside and River play, in any sport, it's going to be a fun one. It should be exciting."

Before any focus could be shifted to the title game, Shadyside was in a legitimate, 32-minute battle with the Zeps (15-5). It was a game that was played within no more than a seven-point window and featured 11 lead changes, including four in the fourth quarter.

Talented freshman Baylee Wach put Shadyside on top 45-43 with a nice drive to the basket. Shenandoah took the lead back when Dani Dimmerling got a rebound and goal.

However, that lead was short-lived. Shadyside senior Haylee Gregan buried her third 3-pointer of the game, giving the Tigers a 48-46 lead.

Shenandoah never recovered from there. Tigers freshman Tory Hendershot, who came up big time and time again in the fourth, drove in for a bucket, putting Shadyside back up by three.

Zeps senior Taylor Franklin, who led all scorers in the game with 24 points, meshed two at the foul line, but the Tigers responded with four straight points, including another Hendershot goal. Jaycee Mayeres and Syd Destifanes, who had a huge defensive rebound before being fouled, each sank 1 of 2 at the line to help keep the Zeps at bay.

"Both Shenandoah and us are very similar teams in terms of our size and even style of play," Gentile said. "They're aggressive on defense and it gave us some trouble, especially in the first half. I think we settled down in the second half and got some better looks. Every game isn't going to be ideal where you play a perfect game. Sometimes, you have to gut out some wins and this was one of those games for us. We got a couple of key stops when we needed them and found a way."

Shadyside held a 14-9 lead after one thanks to the early hot shooting of Gregan, who scored seven of her 13 in the first. Shenandoah got going behind Franklin in the second and climbed within two at 29-27 at the half.

With Franklin scoring seven more, the Zeps outscored the Tigers, 14-12 in the third for a 41-41 reading entering the fourth.

"It was just a back-and-forth game and I thought we had control for a little bit, but we made some dumb mistakes," Shenandoah coach Eric Beskid said. "We allowed them to drive on us and we knew that's what they wanted to do. It got to us late. Shadyside's a heck of a team and we knew that."

The Tigers were led by Hendershot's 17 points and seven rebounds. Gregan's production backed her. Wach chipped in with nine and six boards. Freshman Brinley Steen scored seven, all of which came in the first half.

Though she only had one field goal, senior Jess Cicogna recorded five blocked

shots for the Tigers.

**1A Semifinal**

**Beallsville 40, Trinity**  
BEALLSVILLE — Ashley Howell and Ashlie Loudon both compiled 15 points as Beallsville defeated Trinity.

**2A**

**River 64, Steubenville Catholic 55**  
STEUBENVILLE — Lauren Flannery tallied 26 points as River took down Steubenville Catholic. Candace Caldwell secured 13 points for the Pilots while Ali Long netted 12.

For the Crusaders, Julia Zatta and Christine Dombrowski each secured 17 points.

**4A**

**Cambridge 58, St. Clairsville 26**  
CAMBRIDGE — Lilly Ritz supplied 30 points as Cambridge defeated St. Clairsville.

Ari Reager tallied eight points to lead the Red Devils.

**5A**

**Parkersburg South 53, Brooke 42**  
WELLSBURG — Hope Bowman netted a team-high 15 points, but Brooke fell to Parkersburg South. Chloe Fox also netted 12 points for the Bruins.

**Consolation**

**John Marshall 64, University 57**  
MOUNDSVILLE — Shay Straughn compiled a game-high 34 points hitting five shots from behind the arc as John Marshall defeated University. Avery Derrow was also solid for the Monarchs as she scored 16 points.

**St. John 42, Paden City 31**  
PADEN CITY — Kaylin Nixon tallied 15 points while Alyssa Busack netted 11 as St. John defeated Paden City.

Hannah Loy had a team-high 12 points for the Wildcats.

**Valley 52, Barnesville 51**

BARNESVILLE — Three Valley players scored in double figures as it edged Barnesville. Sophie Palmer had 13 points, nine steals and eight assists to lead the way for the Lumberjills while Jenna Dallison secured 12. Caitlyn Underwood had 10 points and eight rebounds to round out the double figure scorers.

Dulcie Cristman had a game-high 24 points for the Shamrocks.

**Union Local 73, Monroe Central 43**  
BELMONT — Haley Porter secured 28 points to lead Union Local to a victory over Monroe Central. Casey Kildow netted 15 points for the Jets while Hannah Porter had 13.

For the Seminoles, Sierra Rainey tallied 12 points and Amy Bettinger secured 10.

**Bridgeport 56, Caldwell 44**  
BRIDGEPORT — Marissa Beal scored 21 points including 12 in the fourth quarter as Bridgeport defeated Caldwell.

**Harrison Central 66, Oak Glen 49**  
NEW CUMBERLAND — Alex Wiley and Lexee McAfee both tallied 18 points as Harrison Central defeated Oak Glen. Sydney Starr was also solid for the Huskies as she compiled 13 points.

For the Golden Bears, Reece Enochs had 12 points.

**Regular Season**

**Tyler Consolidated 69, Wirt 35**  
MIDDLEBOURNE — Josey Jones was unstoppable as she compiled 29 points and had nine steals as Tyler Consolidated defeated Wirt.

Peyton Kocher had 14 points while JoLee Walton grabbed 10 boards for the Silver Knights.

**East Richland Christian 42**  
**Wood Co. Christian 37, 20T**  
WILLIAMSTOWN — Ally Stewart filled the stat sheet as she tallied 24 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and dished out six assists as East Richland Christian downed Wood County Christian.

Stewart also shot 54 percent from the floor.

**Boys**

**St. Clairsville 57, Martins Ferry 48**  
MARTINS FERRY — Matt Busby netted 19 points as St. Clairsville took down Martins Ferry.

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For the Purple Riders, Deandre Pugh led the way with 13 points while Dasyn Hores had 11.

# Suspect Deported Twice

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A man being held in a suspected drunken-driving crash that killed Indianapolis Colts linebacker Edwin Jackson and his Uber driver has been twice deported from the U.S. — a revelation an Indiana

ing illegally in the U.S.

Police said Jackson, who grew up in Atlanta, and Uber driver Jeffrey Monroe, 54, were standing outside Monroe's car along I-70 after Jackson became ill while Monroe was transporting him for

cause affidavit.

That affidavit, which was filed Sunday under the fake name Manuel Orrego Savala gave police, also states two vials of blood were drawn from Orrego Savala by a nurse at a hospital about 90 minutes

lead the way for Wheeling Park. Laurel Robb recorded a game-high 16 points, Bella Abernathy tallied 14 and Kylie McKennen collected 10.

"We scrimmaged Indian Creek, so we knew about them," Young said. "Their coach is doing a great job. They have gotten a lot better since that scrimmage. They took care of the ball well. They just struggled to score in the halfcourt. We did a good of rebounding and limiting them to just one shot."

Ashley Yaich and Mackenzie Orban net-

ting that. Our goal is to improve, and if we keep on improving we can compete at that level. Honestly, we are a 4A school competing in 5A if you look at the enrollment, and we did not back down. We just have to work even harder to compete at that level."

Indian Creek will play Brooke in the consolation final Thursday night at home. It will be the third meeting of the season between the two schools. The Redskins have won the first two.

"We both know each other well," Rossi said. "It should be a really good game."

## DRAGONS

(Continued from Page 11)

were not getting any movement offensively," Cain said. "She did a heckuva job of taking care of business. That run she went on was a big turning point for us and helped us stay in front and get confidence."

With Madonna back in striking distance, Cameron finally separated itself from the pesky Blue Dons with two big 3-pointers — one each from Jordyn Hughes and Courtney Walker.

A Walker floater that banked in and two Meintel free throws gave Cameron its first double-digit lead and the Dragons were able to run out the clock from there.

"We came in and played a very disciplined, seasoned team," Madonna coach Rodney Boniti said. "We only had one game film, but they didn't surprise us. Everything we saw in that one game was what we prepared for. They got a few shots to drop in the second and same in the third."

"We have had so many injuries and I don't think some of my girls had their legs under them. We are going to match up with Cameron again in the sectionals and I am excited to see how we fare when we get all these girls healthy. We are looking forward to that second challenge. This is a pretty competitive section and region."

Walker chipped in with 10 points for the Dragons (19-1).

Alimario had a monster game for the Blue Dons (8-11) with 16 points and 15 rebounds.

Next up for the Dragons is a date with history in the final championship game of the weekend.

"First one in school history, we are really excited for this opportunity," he said. "We don't really know a lot about Beallsville, but we expect a hard-fought game. We will be prepared."

## CENTRAL

(Continued from Page 11)

"In the first half we played good defense, number 14 (Morgan Borich) was killing us," Kurtz said. "We put Taylor (Duplaga) on her in the second half. I don't think she scored in the third quarter. Overall, I'm pretty happy with the effort."

Four Maroon Knights scored in double figures as Reinbeau led the way as she compiled 17 points while Duplaga netted 13 points. Bennington was also solid as she contributed with 11 points. White, who has been starting for the injured Eden Gainer, netted 16 points including hitting three long range shots. The sophomore hit a clutch 3-pointer to break an 18-18 tie with about four seconds to go in the second quarter.

"She's been playing great since Eden's been out," Kurtz said about White. "She hit a couple of big 3-pointers, especially the one at the half to give us the lead. She was in foul trouble, so we just ran her in there and she made the shot. You can't ask for much more than that."

The Cadets, however showed some life as they cut the deficit to 11 as they reeled

off eight of the next 10 points to put the score at 37-26 with 1:32 to go in the third. In the fourth quarter, Fort Frye was able to get within 10 on two occasions, but that was as close as it would get. After a Borich bucket to put the score at 49-39, Wheeling Central scored six consecutive points to put the game out of reach with 2:33 to play.

"I think if we would have been a little bit more prepared for that (the press in the third), it could have been a little bit different," Fort Frye coach Dan Liedtke said. "We kind of got knocked back on our heels there a little bit. They took advantage of it. You're playing against a really good team, that's the thing but when you're playing a caliber of Wheeling Central, you can make mistakes, but you can't make very many mistakes. I really felt our girls, all in all, did a nice job as far as playing that caliber. We're very young. Very, very young, but we stepped up to the challenge."

Borich led the way for the Cadets as she compiled a game-high 23 points as she netted five shots from behind the arc. Karlee Ross tallied 10 points for the Cadets.

## PANTHERS

(Continued from Page 11)

coach Tom Figurski said. "Big Red led most of the game. We knew we were going to get their best after Saturday. For playing five games in eight days, I couldn't ask for any more from this crew."

"They play with a lot of heart. They never quit. They never give up. That is Buckeye Local basketball."

Buckeye Local will play in its second OVAC title game in three years, looking for the school's first conference championship in 26 years.

"It means a lot to be in the championship," Figurski said. "We tell the girls at the beginning of the year that the last OVAC title we won was in 1992, so our motto is 'no more 1992.' We've got a chance to go out there and show what we are made of on Saturday. This opportunity only knocks so many times. We're back in the OVAC title game and that is where we want to be."

Stuebenville led by six at halftime and three going to the fourth quarter, leading by as many as many as four late in the contest.

"It's tough," Stuebenville coach Jeff Lombardo said. "We told the girls before

the game all we could ask of them is to go out there and play as hard as they can. I love our kids and they did that. They competed hard after a tough loss on Saturday. For the most part we were in control for most of the game."

"Emily (Holzopfel) is really hard to stop. We wanted to make someone else beat us and give Buckeye Local credit, they had a couple of girls step up at the end and make big shots."

Holzopfel — who finished with a double-double leading Buckeye Local with game-highs in points (23), rebounds (10) and assists (four) — tied the game at 46-46 with her second 3-pointer of the tilt with just under a minute to play. Big Red regained the lead with a pair of free throws from Madison Fields with 48 seconds to go, before Angelina Piergallini tied the game again at 48-48 eight seconds later.

Piergallini and Fields each missed potential go ahead shots for their respective clubs in the final 30 seconds, before Destifanes got the ball with just enough time and space to let the game-winner go and get swarmed by her teammates and the Panthers student section when it went in.

ing about it. It should be exciting."

Before any focus could be shifted to the title game, Shadyside was in a legitimate, 32-minute battle with the Zeps (15-5). It was a game that was played within no more than a seven-point window and featured 11 lead changes, including four in the fourth quarter.

Talented freshman Baylee Wach put Shadyside on top 45-43 with a nice drive to the basket. Shenandoah took the lead back when Dani Dimmerling got a rebound and goal.

However, that lead was short-lived. Shadyside senior Haylee Gregan buried her third 3-pointer of the game, giving the Tigers a 48-46 lead.

Shenandoah never recovered from there. Tigers freshman Tory Hendershot, who came up big time and time again in the fourth, drove in for a bucket, putting Shadyside back up by three.

Zeps senior Taylor Franklin, who led all scorers in the game with 24 points, meshed two at the foul line, but the Tigers responded with four straight points, including another Hendershot goal. Jaycee Mayeres and Syd Destifanes, who had a huge defensive rebound before being fouled, each sank 1 of 2 at the line to help keep the Zeps at bay.

"Both Shenandoah and us are very similar teams in terms of our size and even style of play," Gentile said. "They're aggressive on defense and it gave us some trouble, especially in the first half. I think we settled down in the second half and got some better looks. Every game isn't going to be ideal where you play a perfect game. Sometimes, you have to gut out some wins and this was one of those games for us. We got a couple of key stops when we needed them and found a way."

Shadyside held a 14-9 lead after one thanks to the early hot shooting of Gregan, who scored seven of her 13 in the first. Shenandoah got going behind Franklin in the second and climbed within two at 29-27 at the half.

With Franklin scoring seven more, the Zeps outscored the Tigers, 14-12 in the third for a 41-41 reading entering the fourth.

"It was just a back-and-forth game and I thought we had control for a little bit, but we made some dumb mistakes," Shenandoah coach Eric Beskid said. "We allowed them to drive on us and we knew that's what they wanted to do. It got to us late. Shadyside's a heck of a team and we knew that."

The Tigers were led by Hendershot's 17 points and seven rebounds. Gregan's production backed her. Wach chipped in with nine and six boards. Freshman Brinley Steen scored seven, all of which came in the first half.

Though she only had one field goal, senior Jess Cicogna recorded five blocked

shots from behind the arc as John Marshall defeated University. Avery Derrow was also solid for the Monarchs as she scored 16 points.

### St. John 42, Paden City 31

PADEN CITY — Kaylin Nixon tallied 15 points while Alyssa Busack netted 11 as St. John defeated Paden City.

Hannah Loy had a team-high 12 points for the Wildcats.

### Valley 52, Barnesville 51

BARNESVILLE — Three Valley players scored in double figures as it edged Barnesville. Sophie Palmer had 13 points, nine steals and eight assists to lead the way for the Lumberjills while Jenna Dallison secured 12. Caitlyn Underwood had 10 points and eight rebounds to round out the double figure scorers.

Dulcie Cristman had a game-high 24 points for the Shamrocks.

### Union Local 73, Monroe Central 43

BELMONT — Haley Porter secured 28 points to lead Union Local to a victory over Monroe Central. Casey Kildow netted 15 points for the Jets while Hannah Porter had 13.

For the Seminoles, Sierra Rainey tallied 12 points and Amy Bettinger secured 10.

### Bridgeport 56, Caldwell 44

BRIDGEPORT — Marissa Beal scored 21 points including 12 in the fourth quarter as Bridgeport defeated Caldwell.

### Harrison Central 66, Oak Glen 49

NEW CUMBERLAND — Alex Wiley and Lexee McAfee both tallied 18 points as Harrison Central defeated Oak Glen. Sydney Starr was also solid for the Huskies as she compiled 13 points.

For the Golden Bears, Reece Enochs had 12 points.

### Regular Season

#### Tyler Consolidated 69, Wirt 35

MIDDLEBOURNE — Josey Jones was unstoppable as she compiled 29 points and had nine steals as Tyler Consolidated defeated Wirt.

Peyton Kocher had 14 points while JoLee Walton grabbed 10 boards for the Silver Knights.

#### East Richland Christian 42

#### Wood Co. Christian 37, 20T

WILLIAMSTOWN — Ally Stewart filled the stat sheet as she tallied 24 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and dished out six assists as East Richland Christian downed Wood County Christian.

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### Boys

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Manuel Orrego-Savala, 37, remained jailed Monday but has not been charged in Sunday's deadly crash along Interstate 70 in Indianapolis. State Police said Monday that he's a citizen of Guatemala who gave officers a fake name when he was arrested following the pre-dawn crash.

Investigators said he was deported in 2007 and 2009, and was again liv-

ing illegally in the U.S.

Police said Jackson, who grew up in Atlanta, and Uber driver Jeffrey Monroe, 54, were standing outside Monroe's car along I-70 after Jackson became ill while Monroe was transporting him for the ride-hailing company.

Both men were struck and killed by a pickup truck driven by Orrego-Savala, police said. Investigators said they believe Orrego-Savala, who lives in Indianapolis, was intoxicated and driving without a license.

A breath test administered at the crash scene found that Orrego-Savala's blood-alcohol content was 0.239 percent, or nearly three times Indiana's legal limit of 0.08 percent, according to a probable

cause affidavit.

That affidavit, which was filed Sunday under the fake name Manuel Orrego-Savala gave police, also states two vials of blood were drawn from Orrego-Savala by a nurse at a hospital about 90 minutes later and sent for analysis. It said Orrego-Savala has prior run-ins with law enforcement for driving without a valid license and that he was walking away from the crash scene when an Indiana state trooper arrived and detained him.

Republican U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita said Monday in a statement after police released details on Orrego-Savala that "the loss of life at the hands of illegal immigrant criminals should make all Hoosiers sad and ultimately angry."

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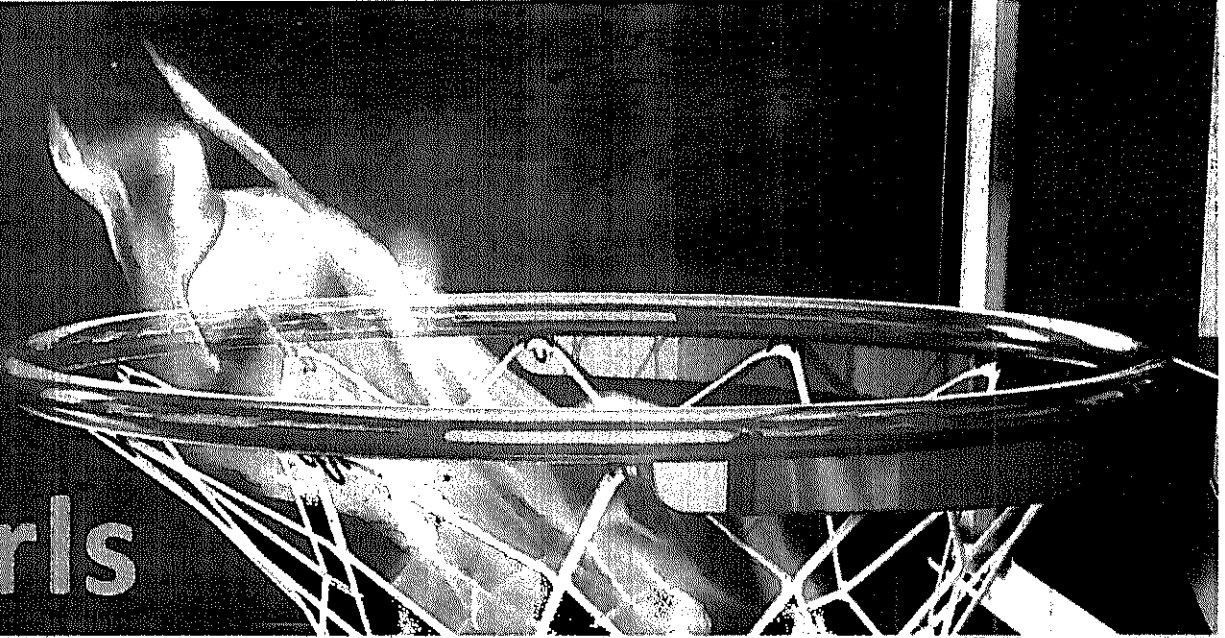
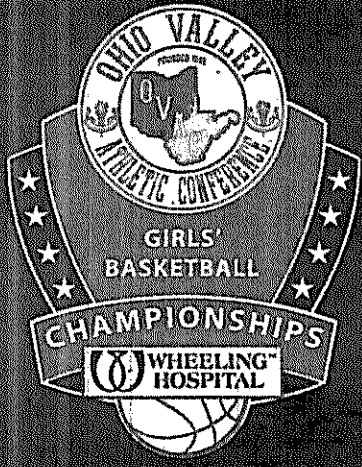
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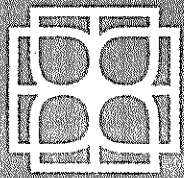
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Class 3A

# Bellaire seeks redemption against Central

By KIM NORTH - Times Leader Sports Writer

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** - After losing to Wheeling Park (74-54) in mid-January, Bellaire head coach John Farrier said his team had eight rungs on the regular-season ladder to climb if it was to reach its ultimate goal.

The Big Reds (19-2) haven't missed a beat since, winning seven straight heading into this afternoon's 12:15 showdown with Wheeling Central, which handed the Belmont County squad its other setback, 71-49, in December. The game will pit the top two Class 3A seeds in the 11th annual Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Championships title tilt. It will be the second of five contests on the day inside Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Building.

"We've climbed seven rungs already, so we've got one to go," Farrier said

after the top-seeded Big Reds outlasted No. 4 Buckeye Trail, 50-45, Tuesday night inside the Bellaire Middle School Gymnasium. "Wheeling Central is a great team. We played them earlier in the season, and we didn't feel as if we put forth our best effort, so we're excited for the challenge. It's going to be a big challenge for us, but we'll be ready for it."

The Maroon Knights (17-2) advanced with a 59-45 triumph over third-seeded Fort Frye Monday night in East Wheeling. The game was nip-and-tuck for the first half, but the hosts used their fullcourt pressure to reel off 14 unanswered points to start the third quarter and were never threatened by the Cadets.

"We can do that in spurts," veteran Wheeling Central head coach Penn Kurtz said of his team's defensive pressure. "But Bellaire is relentless. They pressure you the entire game."

"Our first game was real

close, back-and-forth in the first half before we were able to pull away in the third quarter," Kurtz recalled. "We expect another very close, competitive game. Their guards are quick and they pressure you from the start."

Bellaire, as Kurtz mentioned, relies on its full-court pressure, as well, with basically five guards on the floor.

"We like to get after it on the defensive end of the floor," Farrier noted. "We use our defense to setup our offense."

Both teams rely on their senior leadership. Bellaire has two, Wheeling Central four.

Cierra Davis and De'Asia Burney are the Big Reds' upperclassmen.

The 5-4 Davis paced the semifinal victory with a team-leading 18 points, which included a bonus goal in each of the first three panels. She averages 10.1 points, 3.2 assists and 1.7 rebounds. Burney, a 5-2 defensive specialist, aver-



Photo/PAUL KRAJNYAK

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Bellaire girls basketball team. Front row, from left, are Brittney Beckett, Michaela Flaherty, Natalie Stoner, Cierra Davis, De'Asia Burney, Maci Crozier, Brittany Falcone and Sydney Purttman. Standing, from left, are head coach John Farrier, Mia Gavarkavich, Katrina' Davis and assistant coach Hutch McFeely.

ages 5.4 points. 3.1 assists

See, 3A, Page 4

**Schedule**  
**Class 2A -- 10 a.m.**  
 No. 3 Shadyside vs.  
 No. 4 River -- Page 5  
**Class 3A -- 12:15 p.m.**  
 No. 1 Bellaire vs.  
 No. 2 Wheeling CC -- Page 3  
**Class 4A -- 2:30 p.m.**  
 No. 1 Cambridge vs.  
 No. 2 Buckeye -- Page 7  
**Class 5A -- 4:45 p.m.**  
 No. 3 Parkersburg South vs.  
 No. 4 Wheeling Park -- Page 6  
**Class 1A -- 7 p.m.**  
 No. 1 Cameron vs.  
 No. 2 Beallsville -- Page 9



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Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2016-17 Wheeling Central girls basketball team. Front row, from left, are Jasmine Bumbico, Marissa Horan, Brynna Jackson, Jayden Cook, Katie Bailer and Maggie Fahey. Second row, from left, are Allison Davidson, Hannah White, Kaylee Reinbeau, Taylor Duplaga, Lexi Saunders, Riley Bennington, Kaitlyn Ferns, Bailey Nixon and Eden Gainer. Third row, from left, are Rachel Cupp, Alexis Mills, Suzie Daller, Paul Kurtz, Head Coach Penn Kurtz, Hayden Cook, Chris Bucon, Tristen White and Chloe Vogrin.

3A

Continued from Page 3

and 2.7 rebounds. She had six points and played a key role in keeping the Buckeye Trail guards out of the scorebook.

"Those two are our leaders. I'm so happy they finally get to play for an OVAC championship," Farrier said. "They've worked so hard in their careers. They deserve to win a title."

A pair of junior standouts and an athletic sophomore complete the starting five. The juniors are 5-4 Natalie Stoner and 5-5 Maci Crozier, while 5-3 Katrina Davis



BELLAIRE JUNIOR Natalie Stoner is one of the key cogs to success for the Lady Reds this season.

Photo/SHERI McANINCH

is the sophomore. Stoner and Crozier each average a shade over 13 points, while Katrina Davis chips in just under 13. Katrina Davis leads the team in rebounding at 7.6 and also charts 2.5 assists per contest. Crozier checks in with seven boards, while Stoner grabs 3.3.

"Maci's shooting has gotten better and she plays hard on defense," Farrier noted. "Natalie can really shoot the 3, but has developed into more of a role player this season. Katrina is a 'Russell Westbrook' type of player. She can do it all."

Coming off the bench are 5-9 Michaela Flaherty and 5-4 Brittany Falcone, both juniors. Flaherty has seen action in every game, sometimes as a starter, and averages 9.1 points and 6.2 rebounds. Falcone averages 2.4 points and 2.3 boards in limited time. Junior Sydney Purtiman (5-8) and sophomore Mia Gavarkavich (5-4) could also see action.

Wheeling Central is led by seniors Taylor Duplaga (5-6) and Riley Bennington (5-6).

Duplaga, who is headed to Fairmont State University to play hoops, leads the Maroon Knights with a 16-point-a-game norm. She also grabs four rebounds and hands out three assists

per outing. Bennington, a highly touted softball pitcher, averages 10 points and 6 rebounds.

"We rely on their leadership. They are both 4-year players," Kurtz said. "They are also our best defensive players."

Sophomore Kaylee Reinbeau (6-0) is the team's second leading scorer at 14 a game. She also leads the team in rebounding with 8 a game and averages 2.5 assists.

Other starters are junior Kaitlyn Ferns (5-8) and sophomore Hannah White (5-5). White averages 11 points and Ferns checks in with six rebounds.

Lending support off the bench are seniors Riley Blaha (5-7) and Lexi Saunders (5-6); junior Bailey Nixon (5-6) and freshmen Tristen White (6-0).

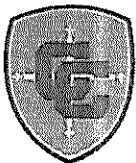
Reinbeau led the way against Fort Frye with 17 points. Right behind was Hannah White with 16. Duplaga added 13 and Bennington 11.

Wheeling Central will be playing without the services of sophomore starter Eden Gainer (5-6). She hasn't played since Christmas.

"We will miss her. She was a big factor in the first game," Kurtz stressed.

Wheeling Central's two losses have come to Sissonville and Morgantown.

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Class 2A

# River, Shadyside set for rubbermatch

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE – Shadyside and River have already met twice season.

The Tigers and Pilots each won on their home court. Shadyside was a 59-51 victor on Jan. 22, while the Pilots prevailed, 43-42, on Feb. 1.

The two squads will play in a rubbermatch this morning with much bigger stakes than just the season series on the line.

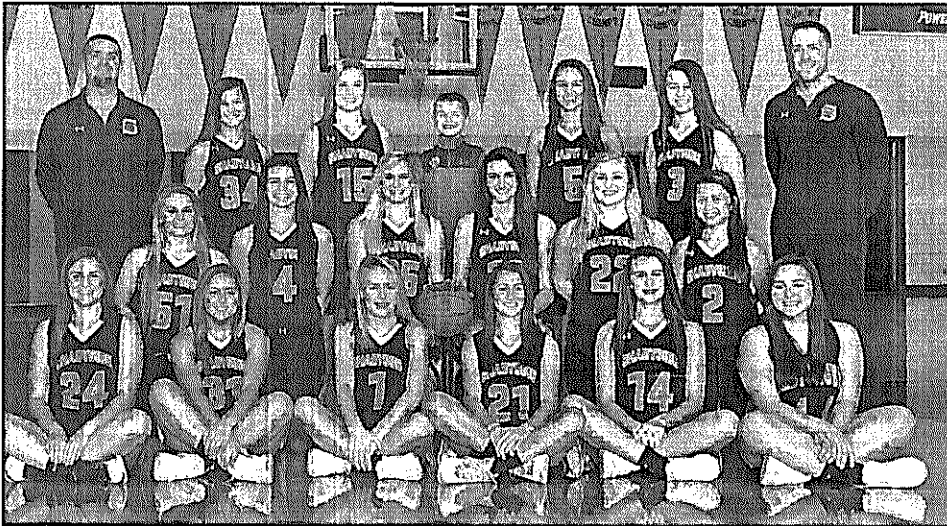
Third-seeded Shadyside and fourth-seeded River – by virtue of their respective upset wins on Monday evening – earned the right to play one another in the 2A title game of the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Championship at Ohio University Eastern's Heath and Physical Education Center.

Other than the actual familiarity involved with playing each other, both head coaches – Shadyside's Serge Gentile and River's Rick Isaly – agreed that the prior meetings have absolutely nothing to do with what will transpire today in the first of a five-game day.

"When you're playing a team for the third time, there are definitely no secrets involved," Gentile said. "You have an idea of what they're going to do and they have an idea of what we're going to do. Each game has its own identity and there aren't a lot of things you can plan out."

To get to the third meeting, the Tigers dispatched second-seeded Shenandoah, while River went on the road and avenged a loss from last season against Steubenville Central.

"Every game is different,



Photo/PAUL KRAJNYAK

**PICTURED IS** the 2017-18 Shadyside girls basketball team. Front row, from left, are Sarah Teasdale, Madisyn Stewart, Mattie Reiman, Brooke Selmon, Julie Hendershot and Kaylee Savage. Second row, from left, are Hayley Osman, Macy Coffland, Haylee Gregan, Jess Cicogna, Jaycee Mayeres and Sydnie Destifanes. Back row, from left, are head coach Serge Gentile, Kamdyn Elerick, Baylee Wach, manager Jaxon Gentile, Brinley Steen, Tori Hendershot and assistant coach Brandon Parr.

but we'll look at the first two games and try to adjust to what they did," Isaly admitted. "They're watching the same films we are, so they'll adjust and we'll adjust."

Neither team is a stranger to the championship game. Shadyside is making its sixth appearance and seeking its third title in this format. The Tigers claimed crowns in 2011 and 2013 and own seven titles, all told.

"It's always nice to see one of your goals come to fruition," Gentile said. "We've been taking (the season) one day at a time and that's the approach we'll continue with. We know River is playing very well and we have a tough task ahead of us."

River, however, has left Belmont County with a sour taste in its mouth in each of its three appear-

ances. The Pilots, who own four titles, but none since 2004, took part in the final in 2013, 15 and 16.

"Our number one goal of the season is the OVAC," Isaly, a member of the basketball championship committee, said. "We pride ourselves on getting into the top four and then to the championship game. Getting back to this game has been our number one goal all season and now we want to win the championship."

It's been frustrating to be there three times and not come back with a championship."

As Gentile pointed out, the Pilots come into the final riding a wave of momentum with a six-game winning streak to their credit. Shadyside, prior to the OVAC semifinal, had dropped two straight, but both losses were to teams playing today (River and Bellaire).

"The bottom line is the

game is going to come down to which team can knock shots down," Isaly said. "Shadyside has more shooters than we have, but I feel like our kids are competitors and they'll battle. I think this is going to be a great game."

Shadyside definitely likes to get its fair share of 3-pointers up. The Tigers have knocked down 143 shots from behind the arc. River, meanwhile, has hit only 46 triples.

"For us to accomplish what we want to accomplish, it's going to take everyone's best effort,"

Gentile said. "Our kids have done a great job of looking at the bigger picture and that means it takes all 16 girls."

Shadyside employs an eight-girl rotation. Though the rotation has remained constant, the order at which the players appear underwent a change late last month.

"We have a very unselfish team," Gentile said. "None of the girls have their own agenda. It's a very close group and it doesn't matter who starts

See, 3A, Page 6

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Class 5A

# Park, South primed for OVAC title game rematch

By **BUBBA KAPRAL**  
Executive Sports Editor

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE ?** Make no doubt about it, the Lady Patriots will be leaving Ohio University Eastern with the OVAC 5A Basketball Championship trophy Saturday night.

The \$64,000 question, however, is which Patriot contingent?

Wheeling Park and Parkersburg South will renew acquaintances in the big-school championship game, a replay of last year's

championship tilt. In that contest, Wheeling Park dismantled their Wood County counterparts, rolling to a 68-54 triumph.

There will be no surprises when the two Patriots vie at 4:45 p.m. They have split regular-season affairs, with the visitors prevailing on each occasion.

Park posted a 75-67 win in Parkersburg while South avenged that loss with a 51-40 at The Palace On The Hill.

Park and South advanced to the finals on the strength

of road wins in their respective semifinals. Park, No. 4 seed, took out top-seeded Indian Creek 56-34 Monday, while No. 3 seeded South made the long trip to Wellsburg a successful one, bouncing No. 2 seed Brooke, 53-42.

"Our kids were excited after beating Indian Creek for a couple of reasons," Park head coach Ryan Young said. "First, they get a chance to defend their OVAC title. Second, they

See, 5A, Page 8



Photo/BRUCE CRAWFORD

**PICTURED IS** the 2017-18 River varsity girls basketball team. Front row, from left, are Riley Lollathin, Lauren Flannery, Livi Rose and Hannah Straub. Standing, from left, are Makenzie Cieszewski, Alli Long, Carsyn Reynolds and Candace Caldwell.

# GOOD LUCK RIVER LADY PILOTS!

## 2A

Continued from Page 5

because we've tried to tell them that it's going to come down to matchups and how someone is playing."

Shadyside, which averages 57.4 points a game, has two starters averaging double figures. Talented freshmen Baylee Wach (11.2) and Tory Hendershot (11.0) lead the way. Wach is the team's leading rebounder at eight a night.

The third member of the freshmen triumvirate is Brinley Steen, who has also been impressive this season. She scores at a seven points per game clip.

"Their freshmen group is more mature than most freshmen I've seen," Isaly said. "Hendershot and Wach are really nice players, but they're not alone. They have an advantage over us with their depth."

Junior Syd Destifanes and Jaycee Mayeres, who average six and eight points, respectively, round out the starting lineup. Des-

tifanes is the Tigers' floor general and averages four rebounds, four assists and three steals per game, too.

Off the bench, Shadyside utilizes senior Jess Cicogna, who had a huge game on the defensive end at Shenandoah; senior Haylee Gregan, who supplied an instant spark against the Zeps with seven points in the first quarter; and junior Maci Coffland, who is a solid rebounder and post defender.

River, meanwhile, is led by talented junior Lauren Flannery. A recent member of the 1,000-point club, Flannery is one of the area's premier players at the point-guard spot. She stuffs the stat sheet to a tune of 19 points, 4.7 rebounds, 3.6 assists and 3.5 assists a night.

"She's a phenomenal player," Gentile said of Flannery. "When you watch her play, it doesn't take long to realize why they run

everything through her. She's a great leader, she handles the ball, has great vision and makes her teammates better. We have to be able to slow her down to give ourselves a chance."

Though Flannery leads the way for the Pilots' all-underclass lineup, she's not alone. Sophomore Ali Long has been impressive on the interior, averaging 10.4 points and 8.3 rebounds a contest.

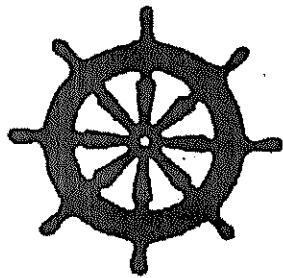
Junior Carsyn Reynolds averages 7.1 points and 5.3 boards. Junior Candace Caldwell, who had a big game against the Crusaders, nets 6.5 points and four rebounds per.

Junior guard Riley Lollathin rounds out the starting lineup with 4.8 points and 3.8 steals a contest.

Rounding out the Pilots' rotation are junior Livi Rose and Mikenzie Cieszewski. Both average 3.2 points a game.

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Class 4A

# Buckeye to face tough test in Cambridge

by SETH STASKEY  
Times Leader Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE – A lengthy title drought is about to come to an end this afternoon in Class 4A.

When top-seeded Cambridge and second-seeded Buckeye Local clash in the championship game of the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Championship something is going to give.

The Bobcats, who are 5-2, have never won an OVAC title and the Panthers, who come in with a 5-6 record, haven't hoisted the hardware since 1992.

"This is what I had envisioned several years ago when we decided to get involved in this tournament," Cambridge head coach Dan Linscott said. "I wish we had been in it back in 2008 and some other years because we feel like we could have fared well. But, once we got the opportunity to juggle our schedule, I wanted us to be in this event."

Buckeye Local, meanwhile, owns only the aforementioned title in its school's history. The Panthers played in the 2016 title game, falling to Union Local.

"It's been 25 years now and we use it every year ... so more 1992," Buckeye head coach Tom Figurski said. "The opportunity to play in this game is something we don't take for granted. It's something the entire school and our community should cherish because it doesn't happen every year."

The teams reached this point in drastically different ways. Cambridge rolled past St. Clairsville, 58-32,



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Buckeye Local girls basketball team. Front row, from left, are Skyler Langford, Brooklyn Miller, Angelina Piergallini, Madelyne Gill, Carrie Dill and Lillie Windsheimer. Standing, from left, are assistant coach Christine Defede, Megan Valuska, Emily Holzopfel, Alaire Destifanes, Rachel Moore, assistant coach Brittany Hicks and assistant coach Charlie Nest.



Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Cambridge girls basketball team. Front row, from left, Marissa DuBeck, Allyssa Ball, Lilly Ritz, Charlie Endly, Deonna Hall and Miranda Hill. Back row, from left, are Desiré Correa, Adison Snyder, Alexis Wilkinson, Khloe Taylor, Tylar Slaughter, Mckenzie Deeks and Joslyn Murrey.

while the Panthers needed an Alaire Destifanes buzzer-beater to escape Steubenville's upset bid, 50-48.

"That (win) just a testimony to our team," Figurski explained. "These girls just have that never-give-

up attitude. Steubenville led for a majority of that game, but our team's heart really showed through. I don't think we led until the final minute of the game."

The Bobcats – as they did earlier in the season – had no issues with the Red

Devils, taking control early and never looking back.

"We really moved the ball well and did what we needed to do," Linscott said. "All of the girls who played contributed in some way. Our girls play well together and it's a very

close group."

Cambridge has been atop the 4A standings all winter and when Figurski began his preparations, he doesn't see too many chinks in the armor.

"We know what Cambridge brings to the table," Figurski said. "They're aggressive, they get after you in the fullcourt. If we can handle their pressure, we can compete. If we allow that to get to us, it could be a long night."

The Guernsey County combine's attack begins with talented senior Lilly Ritz. The 6-2 post player, who is the daughter of former MLB pitcher Kevin Ritz and a state runnerup in the high jump last spring, has been a dominating force on both ends for the Bobcats. Ritz is averaging 21 points and 12 rebounds a game.

She's not been a one-year standout either. She's

See, 4A, Page 8

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5A

Continued from Page 6

still have a bad taste in their mouth from our last Parkersburg South game.”

Park sports a 14-5 record while South is 15-3. Park is ranked No. 6 in the latest West Virginia Class AAA

2. The Wood Countians have one OVAC girls hoop banner in the school's archives (2014.) Park has pocketed 13 conference girls hoop crowns, second most to St. John Central's

15. “It is a nice reward for the girls,” South head coach Ed Davis said. “We didn't play that well in our semifinal win against Brooke. They are much improved but there was a lot of flu involved.”

South hangs it hat on stifling defense and physical play. It is limiting teams to just 47 points a game.

Davis' charges boast an outstanding center in Makenna Winans. The 6-1 sophomore is averaging 16 points a game while proving a menacing defensive presence. She pulls down 8 rebounds a game.

South boasts a battle-tested and talented backcourt. Devin Hefner, a 5-9 senior, leads the team with her 17.2 ppg. average. She is joined by 5-6 junior Sierra Hays. She is averaging 7 points a contest.

Senior Allie Taylor is solid at both ends of the floor for Davis. The 5-9 forward scores 10.4 points a game while also grabbing

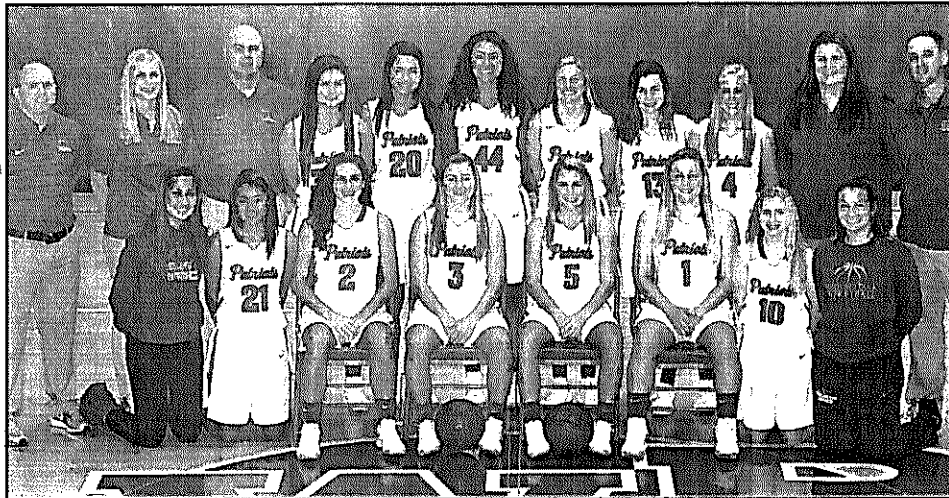


Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Wheeling Park girls basketball team. Front row, from left, are Sierra Donaldson, Niya Cook, Morgan Glass, Brionna Gray, Kylie McKennen, Laurel Robb, Shanley Woods and Allison Julian. Second row, from left, are assistant coach Jason Chambers, assistant coach Lucy DeFruscio, assistant coach Shane Glass, Kieran Johnson, Asia Roby, Bella Abernathy, Abby Snedeker, Abby Jones, Emily Pavlic, assistant coach Katelynn Hackathorn and head coach Ryan Young.

7.2 rebounds.

Kenzie Johnson rounds out the South starting lineup. The 5-4 junior guard facilitates the Patriots' offense, leading the team

with 4 assists a game.

Allyssa Wilson provides a spark as South's sixth man. The 5-8 senior guard-forward averages 5 points and 4 boards a game.

Young once again masterfully has his team peeking at the right time. That was no easy task as he had

See, 5A, Page 9

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4A

Continued from Page 7

over 1,400 points and recently surpassed the coveted 1,000 rebound mark as well.

“It starts with Lilly for us,” Linscott said. “She’s more of a mid-range player than a true, back-to-the-basket post player. She’s a long, talented athlete. She also leads us in steals and blocked shots, too.”

The Panthers, who aren't the biggest team by any means, have been focusing on finding a way to slow Ritz down.

“It’s going to take a team effort on Ritz,” Figurski admitted. “I’ve seen some teams try zoning them and some play man and it doesn’t seem like anyone can stop her. We have to do our

best to limit her points and second-chance opportunities.”

Though Ritz commands much of the attention, she’s not alone by any means. Freshman point guard Taylor Slaughter averages 10 points a game and sophomore Khloe Taylor is the third-leading scorer at eight a night. Senior Charlie Endley had a strong game against St. C. and is averaging six points an outing. Junior Alyssa Ball rounds out the lineup at four points a game.

Marissa Dubeck, Dionna Hall, Miranda Hall and Alexis Wilkinson round out the nine-girl rotation.

While the Panthers must find a way to contain Ritz,

Cambridge has to find a way to slow down Buckeye Local junior standout Emily Holzopf.

The school’s all-time leading scorer – regardless of gender – is averaging better than 25 points a game this season.

She’s complemented in the backcourt by Destifanes, who averages just over 10 points a contest.

“We’ve heard a lot about those guards Buckeye Local has,” Linscott said. “We scrimmaged them a few years ago. They have the advantage in terms of experience of playing in this (championship) game. We’ll have to show up and be ready to play.”

After the Panther guards,

the scoring production endures a significant dropoff. Freshman Megan Valuska, senior Carrie Dill and senior Maddie Gill haven’t scored 100 points for the season.

Valuska averages 4.7, while Gill checks in at 4.6. Dill averages 2.3. Gill is also the Panthers top rebounder.

“Our girls relish the underdog role and we’ve really seen them pick their games up over the last few weeks,” Figurski said. “Over the last few weeks, we’ve really seen other people stepping up.”

Class 1A

# Beallsville, Cameron meet for small-school crown

By RICK THORP  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — As a player at Beallsville, Ori Jarrett was part of some great teams.

Two of those — the 2009 and 2010 squads — on titles at the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls' Basketball Championships.

It's been eight years since the Blue Devils tasted victory inside Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Center. But that could all change tonight as Jarrett, now the team's head coach, leads the Blue Devils to the championship charges against Cameron for the 1A crown. Tipoff in the fifth, and

last, game of the day, is slated for 7 p.m.

"It's a proud moment," said Jarrett, who was all-OVAC at Beallsville from 2007-10, including first-team her senior year.

"We lost last year in the semifinals (to Frontier), so we're ready to get back."

Cameron, meanwhile, is making its first appearance in the final. Head Coach Roger Cain's squad sports an ultra-impressive 19-1 mark.

"This is our first time, so we're pretty excited about it," he said.

While the second-seeded Blue Devils and top-seeded Dragons are different when it comes to experience,

Cain believes the two squads are similar otherwise.

"We basically told our girls that it's just looking at ourselves in the mirror," he said. "They like to do a lot of the same things we do. They like to pressure with man defense. They run a similar offense. They like to get out in transition at times."

"They're just a little bit younger than we are."

The Blue Devils (14-6) have matured quite a bit this winter, the culmination

coming last Monday in a 40-36 triumph against Trinity in the semifinal round. Beallsville lead by 16 early in the fourth quarter, only to watch the Warriors produce a furious rally. In the end, Ashlie Loudon's two free throws in the closing seconds sealed the deal.

Loudon, Jarrett's point guard, finished with 15 points in the victory. The team's other Ashley, Ashley Howell, also scored 15 points.

The duo, both sopho-

mores, have led Beallsville most of the season, along with fellow starters Olivia Muncy, the team's lone junior, senior Dagan Hossman (5-4) and freshman Makenna Phillips (5-9). Sophomore Jadyn Gabel and Harley Nalley have been key contributors off the bench.

Jarrett had high expectations for her team at the season's start and, thus far, things have gone mostly according to plan.

"We've gotten (to the OVAC final) and we got a

No. 8 seed (in the sectional) and a home game (vs. Bridgeport), which is good," she said. "We let some games get away from us that I wish we could have back. We lost three games by a point. I'm not happy about that. But the rest I'm happy with."

As was the case vs. Trinity, tempo can dictate the Blue Devils' success, or lack thereof. It's an area of the game Jarrett believes her team has become more

See, 1A, Page 10

Continued from Page 8

navigate through a couple of major health concerns.

Senior standout Morgan Lass, a key component on Park's press, was lost early in the season with a knee injury. That was compounded by all-state point guard Kylie McKennen undergoing an appendectomy on New Year's Eve, delimiting her for several weeks. The 5-5 dandy is now rounding back into top form and is a stud at both ends of the floor.

"I like the way we are playing, especially on offense end," Young said. Offensively, we don't have any gaudy numbers it we have very good balance. No one is averaging more than nine points a game but we have a lot of players who can score.

"We are scoring about 30 points a game. I am proud with that," added the fourth-year head coach. Every possession will matter Saturday against South.

I can see it being a defensive battle."

Joining McKennen in Park's starting backcourt will be two-year starter Emily Pavlic. The 5-5 junior is the ideal complement for McKennen. Pavlic is a pit-bull defender with quality offensive skills.

Park has a diaper dandy in the middle with Bella Abernathy. Young says the 5-11 frosh has raised her game to a "higher level." She will be key in defending Winans.

Laurel Robb and Brianna Gray round out the starting five.

Robb is a 5-7 senior who is "playing well and has a high basketball IQ," according to Young. Gray is a 5-6 senior who has delivered "great senior leadership with the ability to shoot outside."

Young makes quality use of his bench, using as many as five players off the pine.

Asia Roby is Park's

See, 5A, Page 11

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1A

Continued from Page 9

cognizant of. "Controlling the pace of the game, that killed us in those one-point losses," Jarrett said. "Teams sped us up and then we couldn't get it reeled in like we did the past couple of games. Now,

(the girls) understand if we don't control the tempo we will lose."

Like any team, Jarrett said her squad has improved in many areas this winter, one of those being driving and kicking.

"I think we're doing a much better job of that," she said. "We did pretty well (against Trinity). We didn't hit a lot of those shots, but they were good shots. They were open shots. I think we're good at penetrating."

Every facet of the Blue Devils' game will need to be on point to contend with the Dragons, ranked fifth in the latest West Virginia state poll, two spots behind Wheeling Central.

"I watched Cameron when they played Frontier and they're pretty good," Jarrett acknowledged. "You can tell they've been playing together for a while."

"They play good defense and they move the ball pretty well."

The Dragons did all those things in rallying from an early deficit to top Madonna, 40-30, in their semifinal.

The Blue Dons led 13-4 at one point, but Cain stayed the course and his veteran group put everything together.

"We hadn't seen much adversity," he said. "The lead wasn't getting too large, so I wanted to see how our girls could face it. And, with us being a veteran group, they did really well."

Coming off a regional final appearance last season, expectations were high for Cameron this season, and the team hasn't disappointed. Aside from a 16-point loss to Atlantic, a school of about 1,800, during to a trip to Florida over the holidays, the Dragons have, for the most part, cruised.

Cain said playing for an OVAC was just one of many goals discussed in the preseason.

"Obviously, you want to set big goals," he said. "We set a goal to get to the final and our goal now is to win. We came close close to get-



Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Beallsville girls basketball team. Front row, from left, are Dagan Hossman, Trinity Abbott, Sydney Vanhorn, Harley Nalley and Cheyenne Riley. Second row, from left, are Olivia Muncy, Jaydn Gabel, Ashley Howell, Makenna Phillips, Ashlie Loudon and Kylee Barnett.



Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Cameron girls basketball team. The team includes Autumn Gossett, Courtney Walker, Peri Gray, Kelsie Meintel, Jordyn Hughes, Kendra Dobbs, Alice Jones, Maelyn Canada, Stephanie Starcher, Kori Scott, Madge Lucey, Lili Neely and Emma Whipkey.

ting to state last year and we set that as a goal, as well."

The Dragons are in the midst of one of the best seasons, if not the best, season in school history. But Cain's, as well as the team's, focus is on the task at hand.

"We're looking for bigger and better things still down the road," he said.

Kelsie Meintel paced

Cameron with 19 points and 11 boards in its victory Monday and she, along with three other seniors help comprise the Dragons' starting lineup - Autumn Gossett, Courtney Walker and Peri Gray. Junior Jordyn Hughes rounds out the starting five.

"This group of seniors have played together since like fifth grade," Cain said. "They've spent a lot of time

on the court together. They know each other inside and out."

Cain also leans on a handful of underclassmen, including the likes of freshman Lili Neely, Madge Lucey and Kori Scott.

"We have some depth and it's helped tremendously and helping us achieve the things we have," Cain said.

GOOD LUCK

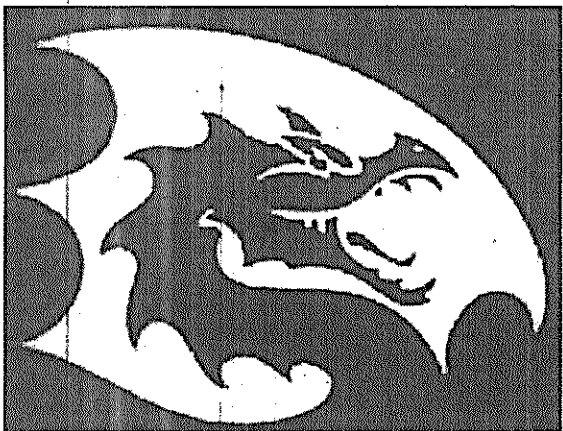


LADY DRAGONS!

GOOD LUCK  
LADY DRAGONS

from

CAMERON  
ATHLETIC  
DEPARTMENT



Continued from Page 9

...th-girl, good enough to  
art for most teams in the  
VAC. The 5-8 frosh can  
ndle, score and defend.  
Shanley Woods, a 5-5  
phomore, and Abby  
nes, a 5-5 junior, are  
ality guards while sopho-  
res Kieran Johnson and  
bby Snedecker are rising  
6 forwards.  
"Depth is a definite  
ength for us. I am com-

fortable playing all of  
them," Young said.

Young knows his gritty  
Patriots will face a formida-  
ble challenge in their quest  
to repeat as conference  
champions.

"South is really good  
inside and out. Their big  
girl (Winans) is good as  
there is. She is a rim protec-  
tor," Young said. "Hefner  
is one of the better players

in the state. South has good  
balance and senior leader-  
ship.

"We know it is going  
to be a battle. They are  
improving on the defensive  
end," he continued. "We  
have to be more physical  
and match their talent."

Davis is looking forward  
to the rubber match  
between Patriots.

"It's a fun game when-

ever we play Park. Ryan  
and I have developed a nice  
friendship. It is also a fun

game for the fans," Davis  
said. "Playing for the  
OVAC championship is

always one of our goals.  
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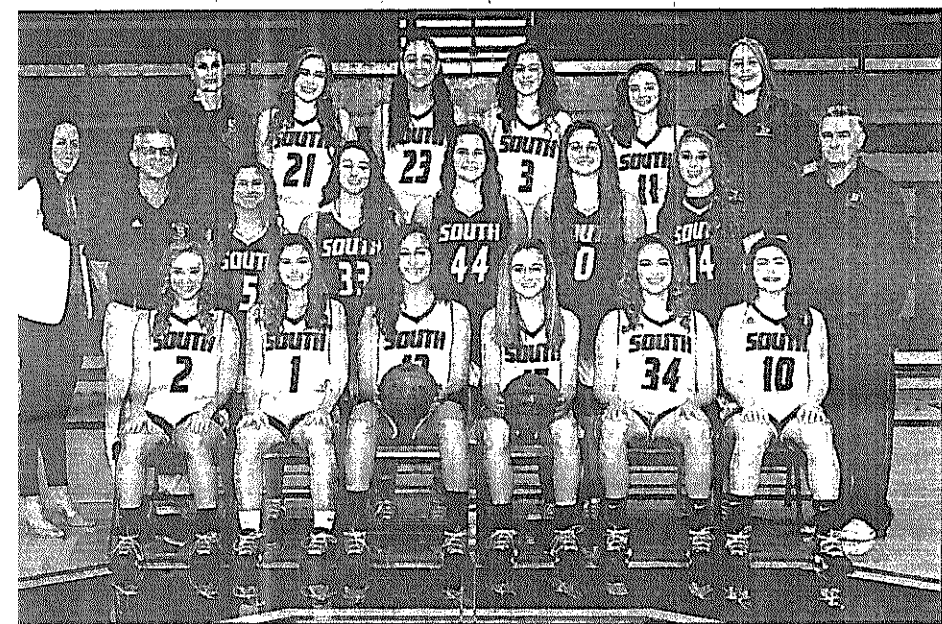
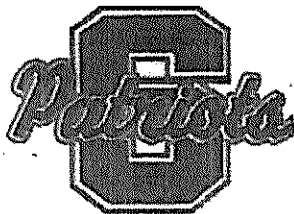


Photo Provided  
PICTURED IS the 2017-  
18 Parkersburg South  
girls basketball team.  
Front row, from left, are  
member Flinn, Kenzie  
Johnson, Makenna  
Winans, Sierra Hays,  
Auren Pelfrey and Rylee  
Armer. Middle row, from  
left, are assistant coach  
Tacy Houser, head  
coach Ed Davis, Charity  
Anderson, Allyssa Wil-  
son, Allie Taylor, Savan-  
ah Hays, Devin Hefner  
and assistant coach  
Terry Harvey. Back row,  
from left, are assistant  
coach Susie Davis, Ellie  
Loggin, Nakia Bracy,  
Aareena Shears, Ash-  
leigh Utt and assistant  
coach Brooke Smith.



# WINTER SPORTS ARE HERE!

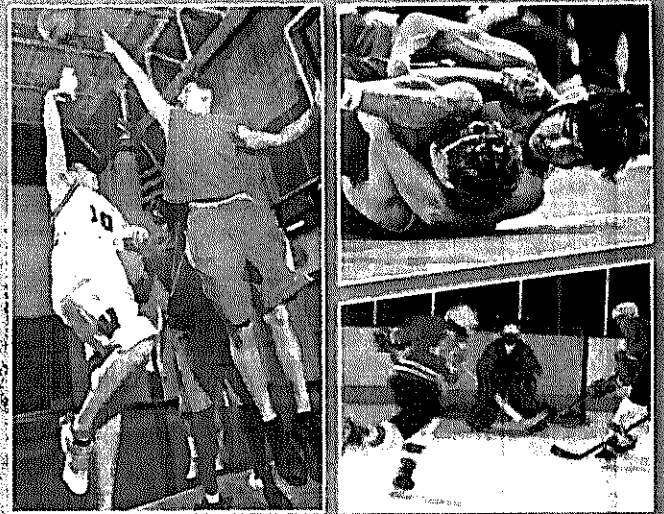
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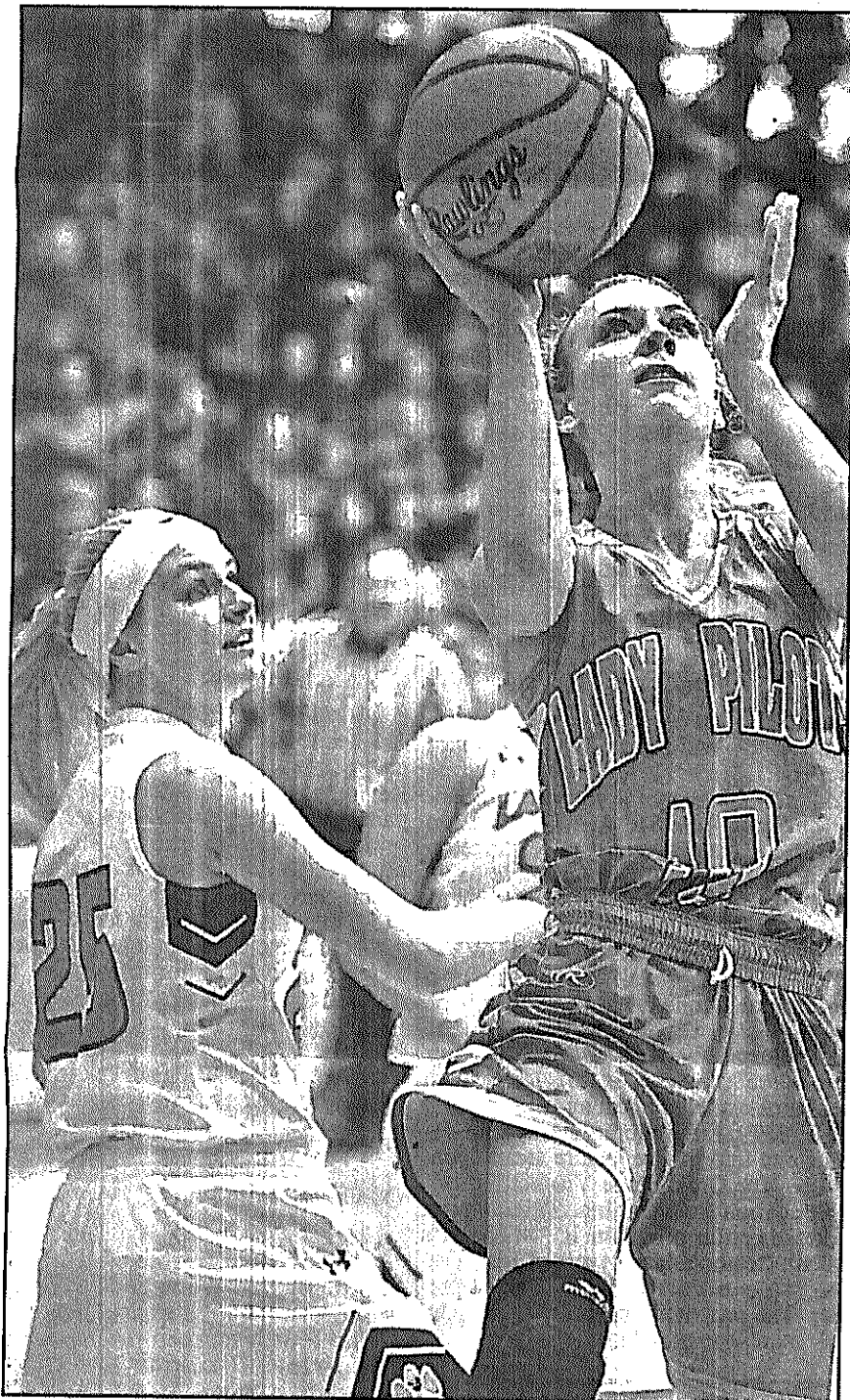
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## WHEELING HOSPITAL OVAC GIRLS' BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS



# River lays claim to 2A crown

• Pilots hold off Tigers behind MVP Flannery

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** — Though it defies the cliché, the fourth time was the charm for River.

After coming up empty on its initial three trips to the championship game of the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Championship, the Pilots broke through Saturday morning.

Using a strong foul shooting performance and an all-around floor game from junior point guard Lauren Flannery, the Pilots fought off Shadyside for a 47-44 victory.

"I am so proud of these young ladies," River head coach Rick Isaly said as he clinched his first conference title in 13 seasons at the helm. "We went through a stretch where I thought we were over-scheduled, playing real tough games. When you get beat, it gets the girls down, but now I think we need to play that competition to get ready for the tournament."

Along with the OVAC title, the Pilots also take the season series with the Tigers (14-7) after the teams split their earlier matchups. It was actually a loss at Shadyside in late January that seemingly ignited the Pilots.

Since that outing, River has now reeled off seven consecutive wins.

"We knew we had to win out to get in (the OVAC tournament)," Isaly said. "We have just continued with that momentum and hopefully we can keep it going."

The Pilots had very little time to thoroughly enjoy their title until the buzzer went off because whenever it seemed like they were set to pull away, Shadyside would hit a big

See, **RIVER**, Page C2

**RIVER'S LAUREN** Flannery (10) drives past Shadyside's Haley Grogan (25) on Saturday at Ohio University Eastern.

Photo/PAUL KRAJNYAK

## Wheeling Central tops Bellaire for 3A title

By **RICK THORP**  
Times Leader Sports Writer

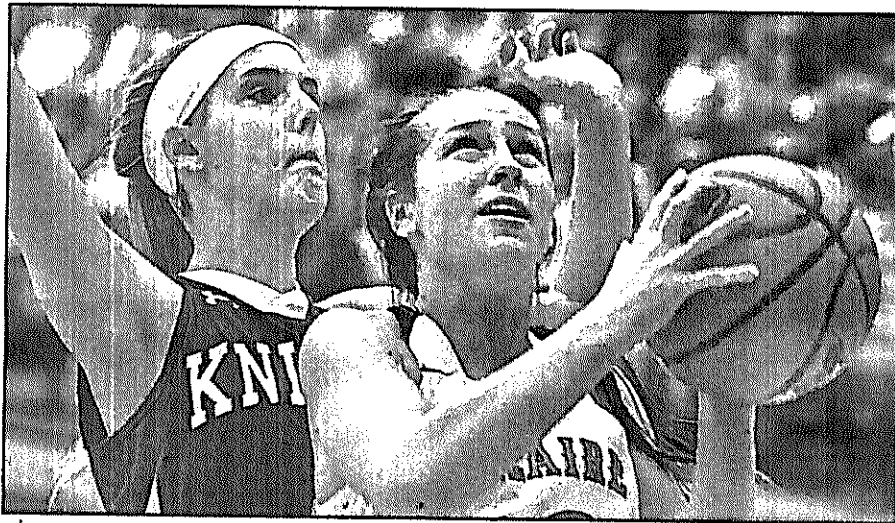
**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** — Championships are, many times, earned down the stretch of games, with little things here or there making a difference.

That's what happened Saturday afternoon inside Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Center as Wheeling Central claimed its third OVAC crown in four years by holding off Bellaire, 71-62, in the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls' 3A title tilt.

Kaylee Reinbeau scored 21 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, earning game Most Valuable Player honors, as the Maroon Knights held off a late Big Reds rally to move to 18-2 and down the Big Reds for the second time this season. The two teams met previously in Bellaire.

"It feels really good," Wheeling Central head coach Penn Kurtz said. "We knew coming back against this team wouldn't be easy."

The Maroon Knights led for most of the contest, but couldn't quite shake the Big Reds, who hung around trailing by



**BELLAIRE'S MACI** Crozier, right, drives to the basket during Saturday's OVAC Class 3A championship game against Wheeling Central.

Photo/PAUL KRAJNYAK

single digits most of the afternoon. After failing to mount a serious run in the second half, Bellaire (19-3) finally got close late in the third.

Down 11 early in the period, Katrina Davis got hot, scoring eight of her team-high 21 points as Bellaire got to within

See, **CENTRAL**, Page C2



T-L Photo/RICK THORP  
**BUCKEYE LOCAL'S** Megan Valuska drives Saturday afternoon.

## Bobcats race past Panthers in 4A

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** — Coming into Saturday afternoon's Wheeling Hospital OVAC Class 4A Girls Basketball championship game, Buckeye Local head coach Tom Figurski embraced the underdog role.

Cambridge more than demonstrated why it was the top seed and heavy favorite inside Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Center.

Behind a strong effort from towering, 6-1, senior pivot Lilly Ritz, and a host of others, the Bobcats cruised to the school's first OVAC title with a convincing 73-31 score.

"This was a collective effort and it takes all of us to accomplish this," Cambridge head coach Dan Linscott said. "Years ago, we didn't play enough games to qualify (for the OVAC title), so we changed that up. We've been close. This is a great atmosphere and event. I am just tickled to

See, **RACE**, Page C2

• Central

Continued from Page C1

nine, 50-41, with a little more than a minute left in the third.

De'Asia Burney hit a jumper and Natalie Stoner followed with a layup as the Big Reds closed to within six. Davis scored off a steal to make it a 51-47 game as the third quarter ended.

But, like they'd done all game, every time it looked as though the Big Reds were going to rally, the Maroon Knights had an answer.

Taylor Duplaga hit a pair of free throws pushing the lead back to six, 53-47. Moments later, Reinbeau made two from the charity stripe herself, both resulting from a steal at the other end, making the score 57-48.

"We made our free throws down the stretch and that was a huge difference,"

Kurtz said.

That's true. But the Maroon Knights were proficient all day in that regard, finishing 25 of 27.

"Against a team like Wheeling Central you can't put yourself in a hole like down 11 at halftime," Bellaire head coach John Farrier said. "I thought we played with a lot more energy in the second half. I think we were a lot more tentative in the first half.

"The energy in the second half allowed us to climb back. I thought we might be OK. We got it down to four or five and they were kind of in foul trouble. But we'd make one mistake and they'd capitalize on it."

Stoner's jumper late in the first quarter gave the Big Reds a 14-13 lead. From

there, the Maroon Knights went on a 6-0 run, capped by a Hannah White layup off a steal. She finished with a team-high 24 points.

From there, Bellaire was in catch-up mode. Farrier said Wheeling Central's defense created problems for his offense in the early going.

"They created some pressure that led to turnovers and easy buckets," he said.

In the second half, Kurtz said Bellaire turned the tables.

"They sped us up and got us going up and down the floor, which is not what we wanted to do."

Stoner finished with 13 for the Big Reds, while Maci Crozier added 10.

"I'm proud of the girls," Farrier said.

# Cambridge Takes Down Buckeye Local for 4A Title

By SETH STASKEY  
For the News-Register

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Coming into Saturday afternoon's Wheeling Hospital OVAC Class 4A Girls Basketball championship game, Buckeye Local coach Tom Figurski embraced the underdog role.

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coach Dan Linscott said. "Years ago, we didn't play enough games to qualify (for the OVAC title), so we changed that up. We've been close. This is a great atmosphere and event. I am just tickled to death to be a champion and part of the history for our school."

Cambridge, which was on top of the 4A standings all winter, simply dominated its way to the hardware. The Bobcats defeated their two opponents — St. Clairsville and Buckeye Local — by a combined score of 127-57.

As he worried during the week leading up to the game, Figurski's Panthers simply had no answer for Ritz on the interior.

A member of the coveted 1,000-point

and 1,000-rebound club, Ritz dominated the paint on both ends. She scored 22 points, grabbed 15 rebounds, swatted four shots and collected four steals en route to the game's MVP honor.

"Lilly Ritz is as good as advertised," Figurski said. "Cambridge was hitting on all cylinders and we couldn't match their intensity. Give Cambridge all of the credit. They took us out of our game, so now we have to re-group and get ready for River View (in the sectional)."

The Bobcats wasted no time in asserting themselves. They led, 16-8, after one and upped the margin to 33-17 at the half before continuing the onslaught in the second half.

"Our length bothered them," Linscott

said. "We played well on both ends of the floor."

Along with Ritz's production, talented freshman guard Taylor Slaughter scored 16 points.

Buckeye Local, which finishes the regular season with a 15-7 record, received another steady effort from its junior leaders, Emily Holzopfel and Alaire Destifanes.

Holzopfel, who was bottled up for much of the afternoon, still managed to finish with 16 points. Destifanes added 11, all of which came in the first half.

Destifanes gave the Panthers a glimmer of hope during a stretch in the second quarter when she buried a trey on consecutive trips.

• River's

Continued from Page C1

"Goal No. 2 was to get into the OVAC (final four) and the seniors set goal No. 3 of winning it," he continued. "I just told them today goal No. 3 is done. We've got other goals set, too. This is a special bunch."

The Pilots, who were ranked as high as No. 2 in the Ohio Division IV poll this season, had to overcome a stern test from the Crusaders (12-8). The teams were deadlocked at 11 after one quarter before the Jefferson County quint took a slim, 24-23, edge into the lockerroom at half-time.

Sparking the Crusaders was 6-3 Donnie Vandeborne. The senior netted 18 of his team-best 23 points in the first 16 minutes. However, he and classmate AJ Connor were the only Crusaders to make a field goal in the game.

"We were right there with them. We went cold in the third quarter offensively, and when you're playing a team like River, if you through a bad spell like we did, you get yourself in trouble because it's so tough to come back against them," Steubenville

Catholic head coach Chris Tarquinio said.

While River was playing in-your-face defense in the third quarter that limited the Crusaders to 1-for-6 shooting and forced four turnovers, Lukas Isaly and the Pilots' role players were coming up big.

Isaly, the Pilots' 2,000-point standout, scored five points in the quarter and sophomore Stone Thompson added four in a reserve role. Drew Dietz and Dillon Grimes knocked down key three-pointers as River took a 38-26 advantage into the final chapter.

Isaly tallied 10 fourth-quarter lightings to help the Pilots navigate to the crown. He finished with 29 which gives him 2,034 for his career.

"I've said it before. He is one of the best players around," Tarquinio said of Isaly. "When you play a player like him, you just try and contain him. I thought we did that for the most part, but he hit a couple of buckets there that changed the momentum to their side. Then they had a couple of other guys hit big baskets."

The title not only comes

on the heels of the girls' crown last week, but also gives the Pilots a double-double to go along with their football championship.

"These kids came out of football late and people said that would be a detriment, but it wasn't because the kids got into basketball shape pretty quick," Romick noted. "I think the success they enjoyed in football carried over into basketball."

Thompson added nine points and three rebounds. He also played very well on defense and distributed the ball on offense.

"Stone has done a great job all year, but today I think he played his best game yet," Romick allowed. "We sat down with him in the middle of the year and told him he was going to have to score some for us. He has the ability to score and he has some tenacity. Today we put him at the high post and he did an excellent job there."

Grimes chipped in eight points, while Dietz added six markers and a team-leading eight boards.

In addition to Vandeborne's 23, AJ Connor finished with 13. That's 36 of the Crusaders' 39.

"I'm very proud of these guys. Nobody thought we would be here. Nobody at all," Tarquinio said.

"It's an honor to play in this championship game. I'm not in here for moral victories, though. We want to win titles and unfortunately we fell short tonight, but Donnie and AJ brought us here and the younger guys have learned from that. We'll be back. We'll be back here."

River led 25-22 off the glass and also had two less turnovers at 12-10.

"Give them credit," Romick said of Steubenville Catholic. "Chris does a great job up there and they gave us everything we wanted."

The Pilots conclude the regular season Tuesday at Frontier with a chance at setting a new school record for wins.

GAME NOTES

■ River's 20 wins tie the mark set back in the mid-80s, according to Romick.

■ Isaly was voted the game's MVP.

## Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls' Basketball Championships

### Park. South Exacts Revenge

#### Early Hole Is Too Much for Park

By JOSH STROPE  
Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — No one in the W.Va. Class AAA playoffs will be looking forward to seeing Parkersburg South when sectionals start rolling around in a few weeks.

The Patriots have been on a roll, winners of 11 straight. The biggest victory of that run came Saturday at Ohio University Eastern when they got a measure of revenge from last year's title game with a 60-56 victory against Wheeling Park in the OVAC Class 5A championship game.

"This is a good reward for the kids," Parkersburg South coach Ed Davis said. "We have been up here the last three years and it hasn't went our way. It was a nice win in a good atmosphere with a tournament-like game against a state-title contender. Hopefully this will do us some good down the stretch."

The two teams are familiar with each other and share more just the same nickname.

They split two meetings this season, with each winning on the other's home court. South's victory against Wheeling Park came during its current winning streak.

Wheeling Park makes no secret about what it is going to do. It is going to press teams and make them make mistakes. The problem for Park was getting the ball to fall

through the hoop in the first half to allow it to set up the press.

Then again, even when Park did find a way to score, South was up to the task in countering Park's bread and butter.

"I have great assistant coaches that work with them every day and we play some really good pressing teams," Davis said. "The inbounder is so key for us and to have a senior like Allie Taylor back there is just a plus."

Parkersburg South (17-3) scored the first five points and other than a tie at 5-5, led throughout.

Taylor hit a big 3-pointer before the end of the first to stretch the lead to eight. That started a 16-5

See, Park, Page B3

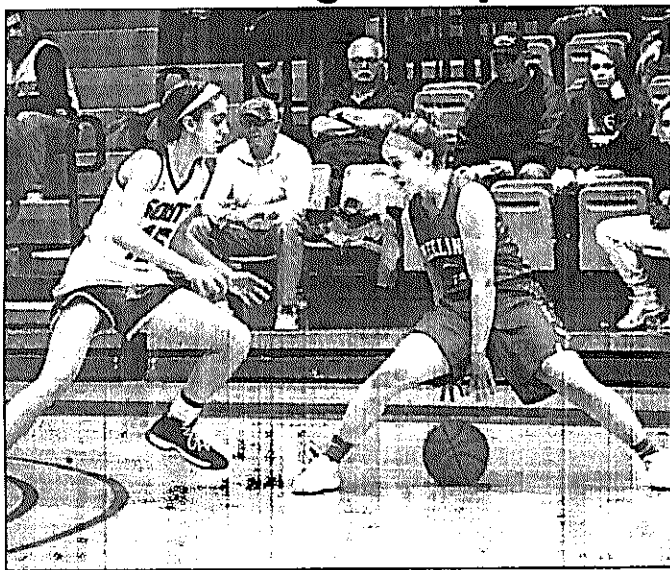


Photo by Josh Strope

Wheeling Park's Brionna Gray, right, dribbles between her legs as she is defended by Parkersburg South's Sierra Hays.

## Cameron Earns Initial Crown

### Freshman Scott Comes Up Big

By JOSH STROPE  
Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — For the first time, an OVAC basketball championship trophy has made its way to Cameron.

Cameron jumped out to an 11-0 lead, then had to hang on against a game Beallsville squad, but the Dragons left Ohio University Eastern on Saturday as the OVAC Class 1A champions with a 69-58 victory.

"This means a lot, not just for the team and for the school, but for the community," Cameron coach Roger Cain said. "The people in the stands really came out to support us and that is an awesome feeling. We thrived off that enthusiasm from the stands."

"We knew coming in Beallsville was going to be tough. We wanted to try and keep the tempo and hopefully wear them down in the end. I don't know if that was the difference or not, but our girls kept on fighting. When they cut it down, we kept our heads together and never stopped fighting. When you have the group

we have, they put it together and did a heckuva job."

It looked like it was going to be a laugher as the Dragons (20-1) charged out to an 11-0 lead to start the game. And while the final score may have been an 11-point victory, that doesn't tell the tale of the heart Beallsville had.

If ever there was a player that deserved an MVP award on a losing team, it was the Blue Devils' Ashlie Loudon.

The sophomore did it all, whether it was driving to the basket or knocking down 3s. She finished with a game-high 30 points.

On defense, the Blue Devils knew the best way to keep Cameron in check was to stop senior post player Kelsie Meintel. Sure, Meintel got her numbers with team-leading 17 points and 13 rebounds. But that was about as quiet of a stat line as you will find.

The Blue Devils duo of Ashley Howell and Jaydn Gabel worked hard on Meintel to not let her get

See, Cameron, Page B3



Photo by Paul Krajnyak

Wheeling Central senior Taylor Duplaga flies in for two points during the Maroon Knights' Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls' Basketball 3A Championship Game on Saturday at OUE.

## Wheeling Central Secures Third Title in Four Years

### Reinbeau, White Lead the Knights

By RICK THORP  
For the News-Register

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Championships are, many times, earned down the stretch of games, with little things here or there making a difference.

That's what happened Saturday inside Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Center as Wheeling Central claimed its third OVAC crown in four years by holding off Bellaire, 71-62, in the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls' 3A title tilt.

Kaylee Reinbeau scored 21 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, earning game Most Valuable Player honors, as the Maroon Knights held off a late rally to move to 18-2 and down the Big Reds for the second time this season. The two teams met previously in Bellaire.

"It feels really good," Wheeling Central coach Penn Kurtz said. "We knew coming back against this team wouldn't be easy."

The Maroon Knights led for most of the contest, but couldn't quite shake the Big Reds, who hung around trailing by single digits most of the afternoon. After failing to mount a serious run in the first half, Bellaire (19-3) finally got close late in the third.

Down 11 early in the period, Katrina Davis got hot, scoring eight of her team-high 21 points as Bellaire got to within nine, 50-41, with a little more than a minute left in the third.

De'Asia Burney hit a jumper and Natalie Stoner followed with a layup as the Big Reds closed to within six. Davis scored off a steal to make it a 51-47 game as the third quarter ended.

But, like they'd done all game, every time it looked as though the Big Reds were going to rally, the Maroon Knights had an answer.

Taylor Duplaga hit a pair of free throws pushing the lead back to six, 53-47. Moments later, Reinbeau made two from the stripe that was the result of a steal at the other end, making the score 57-48.

"We made our free throws down the stretch and that was a huge dif-

ference," Kurtz said.

That's true. But the Maroon Knights were proficient all day in that regard, finishing 25 of 27.

"Against a team like Wheeling Central you can't put yourself in a hole like down 11 at halftime," Bellaire coach John Farrier said. "I thought we played with a lot more energy in the second half. I think we were a lot more tentative in the first half."

"The energy in the second half allowed us to climb back. I thought we might be OK. We got it down to four or five and they were kind of in foul trouble. But we'd make one mistake and they'd capitalize on it."

Stoner's jumper late in the first quarter gave the Big Reds a 14-13 lead. From there, the Maroon Knights went on a 6-0 run, capped by a Hannah White layup off a steal. She finished with a team-high 24 points.

From there, Bellaire was in catch-up mode. Farrier said Wheeling Central's defense created problems in the early going.

"They created some pressure that led to turnovers and easy buckets,"

See, Central, Page B2



Photo by Bill Ferguson

Cameron's Kori Scott goes in for two during her team's OVAC title victory against Beallsville.

## PARK

Continued from page B1

run and South found itself up 13 heading into the locker room at halftime.

"We dug ourselves too big of a hole and you can't do that against a good team like Parkersburg South," Wheeling Park coach Ryan Young said. "On a positive note, our kids battled back and that shows a lot of character. It is an emotional game and I think when we came out, our emotions were all out of whack."

"We will look at this game and know we will have to have control of our emotions from the start. (South) did such a good job of getting the ball out and pushing it."

"We had a hard time locating kids and we felt like we were chasing them the whole first quarter. Once we settled down, things got better, but it hurt us in the beginning."

Battled back they did.

Wheeling Park (14-6) cut the deficit to nine at the end of third — led in part by three 3-pointers from Brianna Gray.

With Parkersburg South standout Devin Hefner on the bench with her fourth foul, Park made its move.

A Bella Abernathy drive made the score 53-51 with 1:30 remaining to get it within one bucket. After a free throw by Makenna Winans made it a three-point game, Park's Kylie McKennen and Hefner made good on both their free-throw attempts.

With 30 seconds left on the clock, Park had a chance to tie. McKennen drove to the basket but was met at the foul line by a pair of South defenders and had the ball knocked away.

Sierra Hays sealed a victory with two free throws.

"Kylie plays really hard and we feel like we have

three seniors on the floor and they have been in these situations," Young said.

"They know what we like to run, it just didn't work out and overall the deficit was too big for us

to overcome."

Hefner was named the John Howell Most Valuable Player, leading South with 19 points. Taylor chipped in with 12.

Gray paced Park with 17 points.

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## CAMERON

Continued from page B1

going.

"I went and watched them played and we tried to focus on her," Beallsville coach Tori Jarrett said. "We wanted our big girl to not help off her too much."

"(At the beginning) our girls were so nervous. Many have never played in this gym before. I told them it was just another game, but once they got over the nerves, we were fine."

Cameron hasn't won this many games by just relying on Meintel. With a solid group of seniors, the Dragons have depth throughout the lineup.

Though this night belonged to a freshman.

Kori Scott was the spark that was needed off the bench on both the offensive and defensive end. Her conventional three-point play with less than four minutes remaining made it a two-possession game when Beallsville battled back to cut it to one.

Scott finished with 16 points and was named the John Howell Most Valuable Player.

"We didn't have very much film and we didn't scout them, but we had a lot of faith in ourselves that we could get the 'W'" Scott said. "I was very nervous. I saw my pap up there and he always tells me to play my game and that's what I did."

"In practice, I help prepare them and they help prepare me and that was a big help."

A Loudon basket with two minutes remaining made it 57-55 and the Blue Devils had a chance to tie or take the lead, but turnovers doomed them.

Courtney Walker stole a pass and was fouled. She made both her free throws. On the ensuing possession, Jordyn Hughes scooped up a loose ball and went coast-to-coast for an uncontested layup with 55 seconds left that put Cameron up seven and all but sealed a victory.

"We got a big defensive stop and we have a veteran group that we trust," Cain said. "Even when we go to our freshmen, they aren't freshmen anymore. They did a great job filling in the minutes we needed to have, especially when one wins the outstanding player award. Great job on her part. I told her earlier we needed her to be a bit more aggressive and we know she is capable of doing great things. When you can rely on that bench, that makes a big difference."

Autumn Gossett chipped in with 15 points and Walker added 13 for Cameron. Olivia Muncy scored 15 for Beallsville.

## CENTRAL

Continued from page B1

he said. "That allowed the gap to widen."

In the second half, Kurtz said Bellaire turned the tables.

"They sped us up and got us going up and down the floor, which is not what we wanted to do and forced us into taking some not-so-great shots."

"They're relentless and they're never going to stop."

In the end, though, Kurtz said his team relaxed and got back to what it does best, led by Reinbeau.

"She's a difference-maker out there for us," he said. "She's the tallest person out there on the floor and can handle the ball, too. She played great."

Stoner finished with 13 for the Big Reds, while Maci Crozier added 10.

# SPORTS

# B

Thursday,  
February 8, 2018

## Field ready for OVAC boys championships

• H.C., U.L., River among No. 1 seeds  
By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**BELLAIRE** — The championship games for the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Tournament are set for Saturday at Ohio University Eastern.

The boys' teams of the OVAC learned their fates Wednesday morning after the championship basketball committee met at the conference office to finalize the semi-final pairings and establish the consolation matchups for the event, which opens Tuesday.

The boys title games will be held at OUE's Health and Physi-

cal Education Center on Feb. 17. The schedule for the title games is as follows: 10 a.m. — 2A; 12:15 p.m. — 3A; 2:30 p.m. — 4A; 4:45 p.m. — 5A and 7 p.m. — 1A.

Here's a look at each of the five divisions:

### CLASS 5A

Defending champion University is back in the field, but the Hawks garnered just the second seed with a 14-1 record. Picking up the top seed was Parkersburg South, which handed University its lone loss of the season.

The Patriots, who have won just one conference title in boys hoops in 2013, are also 14-1 on the season.

Standing between the two West

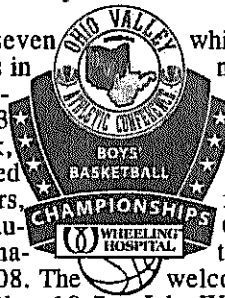
Virginia heavyweights, who ranked No. 1 and No. 6 in the Class AAA poll, are Wheeling Park and Indian Creek, respectively.

Park, which owns seven OVAC big-school titles in boys basketball, qualified with an 11-3 record. Indian Creek, meanwhile, has claimed two conference banners, but none since the inaugural year of the tournament-style event in 2008. The Redskins qualified with a 10-7 record, edging out Morgantown for the final spot.

### CLASS 4A

The 4A field has been firmly set — in terms of the teams —

for what seemed like a few weeks, but the seeding was jockeyed up until Tuesday night's cutoff.



Harrison Central, which has been red hot, garnered the top seed. The Huskies, who have never won an OVAC title in the current format, are seeking their first trip to the title game. Coach Justin Clifford's team, which is 13-4, will welcome Steubenville to the John W. Stephenson Center.

Big Red has claimed 13 conference titles, including one in 2014. Coach Mike Haney's team, which has squared off against a demanding schedule, has been in

a tailspin with three consecutive losses. Still, however, they were able to edge out St. Clairsville for the final berth.

In the other half of the bracket, the two-time defending champion Meadowbrook Colts are the second seed. Coach Scooter Tolzda's team will welcome Oak Glen, which has been solid for much of the campaign.

The Colts, who knocked off Steubenville on Tuesday, finished the pre-OVAC portion with a 13-5 record. Meadowbrook came into the week sitting in third place, but jumped the Golden Bears after their scheduled Tuesday game at Bellaire was postponed due to the village-wide

See, **OVAC**, Page B2

Continued from Page B1

water issue.

Oak Glen, which claimed its only OVAC title in 2004, will make the lengthy trip from New Manchester to Byesville with a 13-4 record.

### CLASS 3A

Union Local put itself at the top of the standings in this class early in the season and never looked back en route to locking it down with a win at Barnesville on Tuesday.

Coach Zach Delman's squad is currently 17-2 and is seeking the school's third conference title. The Jets last hoisted the hardware in 2015.

If the Jets are going to reach the final once again, they'll need to prove one of sport's adages to

be false. They'll welcome Bellaire to Morristown on Tuesday, seeking their third win against Ben Doyle's team.

The Big Reds, who own 18 OVAC titles, enter with a 7-12 record. This is Bellaire's second appearance in the championship bracket.

In the other half of the 3A field, second-seeded Wheeling Central resides. The Maroon Knights have been one of the area's premier teams all winter. Coach Mel Stephens' group owns an impressive 16-1 record.

Central's lone blemish came to Pennsylvania power Mars during the Cancer Research Classic last month. If the Knights are to play for their 26th conference title

and sixth consecutive, they'll need to take down third-seeded Fort Frye.

The Cadets qualified with a 9-5 record and are aiming for their eighth OVAC crown in school history.

### CLASS 2A

A new champion is promised in this division with Wheeling Central having moved up.

River, which lost to Central in the semifinals last winter, was the last conference team to suffer its first loss and is now the top seed. The Pilots are 17-1 on the season.

Coach Mark Romick's team, which is led by standout senior Lukas Isaly, hasn't won an OVAC title since 1973.

For River to get to the title game, it will have to deal with fourth-seeded Toronto. Coach Sean Tucker's Red Knights qualified with an impressive 15-5 record. Toronto, which was upset in last year's semifinal, hasn't won an OVAC title since 1992.

Steubenville Central is the second seed in the field with an 11-7 record. The Crusaders — despite a loss at St. Clairsville on Tuesday — held off Shenandoah for the home-court advantage.

Catholic Central hasn't won an OVAC title since 1993. As for the Zeps, they qualified third with a 13-4 record. They've not won an OVAC title since 2001.

### CLASS 1A

Similarly to the girls' tourna-

ment, the Cameron Dragons are the top seed in the small-school field. Coach Jack Hart's Dragons are currently 14-3 and are in search of their first OVAC championship in boys hoops in school history.

To get to OUE for the first time, Cameron will have to contend with Madonna. Coach Chris Blair's Blue Dons, who won the 1A title last winter, grabbed the final spot despite a 4-12 record.

In the other semifinal, Morgantown Trinity will host third-seeded Valley. Trinity is 11-4 on the season and won its only OVAC crown in 2016.

Valley, meanwhile, owns a 7-9 record and is seeking its first conference title.

## OVAC Girls Hoops

Wheeling Hospital OVAC Girls Basketball Championship Finals  
Saturday  
Championship Game Schedule  
10 a.m. — Shady Side vs. River  
12:15 p.m. — Wheeling Central vs. Bellaire  
2:30 p.m. — Cambridge vs. Buckeye Local  
4:45 p.m. — Wheeling Park vs. Parkersburg South  
7 p.m. — Cameron vs. Bealsville

Consolation Pairings  
Tonight  
Morgantown at Union Local  
Clay-Battala at Magnolia  
Weir at University  
Oak Glen at Martins Ferry  
John Marshall at Beaver Local  
Edison at Harrison Central  
Southern at East Liverpool  
Monroe Central at Linsy  
Barnesville at Frontier  
Toronto at Conotton Valley  
Bridgeport at Handford  
Padon City at Calhoun  
East Richard Christian at Valley  
Shenandoah at Steubenville Central  
Brooke at Indian Creek  
Madonna at Trinity  
St. Clairsville at Steubenville

## OVAC Boys Hoops

Wheeling Hospital OVAC Boys Basketball Championship Semifinals  
Tuesday, Feb. 13  
Class 5A  
No. 4 Indian Creek at No. 1 Parkersburg South  
No. 3 Wheeling Park at No. 2 University  
Class 4A  
No. 4 Steubenville at No. 1 Harrison Central  
No. 3 Oak Glen at No. 2 Meadowbrook  
Class 3A  
No. 4 Bellaire at No. 1 Union Local  
No. 3 Fort Frye at No. 2 Wheeling Central  
Class 2A  
No. 4 Toronto at No. 1 River  
No. 3 Shenandoah at No. 2 Steubenville  
Catholic

Class 1A  
No. 4 Madonna at No. 1 Cameron  
No. 3 Valley at No. 2 Trinity Christian  
Championship Game Schedule  
10 a.m. — Class 2A  
12:15 p.m. — Class 3A  
2:30 p.m. — Class 4A  
4:45 p.m. — Class 5A  
7 p.m. — Class 1A

Consolation Pairings  
Tuesday, Feb. 13  
Martins Ferry at Buckeye Local  
John Marshall at Brooke  
Shady Side at St. Clairsville  
Weir at Morgantown  
Bridgeport at Edison  
Beaver Local at Southern  
Wellsville at East Liverpool  
Barnesville at Frontier  
Linsy at Clay-Battala  
Hundred at East Richard Christian  
Morgantown Central at Padon City  
Bellaire at Conotton Valley  
Magnolia at Oakwell  
Thursday, Feb. 15  
Caldwell at Buckeye Trail  
Friday, Feb. 16  
East Richard at Bealsville  
Frontier at Handford  
Conotton Valley at Padon City  
Padon City at Linsy  
Clay-Battala at Shady Side  
Southern Local at Bridgeport  
Buckeye Local at Wellsville  
St. Clairsville at Barnesville  
Buckeye Trail at Magnolia  
Morgantown at Martins Ferry  
Edison at John Marshall  
Brooke at Beaver Local  
East Liverpool at Weir

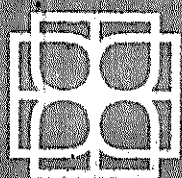


2017-18 OVAC Boys

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Saturday, February 17, 2018

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Class 2A

# Title drought set to end for River or SCC

By KIM NORTH  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Something has to give early this morning as the 11th annual Wheeling Hospital OVAC Boys Basketball Championships get underway with the Class 2A title tilt between River and Steubenville Catholic inside Ohio University's Health and Physical Education Center.

Neither the top-seeded Pilots (19-1) nor the No. 2 Crusaders (12-7) have won a championship under the new format. In fact, neither team has claimed one since Steubenville Catholic claimed a crown in 1993, one of its four. Meanwhile, River's lone title came back in 1973. That will all come to an end when they tip off at 10 a.m.

River took out No. 4 Toronto, 54-24, in Hannibal Tuesday night in semifinal action, while Steubenville Catholic eliminated third-seeded Shenandoah, 39-29, in Steubenville.

"We are a different type of team than we were last year," veteran River head coach Mark Romick said. "The dynamics of the team have changed a little. We play more man-to-man defense this year where we pressed a lot last year.

"We got a late start because of the football team's success in the playoffs," he added. "We had three starters back but the other kids were young and had little to no varsity experience. I thought it would take us a while to get going, but our senior leadership has carried is through.

"Defensively, the kids have bought into what we are teaching them. They have shown up every night

on the defensive end of the floor."

The Pilots are led by senior standout Lukas Isaly. A recent newcomer to the elite 2,000-point club is the engine that makes the team go.

"He's our catalyst and everyone knows that. He's seen about every kind of defense imaginable," Romick said of Isaly. "If you double him he finds the open player. If you play him straight up, he adjusts to the game and can light you up.

"The thing about Lukas this year is he has matured and learned to let the game come to him more."

Isaly averages 23 points, 8 assists, half-a-dozen rebounds and a trio of steals each night. Junior John Murphy (6-3) is the other double-figure scorer for Romick at 11 a game. He also pulls down 5 rebounds. Seniors Drew Dietz, Cody Hupp and Dillon Grimes round out the starting five.

See, 2A, Page 4

**Schedule**

**Class 2A — 10 a.m.**

No. 1 River vs.

No. 2 Steub. CC — Page 2

**Class 3A — 12:15 p.m.**

No. 1 Union Local vs.

No. 2 Wheeling CC — Page 6

**Class 4A — 2:30 p.m.**

No. 1 Meadowbrook vs.

No. 4 Steubenville — Page 4

**Class 5A — 4:45 p.m.**

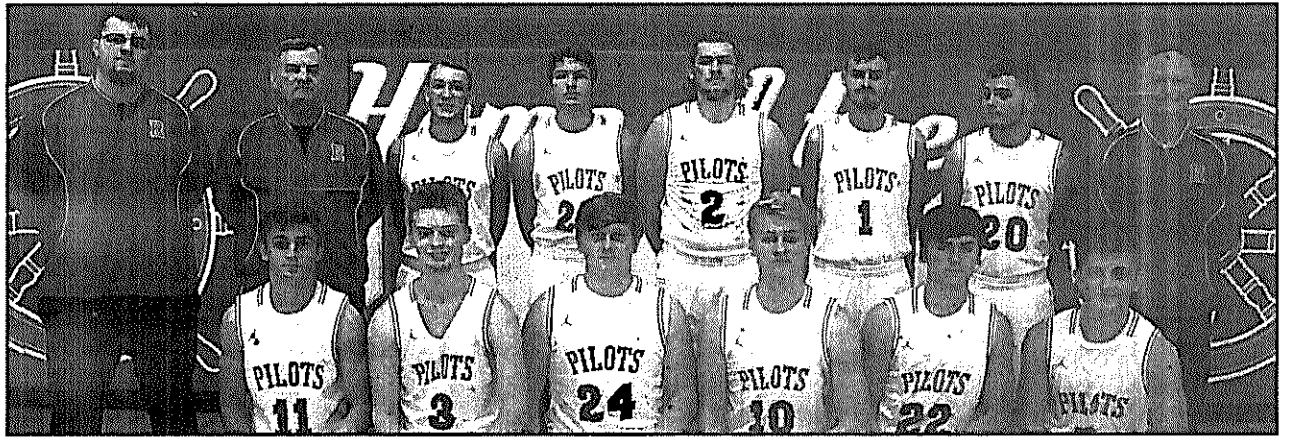
No. 1 Parkersburg South vs.

No. 2 University — Page 8

**Class 1A — 7 p.m.**

No. 1 Cameron vs.

No. 2 Trinity — Page 10

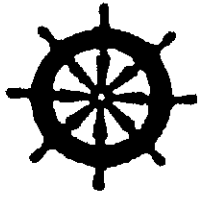


Photo/BRUCE CRAWFORD

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 River boys basketball team. Kneeling, from left, are Michael Johnson, James Hendershot, Colton Lawrence, John Murphy, Stone Thompson and Jason Deaton. Standing, from left, are assistant coach Jordan Indermuhle, head coach Mark Romick, Lukas Isaly, Peyton VanCamp, Drew Dietz, Cody Hupp, Tanner Brown and assistant coach Kris Pfalzgraf.



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Class 4A

# Meadowbrook, Steubenville set to meet again

By **SETH STASKEY**  
Times Leader Sports Editor

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** – A lot of times there's a level of unknown in the title games of the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Boys Basketball Championships.

The Class 4A title game, which tips off at 2:30 p.m. inside Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Center, doesn't fall into that category.

Quite frankly, second-seeded Meadowbrook and fourth-seeded Steubenville are no strangers to one another. Today's game marks the second consecutive season they've played in this game and the second time they've played this month.

"It's a new game," Meadowbrook head coach Lou "Scooter" Tolzda said. "Everything unfolded correctly for us when we played them earlier this season. Last year, we came into the (OVAC) game with a chip on our shoulder because we had lost to them

during the regular season."

The Colts, who come into the game with a 15-5 record, handed Big Red their most lopsided loss of the season by a 74-45 count in Byesville.

"They handled us," Steubenville head coach Mike Haney recalled. "We have to look at that film and see what we can do better. We will need to hope for a cold-shooting night because they have a lot of offensive firepower."

Neither team was a lock to not only get to today's game, but to qualify for the tournament. Since the Colts are also members of the East Central Ohio League, they played only seven OVAC opponents. Once the January weather hit, Tolzda began to get nervous. It led to his team playing six games in 11 days to make sure it was able to play its make-up games.

"There were no guarantees we'd get in," Tolzda said. "On top of the weather

See, 4A, Page 5

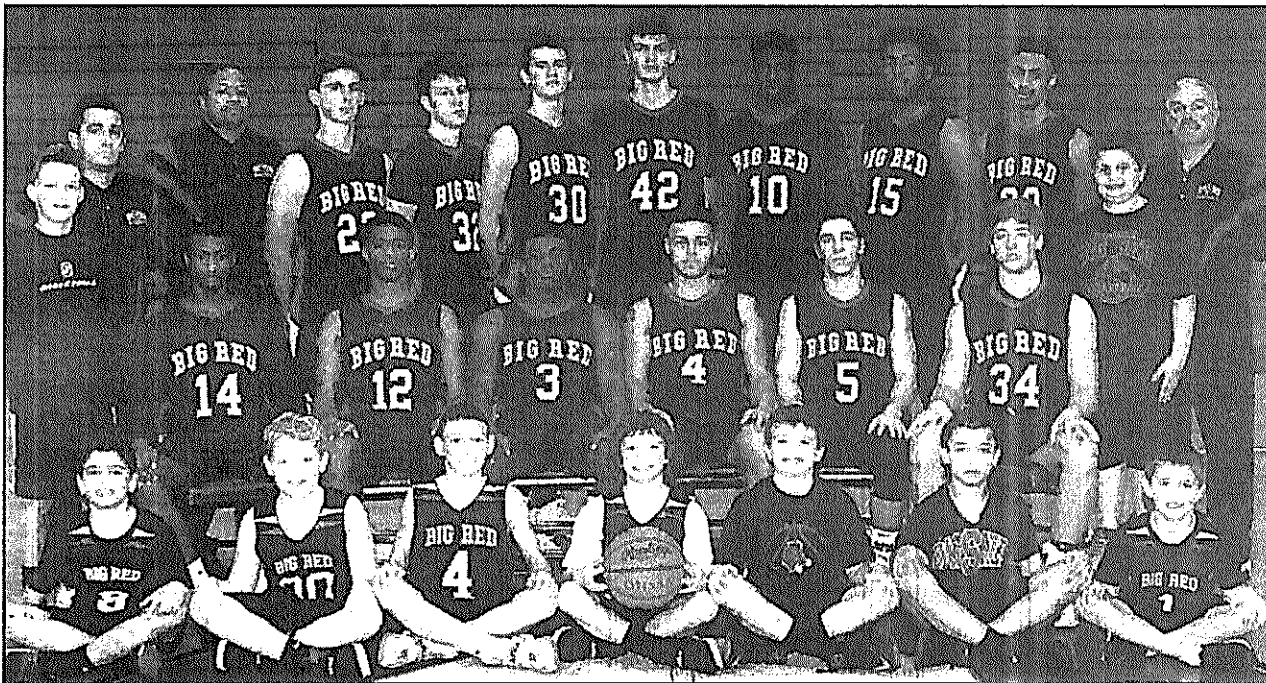


Photo Provided

**PICTURED IS** the 2017-18 Steubenville basketball team. The team includes Dajuan Jones, Javon Davis, Carlo Biasi, Jorian Jones, Abraham Zane, Josh Zimmerman, James Roundtree, Davon Smith, Nico Braccone, Calvin Bickerstaff, Ryan Rauch and Jacob Clevenger.

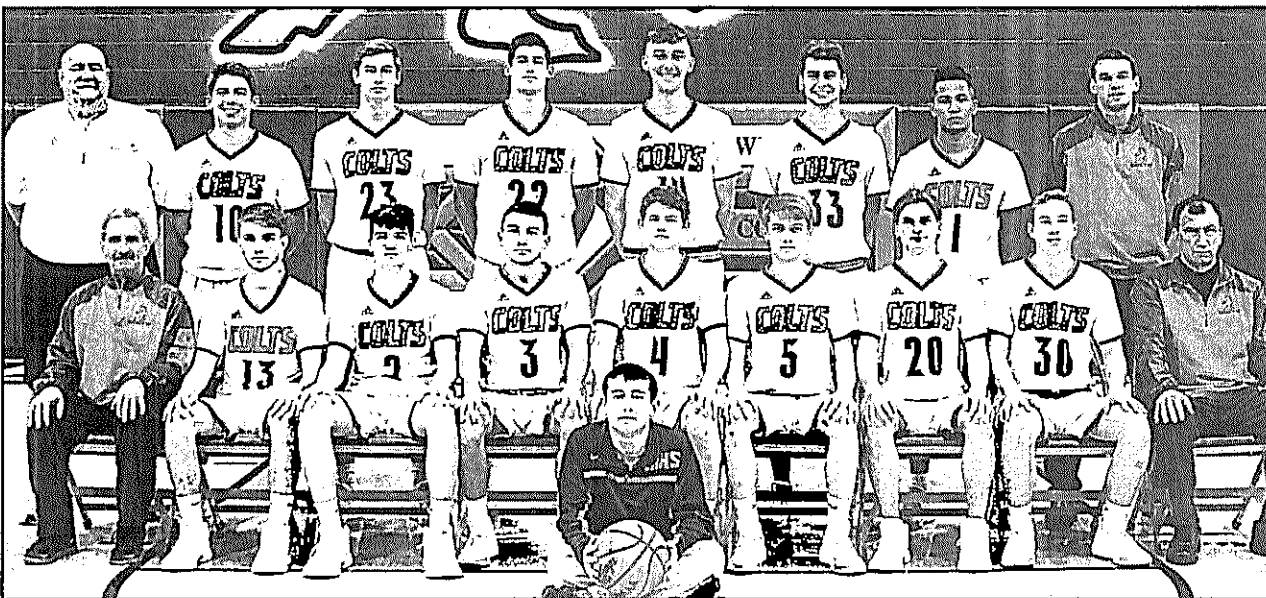


Photo Provided

**PICTURED IS** the 2017-18 Meadowbrook basketball team. Seated, from left, are assistant coach Dan Schwieterman, Zach Rusnak, Dylan Webster, Trey Singleton, Dalton Wood, Peyton Neff, Boston Black, Cage Black and head coach Lou "Scooter" Tolzda. Standing, from left, are assistant coach Mel Pesuit, Bobby Feyko, Addy Black, Davis Black, Logan Fox, Easton Black, Jonathan McCall and assistant coach Teryn Jarrett.

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2A

Continued from Page 3

The 6-3 Dietz averages 8 points and 7 boards, while the 6-2 Hupp adds 7 points and 6 caroms. The 6-foot Grimes averages 2-3 points.

Coming off the bench are sophomores Stone Thompson (6-1) and Colton Lawrence (5-10); and seniors Tanner Brown (6-0) and Peyton VanCamp (6-2). Of that quartet, Thompson averages about 6 points a night.

Romick knows it won't be a picnic Saturday as the Crusaders pose a lethal

twosome in AJ Connor and Donnie Vandeborne.

"They rely on two guys to score a bulk of their points, but they have a lot of depth and some nice role players," he said. "Connor and Vandeborne like to put the ball on the floor and attack you offensively. They like to drive in and kick it back out. We must limit their penetration and keep them out of the paint."

The 6-foot Connor is Steubenville Catholic's

See, 2A, Page 9

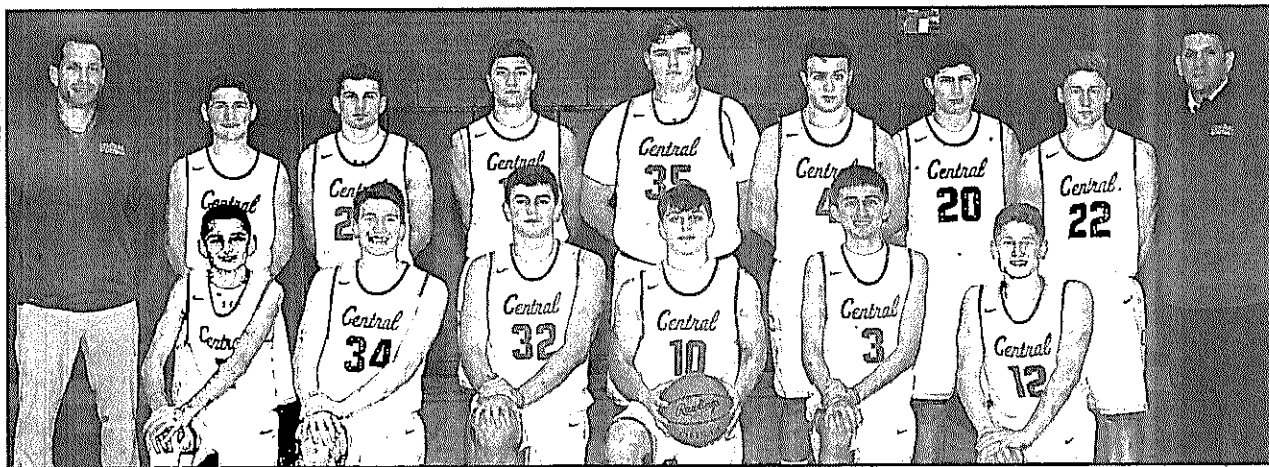


Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Steubenville Catholic Central basketball team. Front row, from left, are Luca Connor, Josh Costello, Donnie Vandeborne, Geno DiBlase, AJ Connor and Jack Rook. Back row, from left, are assistant coach Dave Connor, Issac Hough, Matt Kilonsky, Chole Maragos, Jake Stoll, Ryan Gorman, Vince Carapellotti, Michael Rook and head coach Chris Tarquinio.

4A

Continued from Page 4

er and playing so few OVAC games, we are facing what many have told me is the toughest schedule in Meadowbrook history, so I am pretty proud of what these guys have done."

The Colts have been in several tight games, including all of their losses, which came to a list of heavy hitters, including Parkersburg South, Zanesville in overtime, John Glenn, Dover and Warren Local.

Steubenville, meanwhile, ended the pre-OVAC portion of the schedule with a three-game losing skid and whether or not it or St. Clairsville qualified came down to bonus points, causing some anxious moments in the Jefferson Co. Seat.

"We were hanging on like a rock climber to stay in that fourth spot," Haney said. "We're happy it worked out and now we have a chance to get back to this game. We played some good teams from outside of the area to help prepare us for the tournament, but we'd like to win some of those games, too. Not just play in them. It was a roller coaster like season

for us."

Big Red is playing in their fourth conference title game. They won the crown in 2014, knocking off Union Local. All told, Big Red owns 14 titles.

En route to the title game, Meadowbrook had its way with Oak Glen, winning by an 83-47 count.

"We were ready to play and we played well," Tolzda, who picked up career win number 401 in the process, said. "Our kids approached that game like they have all season. We play hard and we play with excitement."

Steubenville rebounded from its sluggish finish and went to Cadiz and took down the top-seeded

Huskies, 67-57.

"It's took us a little while longer than we expected for us to get, but we're starting to share the ball better, which is big for us," Haney said. "We thought, at the beginning of the season, we had a chance to be in this game, but we also thought our record (11-8) would be better, too. We have to play four, good quarters. We were able to do that at Harrison."

Though the Colts lost four of their five starters, including three of whom playing at the collegiate level, from last season's team that not only won the OVAC, but also advanced to the Division II regional, Tolzda believed his squad could still be formidable.

"We had some kids waiting their turn and we had a great summer, where the

kids really worked hard," Tolzda said. "Our open gyms were good and the

kids got better from playing. Plus, winning sees

See, 4A, Page 5

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3A

Continued from Page 6

compete for its sixth consecutive conference title by virtue of a 65-55 victory against Fort Frye.

"We knew Fort Frye would provide a real test because of how disciplined they are and how well they

shoot the ball," Stephens said. "The semifinal games are tough. If you look at most of the games in the

OVAC, they're all usually pretty close."

Stephens believes that playing the Cadets prior to

the Jets is a good tuneup because of the similar styles at which the two teams employ.

"Union Local similar to them in a lot of respects," Stephens said. "Union

See,3A, Page 8

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3A

Continued from Page 7

Local has a little better shooters overall, but they're both disciplined and really test you on the defensive end."

Union Local certainly can shoot the basketball. The Jets are shooting 38 percent from behind the 3-point line and have cashed in 152 triples this season.

Leading the way for the Jets, who only utilize a six-man rotation for the most part, are the Brothers Kildow. Junior Cal Kildow leads the way in the scoring column at 17.5 points a night. Senior Ty Kildow checks in at 16 points per.

Rugged senior Cody Ray, who plays much bigger than his 6-foot frame, is next in line at 12.5 points per game. He also leads the team with 5.6 rebounds per contest.

Junior Elijah Baker - a starter for the first time this season - has made his presence felt time and time again. He averages 8.6 points a game, while senior Luke Menges rounds out the lineup. Another interior player who plays bigger

than his frame, nets just over four points a night.

"We have to continue to be balanced," Delman said. "Teams know who our top threats are, so all of the guys have to do their part and step up. We could have four or five guys put up double figures on any given night, which is a good thing about our guys."

Derek Smith is the Jets' top substitute.

Central, which has stubbed its toe to Mars, Pa in the Cancer Research Classic and Clarksburg Notre Dame, is led by its dynamic back-court duo of seniors Brent Price and Owen Gainer.

Both not only average 21 points a contest, but they also raise the level of play of their teammates.

Price and Gainer have surpassed the 1,000-point mark in their careers and Stephens likes how unselfish each player remains.

"They both do a good job of looking for each other,"

See, 3A, Page 9

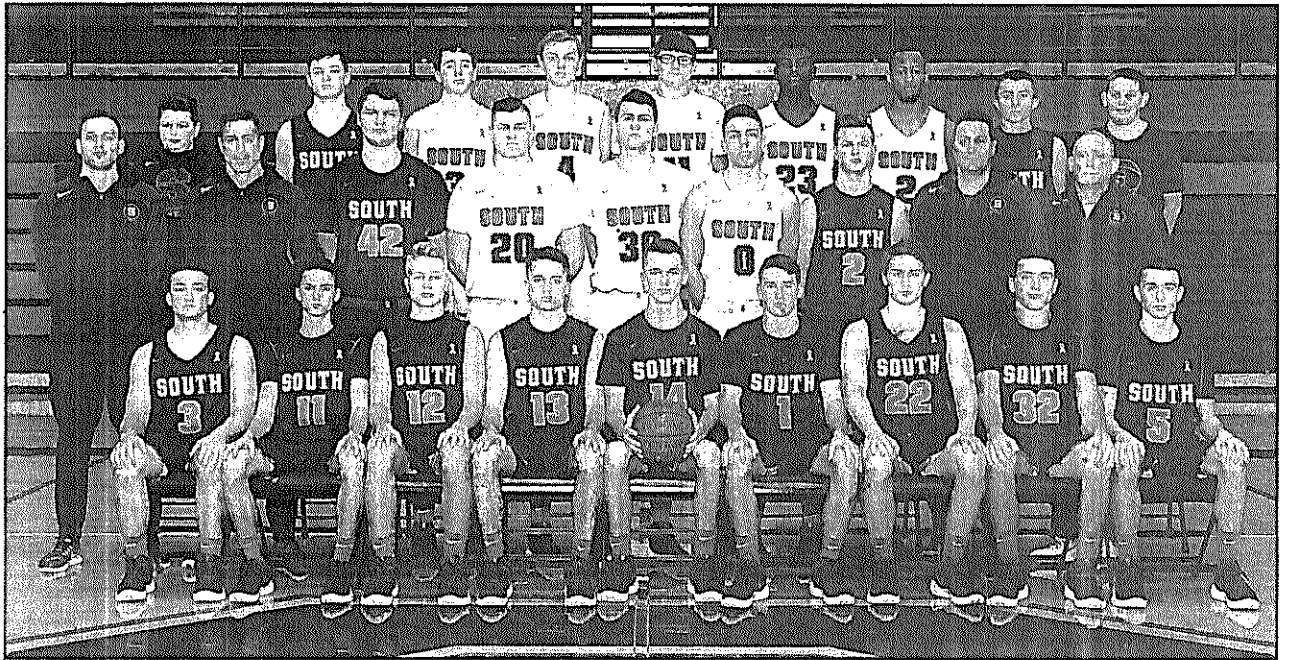


Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Parkersburg South basketball team. Front row, from left, are Ben Menarchek, Cody Durnell, Tyson Graham, Cole Plants, Kerwyn Marshall, Todd Burner, Shane Snider, Brayden Mooney and Jacob Dennis. Second row, from left, are assistant coach Garrett Foggin, head coach Mike Fallon, Isaac Smith, Colten Luther, Alex Woolard, Malaki Sylvia, Seth Fallon, assistant coaches Adam Dobson and Chris Hyson. Top row, from left, are Cam Fallon, Brendan Jenkins, Brendan Plants, Cameron Marks, Nathan Currey, Devin Gains, Brandon Penn, Noah Barker and Andrew Pierotti.

Class 5A

# South, University ready

By **BUBBA KAPRAL**  
Executive Sports Editor

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** - It will be a powerhouse showdown in the OVAC Wheeling Hospital 5A Boys' Basketball Championships title game this afternoon at Ohio University Eastern.

Parkersburg South and University enter the title tilt ranked No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, in the latest West Virginia Class AAA poll. The two have met once this season with South posting a hard-earned 67-63 win on its home boards. It is the Hawks' lone loss this season.

Each team has one OVAC hoop crown in its archives. University enters the game as defending con-

ference champion, dispatching rival Morgantown in the title contest. South, meanwhile, claimed its crown in 2013.

Both teams turned in impressive semi-final performances to punch their title-game ticket.

No. 1 seed South blasted Indian Creek, 77-43, Tuesday while No. 2 seed University eliminated Wheeling Park, 80-45, the same evening.

South has two losses on the campaign, coming at the hands of Teays Valley Christian and George Washington, the latter taking place Thursday.

The Patriots boast a veteran lineup, starting three seniors and a pair of juniors.

Senior guard Cole Plants

is South's top scorer, averaging 18.6 points per game. Classmate Shane Snider is support support with a 15.4 ppg. average.

The balance of the starting five consists of juniors Seth Fallon (9.4 ppg.) and Brayden Mooney (8.7 ppg.) and senior Kerwyn Marshall (3.7 ppg.).

South is averaging nearly 70 points a contest while yielding just 57.

University, coached by Joe Schmidle, is driven by point guard Kaden Metheny. The 5-11' sophomore is already receiving a multitude of D-1 offers.

Senior forward Ethan Ridgeway is also a Hawk force. He delivered 23 points in the semi-final win while Metheny added 18.

The pair drew the praise

of Wheeling Park head coach Michael Jebbia.

"I know there's no better point guard in the state than Kaden Metheny. That's a guarantee. And Ethan Ridgeway without a doubt is one of the top players in the state," Jebbia remarked after Tuesday's clash.

Metheny and Ridgeway are joined in the University starting lineup by Austin Forbes (13.2 ppg.), Clay Bailey and Storm Leftridge.

"I think South is the No. 1 team in West Virginia for a reason. They are very balanced and deep. They have many weapons on offense that are multi-dimensional," Schmidle said. "They are very difficult to guard and prepare for. I'm hoping that

See, 5A, Page 9

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SOUTH  
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**GOOD LUCK  
PATRIOTS!**

From The  
Parkersburg  
South Boys  
Basketball  
Boosters






Photo Provided

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 University basketball team. The team consists of K.J. McClurg, Oliver Reed, Clay Bailey, Kaden Metheny, Tyler Blohm, Ethan Ridgeway, Rodney Bucklew, Mike Maumbe, Kyle Smith, Storm Leftridge, Austin Forbes, Buddy Leach and Riley McCord.

2A

Continued from Page 5

Tarquinio said. "Not many people thought we could get here, but the 14 players and 3 coaches did. We knew we could get here and we proved it the other night on the court."

Playing bigger schools during the regular season has allowed the Crusaders to be ready when the competition gets stiff.

"I purposely scheduled a tough schedule. I made it challenging for a reason and that reason being that playing good competition will make us better at tournament time," he said.

He also knows that playing River will not be an easy task.

"It will definitely be a

challenge for us," Tarquinio said. "I've known Mark (Romick) for a long time. I know River will be well-coached and disciplined. They play solid defense and have one of the best players in the state in Lukas (Isaly)."

Rounding out the Crusaders starting lineup are senior Geno DiBiase (5-11) and juniors Jake Stoll (6-5) and Matt Kilonsky (5-11). Stoll and Kilonsky each score a little over 6 points a game. Coming off the bench are senior Josh Costello (6-0) and sophomore Luca Connor (5-11). Connor averages 5 points and Costello 4.

5A

Continued from Page 8

playing on a neutral floor will balance things out. They are almost impossible to beat in their gym."

South is coached by Mike Fallon. He holds University in high regard.

"University is a very good basketball team. They have many different weapons and can score in bunches," Fallon offered. "They are very well coached and very disci-

plined team. Watching film on them is very similar to us. Same type of style up and down the floor.

"I am very proud of our kids. We toughened up our schedule this year and kids have responded. We also understand the regular season is just a time to get your yourself prepared for post-season play," he added. "We have many different kids step up on nightly

basis and have been able to win close games at home and on road. I think says a lot about them."

Both coaches are fans of the OVAC tourney setup.

"It is nice to play in OVAC finals. Our ultimate goal is to get to Charleston and play for a state championship but we are thankful for opportunity to participate in a great tournament," Fallon said.

That sentiment was reinforced by Schmidle.

"We are happy to represent the conference in the championship game. It's an exciting venue," Schmidle said. "To have the No. 1- and No. 2- ranked AAA teams in the state of West Virginia playing against each other in this final just adds to the excitement. It shows how strong our conference is."

3A

Continued from Page 8

Stephens said. "Brent always had the ability to get into the paint and score. He's worked a lot on his outside shot and improved it. Owen's always been a shooter and he's worked hard on his ability to drive the ball."

While Price and Gainer garner much of the defensive attention — both on the floor and in the scouting

report — they're by no means the Knights' only options.

"You can tell quickly how well coached Wheeling Central and how well their kids play together," Delman said. "They have a good combination of size and speed. You have to focus on Gainer and Price, but Central definitely has other guys who can hurt

you."

On the interior, the Knights boast decent size and length with seniors Anthony Robbins and Cedric Williams. Both check in with seven points a game. Junior Bray Price, who had a big game against Fort Frye earlier in the week, nets six points a contest.

"Those guys play their

roles," Stephens said. "You have to have those kinds of guys who know and accept their roles. We've been fortunate to have that. Even guys off the bench don't contribute a lot of points."

Speaking of the Knights bench, the top subs are Ian Georges, Jalen Creighton and Blake Peluchette.


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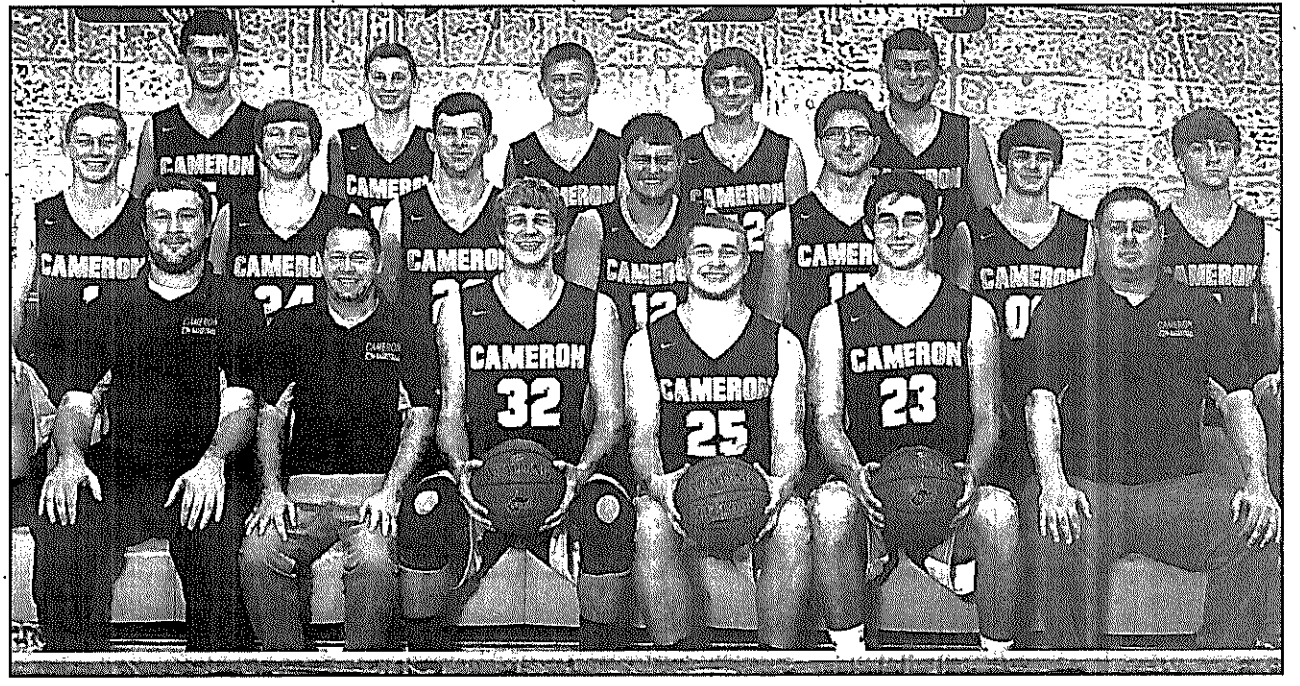
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**GOOD LUCK CAMERON CITY OF CAMERON MAYOR BETTY SCOTT**

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**GOOD LUCK DRAGONS**  
*from*  
**CAMERON ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT**

PICTURED IS the 2017-18 Cameron basketball team. Front row, from left, are assistant coach Devin Overholt, assistant coach Matt Burge, Robert Milliken, Trey Scott, Colby Brown and Head Coach Tom Hart. Middle row, from left, are Noah Neely, Jessop Broughton, Travis Mickey, Aidan Lucey, Dillon Meintel, Zane Clutter and Garrett Scott. Third row, from left, are Logan Burkett, Mason Miller, Scott Pekula, Conner Howard and Scott White.

**Class 1A**  
**Cameron, Trinity to vie**

By RICK THORP  
Times Leader Sports Writer

ST. CLAIRSVILLE - Regular-season games don't always foreshadow the results of a tournament rematch. But if Trinity and Cameron stage a battle like the one they put on about a month ago, the folks inside OUE's Physical Education and Recreation Center might be in for a dandy tonight.

The Warriors and Dragons meet in the 7 p.m. finale of the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Boys' Basketball Championships, and if their January 24th meeting is any indication, a close tilt could be in store.

"I know (Cameron head) coach (Tom) Hart pretty well," Trinity head coach John Fowkes said this

week, minutes after his team moved to 14-5 by belting South Harrison. "And, he knows us pretty well.

"So, it's going to be a slugfest. We anticipate that, for sure."

Just like the Class 5A final before it, the 1A title bout features two teams ranked in the top 10 of their West Virginia class. The Warriors stand sixth in the latest Associated Press Class A rankings, while the Dragons are eighth.

"Playing for the OVAC title is a tremendous honor," Hart said. "But this game will also have statewide implications, as well."

The Dragons (17-3) are trying to turn to turn a rare OVAC double. Cameron's

girls claimed their first conference crown - in any era - last week. The boys will try to do the same, but Hart isn't thinking about making history - just bringing home the crown.

"We're just focusing on coming ready to play (tonight)," he said. "It would be tremendous, though, to join the girls as champions. It would be a tremendous feat, not only for the school, but the community, too."

Trinity, meanwhile, is seeking its second crown in three seasons and first under Fowkes, in his second year. Last winter, the Warriors lost in the semifinals to Wellsville.

"That's one of goals to win the OVAC," Fowkes said. "This is a tournament

we want to win."

Trinity is no stranger to the big stage. In mid-December, it won the Jefferson Tournament, comprised of larger teams. Then, to round out the month, it played locally in the Undo's at Wheeling Jesuit University, falling to Wheeling Central in the championship game.

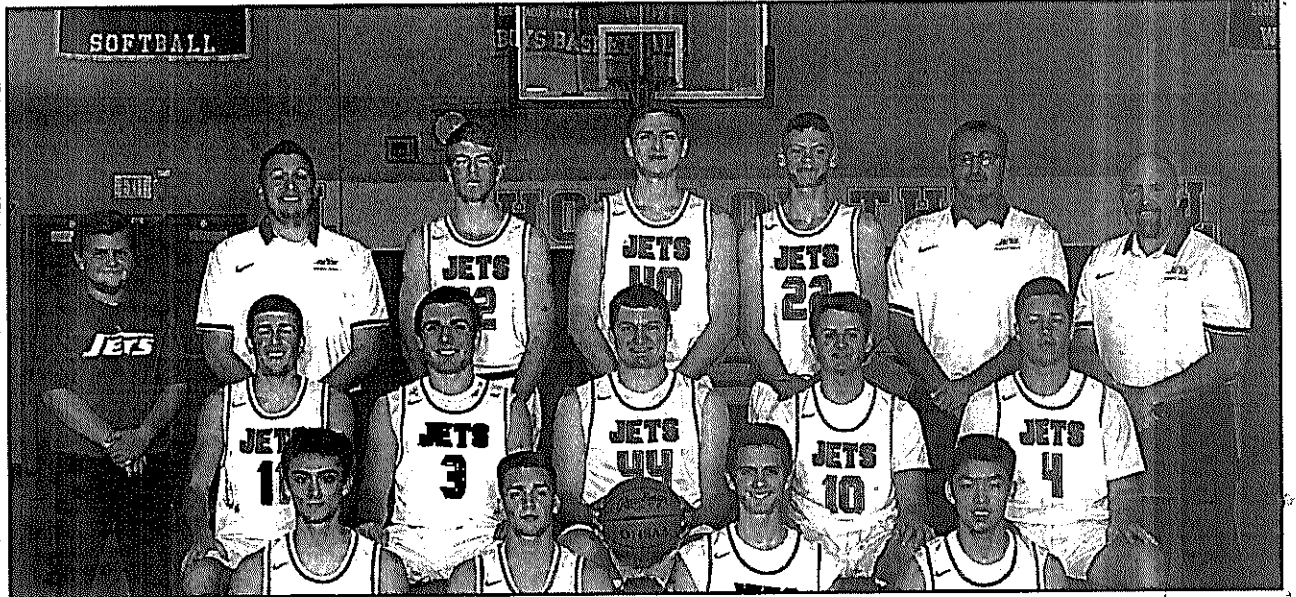
Hart knows the Warriors are battle-tested and saw that first hand in their meeting a month ago.

"They have length and they have quickness," he said. "They have some really good shooters."

Trinity led by as many as 16 in Marshall County, but it took a 3-pointer by senior Jacob Martin with 24 seconds left to give the War-

**PICTURED IS** the 2017-18 Trinity Christian basketball team. Front row, from left, are Caleb Jenkins, Josh Hart, Josh Rosen, Cam Kellar, Jacob Martin, Jo Zini, Caleb Moats, Kellen Alderman, Briston Bennett, Jalen Wimer and Mason Steptoe. Back row, from left, are Finn Sinclair, Jon Morley, Caleb Rice, Logo Zervos, Mark Spruill, Daniel Woods, Joel Robertson, Fletcher Hartsock, Dakota Shepherd and Jack Barnett. Back row, from left, are assistant coach Brandon Stakey, head coach John Fowkes and assistant coach Marcus Law.

Photo Provided



1A

Continued from Page 10

riors a 64-63 victory. "They're best player is (Joe) Zinni," Hart said. "He's their go-to guy. He kind of carried the in the fourth quarter against us."

Zinni (6-3 senior), who surpassed the 1,000-point mark Wednesday, enters tonight's game having scored 31 points in back-to-back games. He's averaging about 17 points per contest.

Rounding out the Warriors' starting lineup are - Josh Hart (5-9 junior), Briston Bennett (5-10 junior), Joel Robertson (6-3 junior) and Daniel Woods (6-5, junior).

"He's very quick on his feet," Hart said of Wilson, averaging 15 points and 12 boards per outing. "You just can't let him have his way or he'll eat you up inside."

Fowkes said he likes to go as many as five deep off the bench, with seniors Caleb Moats (6-2), Kellen Alderman (6-2) and Cam Kellar (5-9) contributing, along with juniors Logo Zervos (6-1) and Jon Morley (5-9).

The bench has been crucial for the Warriors as Caleb Jenkins, their original starter at point guard, is out with a stress fracture. Martin, the hero in the first Cameron game, tore his ACL in a rematch with the Maroon Knights on January 31.

The Dragons have been hit by the injury bug, too. Senior Robert Milliken, averaging 14 points, 11 rebounds and four blocks per game, injured his ankle last week against Tyler Consolidated and is doubtful tonight. If he can't go, look for either sophomore Garrett Scott (6-0) or junior Dillon Meintel (5-10).

The rest of Cameron's starting lineup includes: seniors Trey Scott (5-10) and Colby Brown (6-5), and juniors Aidan Lucey (5-10) and Travis Mickey (6-2).

"All five of our starters have had at least one game of scoring 20 points or more," Hart pointed out. "Our scoring is balanced. We don't have one player that does it all. They play team ball because they believe in playing team ball. They don't worry about getting the points. They want to play well and hard and they want to win."

Hart believes the game will certainly provide a post-season-type atmosphere.

"I think it's a great night-cap game," Hart said. "You have two teams. Both teams ranked."

"We know we'll be running into a very good team. John does a great job with them. We'll have to bring our 'A' game. We know that."

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# WINTER SPORTS ARE HERE!

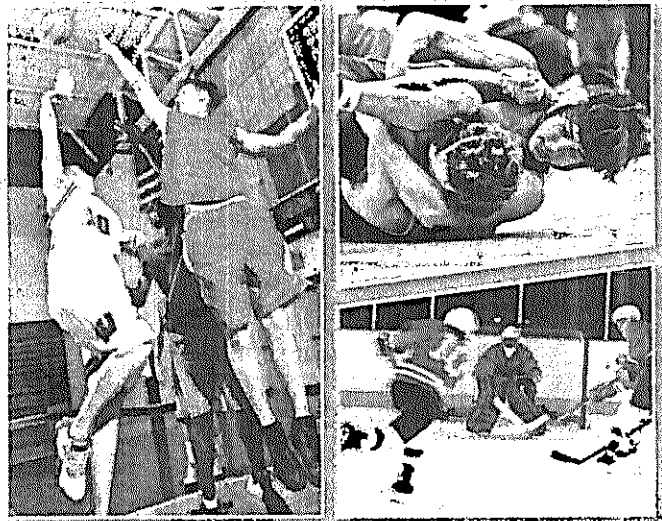
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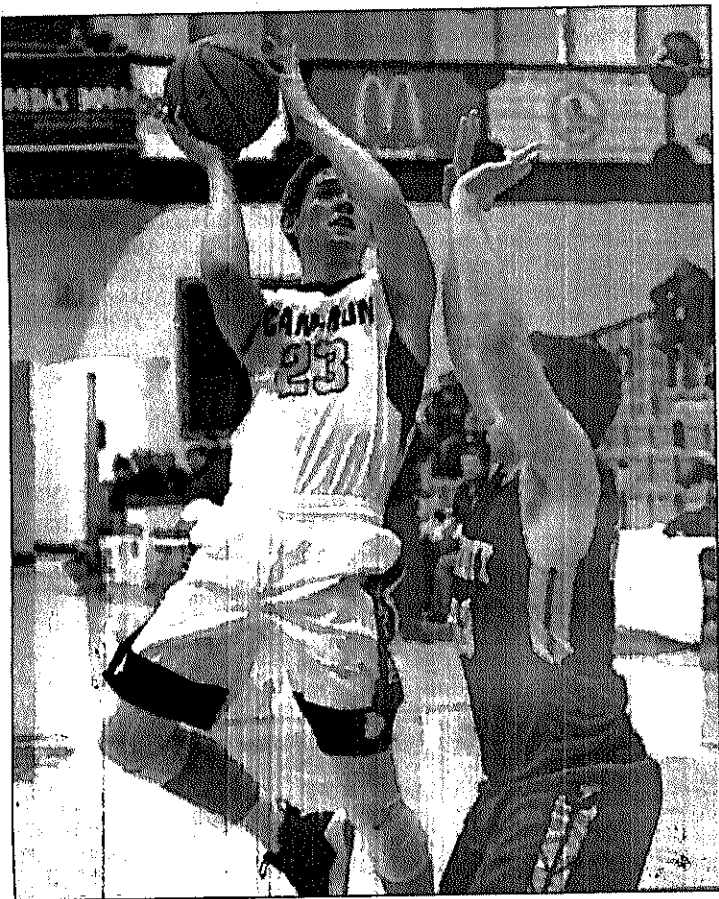


Photo by Bill Ferguson  
Cameron's Colby Brown shoots over Trinity Christian's Daniel Woods during first half action in the OVAC Class 1A Championship game.

## Cameron Falls In 1A Championship

Dragons struggle with Trinity's press

By JOSH STROPE  
Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Trinity coach John Fowkes couldn't say enough about his defense following Saturday's OVAC Class 1A championship victory against Cameron.

The Warriors were ferocious on the press, something they felt they could have a lot of success with after watching film of Cameron's game against Wheeling Central in the Undo's Tournament.

Trinity (15-5) forced 14 turnovers, including four in the fourth quarter en route to a 52-40 triumph at Ohio University Eastern in the nightcap of the tournament. It is the second OVAC title for the Warriors, winning it previously in 2016.

"Wheeling Central ran a diamond press against them, but Wheeling didn't really sprint back on defense and we kinda

knew how to attack it with a four across," Fowkes said. "We disguised the diamond press with bringing all the guys up and I still don't think they knew what kind of press it was."

"I think we wore them out. Credit to our kids. We have had a great season with strength and conditioning. Our kids are in great shape. Joel Robertson played four quarters straight. We had (Logo) Zervos come off the bench. He is a jayvee kid that got his first real minutes in big action this season and he was pretty good for us."

Cameron (17-4) trailed for most of the night, but never let the score get too far away. The Dragons took a 27-25 lead early in the third quarter on back-to-back 3-pointers from Colby Brown and Travis Micky. Brown's basket to make it 29-28 midway through the quarter, though, was the last time the Dragons led.

See Cameron, Page B4

# Central Captures Sixth Straight OVAC Title

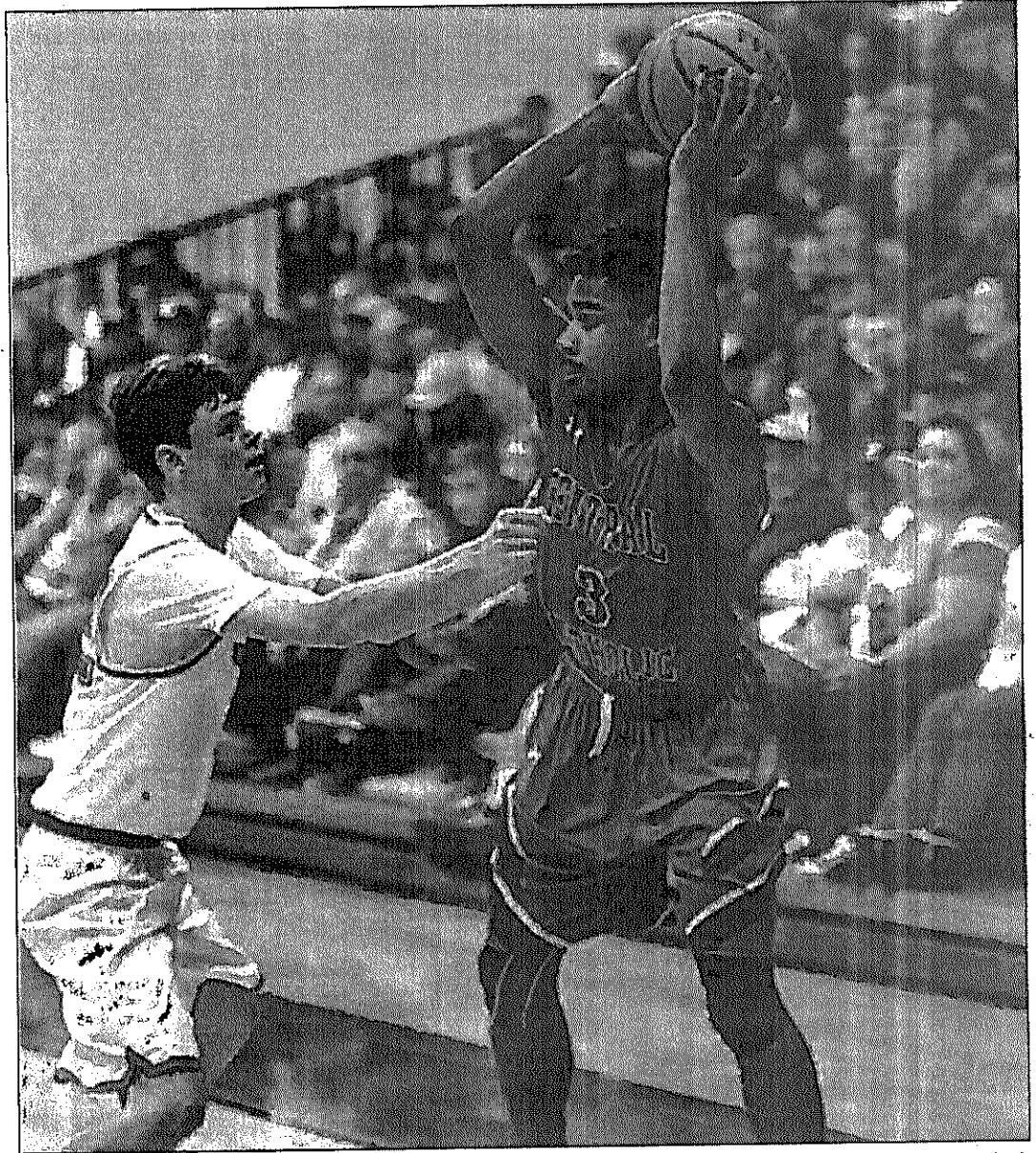


Photo by Sheri McAninch  
Wheeling Central's Brent Price looks for an open teammate as Union Local's Elijah Baker defends during the 3A OVAC Championship game.

## Maroon Knights get victory over Union Local

By SETH STASKEY

For the News-Register

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Winning the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference championship never gets old for Wheeling Central.

Especially as it pertains to championships in the Wheeling Hospital Boys Basketball Championships.

The Maroon Knights added another chapter to their illustrious hoop history Saturday afternoon when they knocked

off top-seeded Union Local, 59-43, in front of a large turnout at Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Center. The championship is Central's sixth consecutive and seventh all told under the current tournament format.

"What's nice is you have some of the guys returning, but you always have a few new guys sprinkled in and for them to have the opportunity to come over here to even

play for one is special, but to win one is really nice," Central coach Mel Stephens said.

Wheeling Central, which never trailed in the game, exerted its will by virtue of its clear advantages in foot speed, length, size and overall athleticism.

"They're just way more athletic than us," Union Local coach Zach Delman said.

"They're talented and very

See Central, Page B4

Continued from page B1

Daniel Woods came through with a conventional three-point play to give the Warriors back the lead at 31-29 and never trailed the rest of the way.

Cameron cut the deficit to 40-36 in the fourth quarter on a 3-pointer by Dillon Meintel.

It was answered by two free throws from Woods. As Cameron tried to bring the ball up the court, it was stolen and Kellen Alderman scored a basket, was fouled and completed the three-point play to stretch the lead to nine.

After a Mickey basket on the other end, it became a free-throw shooting contest down the stretch, with Trinity converting on 7 of 8 tries to seal a victory.

"This means a lot to the kids, the program, me personally," Fowkes said. "I told the kids to pinch me. It is pretty cool and I'm living the dream."

On the other end, Cameron saw its hopes for its first OVAC boys' title come up short on the same floor the girls' team made history seven days earlier.

"They are disappointed," Cameron coach Tom Hart said. "We have been working hard for this game, but we didn't get into much of an offensive rhythm and I give that credit to Trinity. They played really well on defense."

"They put an emphasis on our point guard Trey Scott and not letting him get the ball. We put in some sets we thought that could work but never got that chance. We typically don't turn the ball over a lot."

"We made a lot of poor decisions, but again, I credit a lot of that to Trinity's defense."

Brown was the lone Dragon in double figures with 16 points and completed the double-double with 10 rebounds.

Woods, who was named the John Howell Most Valuable Player, took advantage of the lack of size inside for Cameron. With Robert Milliken, who has been injured, limited in his minutes, Woods (6-foot-5) used the mismatch on his way to a game-high

18 points and 10 rebounds. Robertson added 11 points.

"One of the benefits of this game was getting to play Trinity this close to the postseason," Hart said. "They are going to be one of the favorites to come out of their region so I think this game will benefit us in getting ready for the postseason. We have a tough section and a tough region. This type of game, a championship game on neutral floor, will benefit us."

**Class 5A**  
**University 60**  
**Parkersburg South 45**  
**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** — University claimed its second straight OVAC title, beating Parkersburg South in a battle of the top two teams in Class AAA in West Virginia.

Kaden Metheny scored 17 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter to earn MVP honors. Ethan Ridgeway netted 10.

Cole Plants paced the Patriots with 13 points.

**GIRLS**  
**W.Va. Class AA**  
**Region One, Section Two**  
**Weir 44, Oak Glen 32**  
**WEIRTON** — Freshman

Leah Maley had 13 points and Gia Fuscardo netted 12 as Weir (9-14) ended Hancock County rival Oak Glen's season in a first round sectional game.

The Red Riders (9-14) will take on top seed North Marion on Tuesday.

Maggie Kovalcik paced the Golden Bears (5-18) with 12 points.

**W.Va. Class A**  
**Region One, Section Two**  
**St. Marys 77**  
**Paden City 31**

**ST. MARYS** — Paden City fell into a 20-3 first-quarter hole and couldn't dig its way out in a season-ending loss to Paden City.

Skyler Fulks paced the Wildcats with 10 points.

**2018 Eastern Interscholastic Swimming & Diving Championships**  
**GERMANTOWN** — The Linsly girls swim team was led by Sydney West at the Eastern Scholastic Swimming & Diving Championships as she placed in the 100 breaststroke with a time of 1:08.84.

Also placing for the Cadets were all three girls and boys relay teams.

Continued from page B1

dangerous. We tried our best to keep them out of the open court and not make the game a track meet."

Union Local did have the game's tempo to its liking, but that's where Central's defense became a factor.

The Maroon Knights exerted their will defensively, offering very few open looks.

The Jets, who hit 16 treys against Bellaire in the semifinal victory last Tuesday, converted half as many from behind the arc this time out.

"We knew how dangerous Union Local is because of how well they shoot the ball and they're very disciplined (offensively)," Stephens said. "Those were concerns, but defensively, I am really proud. They shook loose a couple of times, but for the most part we were there to contest shots. We rebounded well, too."

Union Local finally found some room to operate in the third quarter as junior Elijah Baker got open to hit three bonus goals in the period. The Jets were within four at 33-29, but after several empty possessions on both ends, Central stopped its bleeding.

Senior standout Owen Gainer dialed up a triple and then got a steal and layup, pushing the lead back to nine. Quite simply, the Jets couldn't recover.

In the fourth quarter, Knights senior Brent Price, who had been held primarily in check, got going and claimed the game's MVP Award.

He scored seven of his 13. Included was a fierce two-handed jam down the middle of the lane.

"We had to claw back too much after we let them extend a lead," Delman said.

"We got some stops when we needed them, but we had three or four empty possessions and couldn't get over the hump. They made plays when they needed them."

While Price and Gainer garner most of the attention — and rightfully so — they weren't alone against the Jets. Cedric Williams scored 10 points and freshman A.J. Maxwell, who was recently elevated to the varsity squad, came off the bench to score 10, too.

Union Local, meanwhile, was led by junior Cal Kildow's 14. Baker finished with 13 and Ty Kildow added 11.

## TOPPERS

Continued from page B1

"My teammates really found me," Brown said. "When we get up and running and hitting our shots, that's when we are at our best."

36 seconds on the clock to make it a one-score game, but West Liberty came up empty handed in their final possession

Tayana Stewart's 11.

**Wheeling Jesuit 81**  
**West Virginia Wesleyan 78**  
**WHEELING** — The lone Wheeling

Sunday, February 18, 2018

## SPORTS

SUNDAY NEWS-REGISTER — Wheeling, W.Va. — B3

## River Claims First Conference Title Since 1973

By KIM NORTH  
For The News-Register

**ST. CLAIRSVILLE** — Before the 2017-18 season began, River coach Mark Romick sat down with his team. Together they compiled a bucket list for the upcoming campaign. Saturday morning, the Pilots crossed off another goal.

Behind a stifling third-quarter defense, top-seeded River (20-1) continued its impressive year with a 55-39 come-from-behind victory over No. 2 Steubenville Catholic in the Wheeling Hospital OVAC Boys Basketball Championships Class 2A title tilt inside a chilly Ohio University Eastern's Health and Physical Education Center.

The championship was the Pilots' second, the first coming nearly five decades ago in 1973.

"This is pretty sweet," Romick said. "To double up with what the girls did last weekend is great for both programs. It's great for the kids. You can't be happier for our seniors. They've put in a lot of time and the kids have worked really hard."

"That's 20 wins on the season for us. That ties the school record. We had goals set whenever the season started. It's kind of comical but we go over those goals every day during practice. I asked them what goal No. 1 was, and they responded '16 wins.' I said 'OK, you've got a checkmark. I said we're not going to stop there and they said 'no, we're going on.'"

"Goal No. 2 was to get into the OVAC (final four) and the seniors set goal No. 3 of winning it. I just told them today goal No. 3 is done. We've got other goals set, too. This is a special bunch."

The Pilots, who were ranked as high as No. 2 in the Ohio Division IV poll this season, had to overcome a stern test from the Crusaders (12-8). The teams were deadlocked at 11 after one quarter before the Jefferson County quint took a slim, 24-23, edge into the lockerroom at halftime.

Sparking the Crusaders was Donnie Vandeborne. The senior netted 18 of his team-

best 23 points in the first 16 minutes. However, he and classmate AJ Connor were the only Crusaders to make a field goal in the game.

"We were right there with them. We went cold in the third quarter offensively, and when you're playing a team like River, if you through a bad spell like we did, you get yourself in trouble because it's so tough to come back against them," Steubenville Catholic coach Chris Tarquinio said.

While River was playing in-your-face defense in the third quarter that limited the Crusaders to 1 for 6 shooting and forced four turnovers, Lukas Isaly and the Pilots' role players were coming up big.

Isaly, the Pilots' 2,000-point standout, scored five points in the quarter and sophomore Stone Thompson added four in a reserve role. Drew Dietz and Dillon Grimes knocked down key 3-pointers as River took a 38-26 advantage into the final chapter.

Isaly tallied 10 fourth-quarter lightings to help the Pilots navigate to the crown. He finished with 29 which gives him 2,034 for his career.

"I've said it before. He is one of the best players around," Tarquinio said of Isaly. "When you play a player like him, you just try and contain him. I thought we did that for the most part, but he hit a couple of buckets there that changed the momentum to their side. Then they had a couple of other guys hit big baskets."

The title not only comes on the heels of the girls' crown last week, but also gives the Pilots a double-double to go along with their football championship.

"These kids came out of football late and people said that would be a detriment, but it wasn't because the kids got into basketball shape pretty quick," Romick said. "I think the success they enjoyed in football carried over into basketball."

Thompson added nine points and three rebounds. He also played very well on defense and distributed the ball on offense.

"Stone has done a great job all year, but

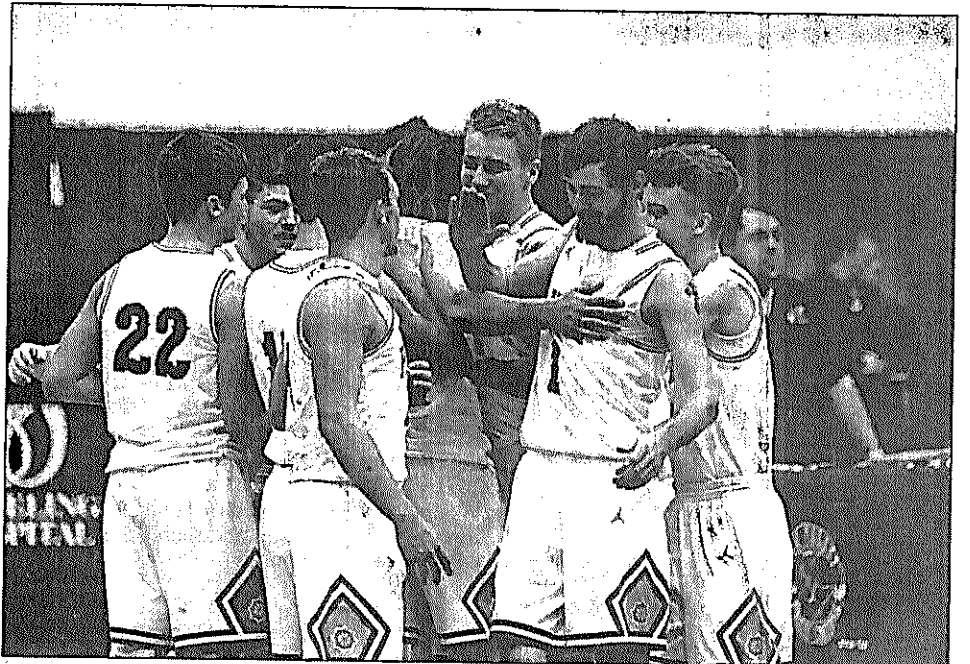


Photo by Sheri McAninch  
The River boys basketball team celebrates after it claimed the 2A OVAC Championship against Steubenville Catholic on Saturday.

(Saturday) I think he played his best game yet," Romick said. "We sat down with him in the middle of the year and told him he was going to have to score some for us. He has the ability to score and he has some tenacity. (Saturday) we put him at the high post and he did an excellent job there."

Grimes chipped in eight points, while Dietz added six and a team-leading eight boards.

In addition to Vandeborne's 23 points, AJ Connor finished with 13.

"I'm very proud of these guys. Nobody thought we would be here. Nobody at all," Tarquinio said. "It's an honor to play in this championship game. I'm not in here for moral victories, though. We want

to win titles and unfortunately we fell short, but Donnie and AJ brought us here and the younger guys have learned from that. We'll be back. We'll be back here."

River led 25-22 off the glass and also had two less turnovers at 12-10.

"Give them credit," Romick said of Steubenville Catholic. "Chris does a great job up there and they gave us everything we wanted."

The Pilots conclude the regular season Tuesday at Frontier with a chance at setting a new school record for wins.

## GAME NOTES

■ River's 20 wins tie the mark set back in the mid-80s, according to Romick.

■ Isaly was voted the game's MVP.

## WHEELING HOSPITAL OVAC BOYS' BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

# River's long title drought finally ends

• Pilots navigate by Crusaders to capture Class 2A crown

By KIM NORTH  
Times Leader Sports Writer

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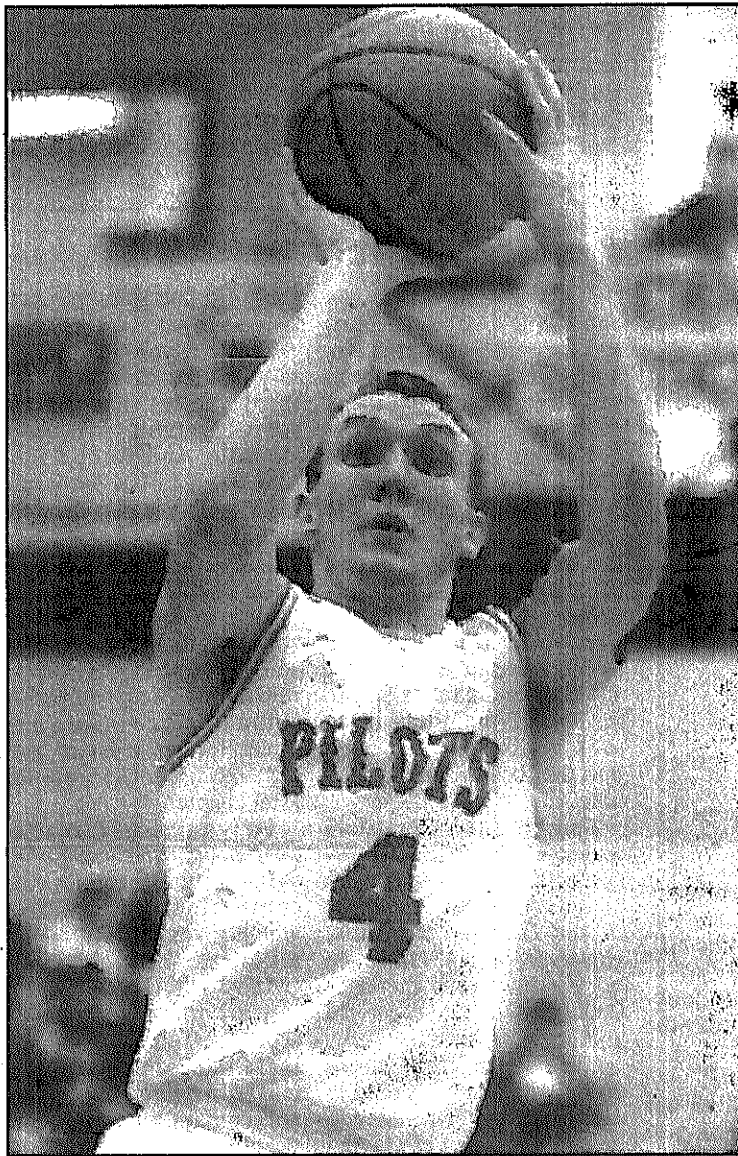
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See, RIVER'S, Page C2



Photo/SHERI McANINCH

RIVER'S Lukas Isaly eyes a shot during Saturday's Class 2A championship game at Ohio University Eastern. He scored 29 points in a 55-39 victory over Steubenville Catholic.

# Maroon Knights ground Jets in 3A

By SETH STASKEY  
Times Leader Sports Editor

ST. CLAIRSVILLE — Winning the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference championship never gets old for Wheeling Central.

Especially as it pertains to championships in the Wheeling Hospital Boys Basketball Championships.

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"What's nice is you have some of the guys returning,



Photo/SHERI McANINCH

UNION LOCAL'S Elijah Baker, right, drives to the basket during Saturday's Class 3A contest.

but you always have a few new guys sprinkled in and for them to have the opportunity to come over here to even

play for one is special, but to win one is really nice," Central head coach Mel Stephens said.

Wheeling Central, which never trailed in the game, exerted its will by virtue of its clear advantages in foot speed, length, size and overall athleticism.

"They're just way more athletic than us," Union Local head coach Zach Delman conceded. "They're talented and very dangerous. We tried our best to keep them out of the open court and not make the game a track meet."

Union Local did have the game's tempo to its liking, but that's where Central's defense became a factor. The Maroon Knights exerted their will defensively, offering very few open looks.

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## • River

Continued from Page C1

shot.

The dynamic freshmen duo of Baylee Wach and Tory Hendershot hit triples in the fourth to keep the Tigers close. Hendershot's goal came with just 51 seconds left and knotted the game at 42.

River, however, was unflappable. It got the ball into Flannery's hands, who continually made plays. Whether it was her 10-of-10 effort at the line, including five straight in the fourth, or when she saved two possessions by calling time outs, she fully earned the game's MVP award.

All told, Flannery finished with 20 points.

"I was nervous coming into this game because it was like we were cursed on this floor," Flannery said. "Being able to get this win is exciting. Shadyside's a good team and made shots when they needed them, but

our defense was good down the stretch."

Despite struggling to score the ball in the fourth quarter, Shadyside still had a glimmer of hope with two seconds to go. Its desperation shot was well short of the rim, setting off the Pilots' celebration.

It didn't take Shadyside head coach Serge Gentile long to pinpoint his team's biggest downfall. One quick glance at the book and a 4-of-14 effort at the foul line led to a lot of head shaking.

"They made a few more plays than we did and we weren't very good at the line," Gentile said. "It's tough to win basketball games, especially a championship game, when you shoot that kind of percentage at the line. River's a very good team and we fought until the end."

Flannery's scoring production was complemented

by solid interior play of Ali Long. She had 14 points. Riley Lollathin added eight points, including three big goals in the second half.

Shadyside was paced by Wach's 16. Hendershot went for 10, while Jaycee Mayeres added seven.

## • Race

Continued from Page C1

death to be a champion and part of the history for our school."

Cambridge, which was on top of the 4A standings all winter, simply dominated its way to the hardware. The Bobcats defeated their two opponents — St. Clairsville and Buckeye Local — by a combined score of 127-57.

As he worried during the week leading up to the game, Figurski's Panthers simply had no answer for Ritz on the interior.

A member of the coveted 1,000-point and 1,000-rebound club, Ritz dominated the paint on both ends. She scored 22 points, grabbed 15 rebounds, swatted four shots and collected four steals en route to the game's MVP honor.

"Lilly Ritz is as good as advertised," Figurski said. "Cambridge was hitting on all cylinders and we couldn't match their intensity. Give Cambridge all of the credit. They took us out of our game, so now we have to regroup and get ready for River View (in the sectional)."

The Bobcats wasted no time in asserting themselves. They led, 16-8, after one and upped the margin to 33-17 at the half before continuing the onslaught in the second half.

"Our length bothered them," Linscott said. "We played well on both ends of the floor."

Along with Ritz' production, talented freshman guard Taylor Slaughter scored 16 points.

Buckeye Local, which finishes the regular season with a 15-7 record, received another steady effort from its junior leaders, Emily Holzopfel and Alaire Destifanes.

Holzopfel, who was bottled up for much of the afternoon, still managed to finish with 16 points. Destifanes added 11, all of which came in the first half.

Destifanes gave the Panthers a glimmer of hope during a stretch in the second quarter when she buried a trey on consecutive trips.

## • Maroon

Continued from Page C1

against Bellaire in the semifinal victory last Tuesday, converted half as many from behind the arc this time out.

"We knew how dangerous Union Local is because of how well they shoot the ball and they're very disciplined (offensively)," Stephens said. "Those were concerns, but defensively, I am really proud. They shook loose a couple of times, but for the most part we were there to contest shots. We rebounded well, too."

Union Local finally found some room to operate in the third quarter as junior Elijah Baker got open to hit three bonus goals in the period. The Jets were within four at 33-29, but after several empty possessions on both ends, Central stopped its bleeding.

Senior standout Owen Gainer dialed up a triple and then got a steal and layup, pushing the lead back to nine. Quite simply, the Jets couldn't recover.

In the fourth quarter,

Knights senior Brent Price, who had been held primarily in check, got going and claimed the game's MVP Award. He scored seven of his 13. Included was a fierce two-handed jam down the middle of the lane.

"We had to claw back too much after we let them extend a lead," Delman said. "We got some stops when we needed them, but we had three or four empty possessions and couldn't get over the hump. They made plays when they needed them."

While Price and Gainer garner most of the attention — and rightfully so — they weren't alone against the Jets.

Cedric Williams scored 10 points and freshman A.J. Maxwell, who was recently elevated to the varsity squad, came off the bench to score 10, too.

Union Local, meanwhile, was led by junior Cal Kildow's 14. Baker finished with 13 and Ty Kildow added 11.

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