

# Big shot, big finish for Grove



Richard Parrish | The Lima News

Columbus Grove's Blake Reynolds goes up for a shot against New Boston Glenwood's Kyle Sexton during a Friday Division IV state semifinal game at the University of Dayton Arena. See more state semifinal photos at [LimaScores.com](http://LimaScores.com).

## Fourth-quarter rally leads Bulldogs to championship game

By Jim Naveau  
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DAYTON — It was, to be honest, the most exciting offensive play Columbus Grove had come up with in quite a while.

But it wasn't the last one for the Bulldogs in a 58-53 win over New Boston Glenwood in their Division IV boys basketball state tournament semifinal on Friday. Far from it.

Columbus Grove had tumbled from a one-point halftime lead to a 10-point deficit as the final seconds of the third quarter ticked

off the scoreboard clock.

But one second before the clock rolled over to 0:00, Gabe Clement connected on a half-court shot to bring the Bulldogs within seven points going into the final quarter.

From there, Columbus Grove went on to hit 7 of its 8 shots in the fourth quarter, including its final seven in a row, to advance to Sunday's state championship game against Botkins at the University of Dayton Arena.

While a direct line can't be drawn from the halfcourt shot to everything good that happened

for Columbus Grove in the final quarter it certainly had a role.

"That made the game seem more manageable at that time," Columbus Grove coach Chris Sautter said.

And, no kidding, it was something the Bulldogs had practiced in a leave no stone unturned approach.

"We actually do that the day before every game. We practice halfcourt shots. Usually there is a Gatorade riding on the line. You just never know when you'll

See GROVE | 4C

## NOTEBOOK

# D-IV title game foes not complete strangers

By Jim Naveau  
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DAYTON — They aren't rivals. They didn't play each other during the regular season and they don't have a lot of common opponents.

But Columbus Grove and Botkins will know a little about each other going into their Division IV state championship game at 10:45 a.m. Sunday.

"We scrimmaged them last year. That was a battle for sure," Columbus Grove coach Chris Sautter said after the Bulldogs defeated New Boston Glenwood 58-53 on Friday in their state semifinal game at the University of Dayton Arena.

"They're pretty good. The two Pleiman kids (Jacob and Carter Pleiman) are, what, 6-5, 6-6? There's another kid who is about 6-5. It all starts with the point guard (Jayden Priddy-Powell). He's a great player, handles the ball well, is quick, has a great pull-up jumper and can get to the rim and finish with either hand," Sautter said.

Botkins (26-3) starts 6-6 junior Jacob Pleiman (15.4 points a game), 5-10 point guard Jayden Priddy-Powell (13.5), 6-5 Carter Pleiman (9.0), 5-11 Zane Paul (7.2) and 6-5 Denton Homan (1.6).

Columbus Grove (25-2) starts 6-4 Blake Reynolds (15.9 points a game), 6-3 Tayt Birnesser

See STRANGERS | 4C



Photos by Richard Parrish | The Lima News

Ottawa-Glandorf's Owen Nichols puts up a shot against Lutheran East's Jalin Billingsley during a Friday Division III state semifinal at the University of Dayton Arena. See more state semifinal photos at [LimaScores.com](http://LimaScores.com).

# O-G falls short against Lutheran East

## Titans' season ends in state semifinals

By Jose Noguera  
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DAYTON — Throughout the postseason, Ottawa-Glandorf has found ways to win but against Lutheran East, the Titans fell short, 58-52, in the Division III state semifinal Friday night.

The loss ends O-G season with a 20-5 mark. Lutheran East advances to the state title game against Worthington Christian at the University of Dayton Sunday.

"Obviously I am very proud of our guys and I thought they executed to a 'T' tonight," Titan head coach Tyson McGlaughlin said. "They did everything I asked them to within our game plan. They took a couple of gambles but you have to give Lutheran East a lot of credit.

"It was a tall task. No pun intended. They have all kinds of size and athleticism and were outmatched in some areas. I am not ashamed to say that because I



Ottawa-Glandorf's Brennen Blevins puts up a shot against Lutheran East's SIRR Hughe.

mean it in with utmost respect to both programs. They found a way to get the job done but I couldn't be prouder of the men in my locker room because they did things they were taught. They had to beat us. We weren't going to beat ourselves"

Going into the final eight minutes, the Titans were down 42-37 after a tough third quarter that saw the Falcons garner

the momentum to claim the five-point advantage.

But the Titans began its fourth quarter rally and despite having trouble early in the fourth quarter that saw the Titans force four turnovers and come up with no points in the first four minutes, the persistent Titans remained composed and finally began to get the necessary points to cut into the Falcon lead.

And when Blevins hit a reverse layup prayer and was fouled, the Titans, after the O-G senior hit the free throw, were within one 59-49, within just under two minutes left in the game.

But down the stretch, Lutheran East held off the Titans to secure the victory.

Ottawa-Glandorf Brennen Blevins, who finished with a team-high 23 points, was limited eight points in the final two quarters and only two in the pivotal third quarter. Blevins rebounded in fourth quarter to help with the comeback with some big buckets.

Lutheran head coach Sam Leggins said they really didn't do anything different defensively but thought the Titans' felt the effects of the constant pressure.

"I think they kind of tired a little bit," Leggins said. "Anytime you pressure a team full court wears on you no matter how much you prepare for it but credit to them I thought they handled it better than I thought they would."

Offensively, the Falcons' outside shooting proved

See O-G | 5C

# Oral Roberts shocks Ohio State with OT tournament victory

By Cliff Brunt  
AP Sports Writer

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Ohio State's players were dancing around in the moments before tipoff against Oral Roberts, relaxed and full of swagger.

The Buckeyes aren't dancing anymore. The 15th-seeded Golden Eagles pulled off the first major upset of the first NCAA Tournament in two years, holding off second-seeded Ohio State 75-72 in overtime on Friday.

"When they rank them, it was only just a number at the end of the day," said Kevin Obanor, who led Oral Roberts with 30 points and 11 rebounds. "We put our shoes on just as the other team puts their shoes on. We just had the mindset of, 'Show us that you deserve to be No. 2,' and we came out with a lot of confidence."

Oral Roberts got poised, impeccable performances from its two stars, Obanor and guard Max Abmas, to become the ninth 15 seed to win a first-round game and the first since Middle Tennessee shocked Michigan State in 2016. Last year's tournament was called off because of the pandemic.

Obanor scored seven of Oral Roberts' 11 points in overtime, including two free throws with 13 seconds left. Abmas, the nation's leading scorer, had 29 points.

See OSU | 5C



# State semifinals



Photos by Richard Parrish | The Lima News

Columbus Grove players celebrate after defeating New Boston Glenwood in a Friday Division IV state semifinal at the University of Dayton Arena. See more state semifinal photos at [LimaScores.com](http://LimaScores.com).



Ottawa-Glandorf's Owen Nichols puts up a shot against Lutheran East's Jalin Billingsley during a Friday Division III state semifinal at the University of Dayton Arena.



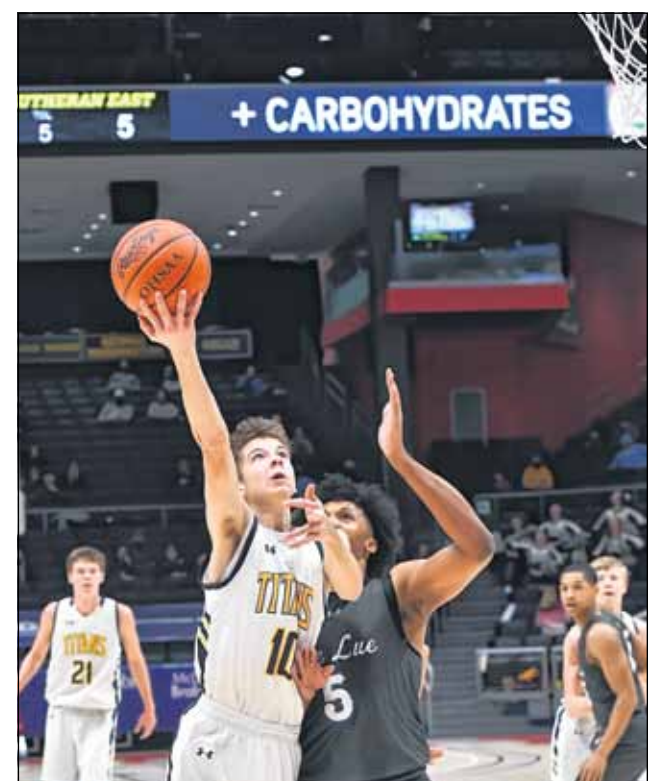
Columbus Grove's Gabe Clement sinks a 3-pointer from halfcourt at the end of the third quarter.



Ottawa-Glandorf's Owen Nichols goes up for a shot against Lutheran East's Jared Lary.



Columbus Grove's Gabe Clement puts up a shot against New Boston Glenwood's Chase Clark.



Ottawa-Glandorf's Eli Schmenk puts up a shot against Lutheran East's Jalin Billingsley.



Photos by Richard Parrish | The Lima News

**Columbus Grove players cheer on their teammates during a Friday Division IV state semifinal against New Boston Glenwood at the University of Dayton Arena.**

## Grove

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need to hit one," Sautter said.

Blake Reynolds (22 points, 6 rebounds, 8 assists), Tayt Birnesser (14 points) and Clement (12 points) led Columbus Grove (25-2). Kyle Sexton, a 6-5 post player, led Glenwood (24-3) with 14 points, nine rebounds and four assists.

Reynolds, who is Columbus Grove's career scoring leader, and Birnesser, who is No. 2 on that list, combined for 19 of the Bulldogs' 21 points in the fourth quarter.

Columbus Grove jumped out to an 18-12 lead after one quarter. But for most of the second and third quarters Glenwood was more often the aggressor.

"I thought we did a nice job in the first quarter and then for about the next 2 1/2 quarters it seemed

like we forgot to score or forgot how to score. They mixed things up defensively and challenged shots at the rim," Sautter said.

"When they got it to 10 points a lot of that was winning 50-50 balls and getting offensive rebounds and for a stretch we weren't very good defensively. They were kicking our tails on the glass and on 50-50 balls. But give our kids credit. We hung in there defensively and made the plays down the stretch like you'd expect."

"If I were coaching anybody else I'd be concerned but with the experience we have and the situations we've been in we've won 51 games the last two years, 70 games the last three years, I just have a lot of faith in these guys they'll find ways to get wins and they have," he said.

Clement said the players were thinking the same way. "I was just saying to everyone that we're



**Columbus Grove's Trey Sautter puts up a shot against New Boston Glenwood's Devon Jones.**

fine. I trust these guys, we trust each other so we're fine."

Columbus Grove was still searching for a way to win with 3:53 left in the game, though when it was down by five points, 51-46.

That's when Birnesser hit back-to-back threes in the span of 57 seconds to bring the Bulldogs back to within one point

at 53-52. Those were the first points he had scored since hitting two threes and a pair of free throws early in the first quarter.

"They were guarding me pretty well and I don't think I was as aggressive as I could have been. But I just kind of waited and got open there at the end and Blake found me and I just knocked them down," Birnesser said.

"Tayt does what Tayt does — steps up and hits big shots," Sautter said.

Columbus Grove went ahead for the first time since early in the third quarter on a bucket by Reynolds to make it 54-53 with 1:47 left in the game. Reynolds scored again and Clement scored on a lay-up in the final seconds.

Glenwood coach Adam Cox said, "They made some big shots. No. 3 (Birnesser) made those two threes that gave them some momentum. We had done such a good job on him from the end of the first quarter to the fourth quarter. He hit those two big threes that took it from seven points to one point in two possessions."

"They played a great fourth quarter. They dialed it up when they needed to," he said.

Glenwood played the final 4:23 of the game without the player it needed most when Sexton fouled out.

"It took the wind out of us," Cox said. "I thought we were going to pull it out without Kyle. Kyle picking up that fifth foul was definitely big. I think if we'd had Kyle we win that game."

Reach Jim Naveau at 567-242-0414.

## Strangers

From page 1C

(15.1), 6-0 Gabe Clement (10.7), 6-2 Trey Sautter (8.8) and 6-1 Ethan Halker (5.1).

Botkins coach Sean Powell and his players said intimidation and awe were never a factor in the Trojans' 44-40 win over Richmond Heights in their semifinal.

The Trojans' win puts them into a boys basketball state championship game for the first time. The school's only other state tournament trip in 1994 ended in the semifinals. Columbus Grove was state runner-up in 2006.

Botkins came into Friday's game with the better record but Richmond Heights arrived with more hype.

The Spartans' 6-7 junior forward Josiah Harris has an offer from Ohio State and their schedule included games against D-I powers Cleveland St. Ignatius and Lakewood St. Edward and Division II Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary.

But Botkins led at halftime and survived going scoreless for 10 minutes in the second half to get the win.

"They have offers and big names but at the end of the day it's just basketball," Botkins coach Sean Powell said. "It's how five guys work together, how five guys rebound. We felt like we were a better defensive team, a better rebounding team and we were going to take good care of the ball against their pressure."

Powell, who has a 53-22 record in three seasons at Botkins, is a former Shawnee standout who scored more than 1,000 points in his career and was an assistant coach at Shawnee and Perry before getting his first head coach's job three years ago.

Jayden Priddy-Powell, who led Botkins with 19 points said, "We believe in ourselves. Coach says we should tell ourselves we're the best of the best. Don't ever think we're going to be behind in the game. Always imagine you're one up in the game."

Jameson Meyer, who hit two huge 3-pointers in less than a minute in the fourth quarter said, "If we do what we can do we can play with anybody as long as we do what we can do."

Priddy-Powell also said playing in the Shelby County League helped prepare Botkins for a game against a team accustomed to playing a physical style.

"In Shelby County we kind of play football and basketball. It's real physical," he said.

### Quote of the day:

"It feels pretty good. I'm just glad I made it past the second quarter in this game." — Columbus Grove senior guard Gabe Clement when asked to compare playing in a state basketball semifinal with playing in a football state semifinal. He was injured in the second quarter of Grove's state semifinal football game against Coldwater.

### Runner-up quote of the day:

"Did that really just go in?" — New Boston Glenwood coach Adam Cox on Clement's half-court shot at the end of the third quarter of his team's state semifinal against Columbus Grove.

### They got back:

Columbus Grove was one of nine teams in this year's boys state basketball tournament who were in regionals last season when the tournaments were halted because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three of the four teams in the Division I tournament — Mentor, Centerville and Westerville Central — were regional qualifiers last year.

Division II also has three state qualifiers who were in regionals in 2020 — Shawnee, Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary and Columbus DeSales.

Ottawa-Glandorf is the only Division III team among last year's regional qualifiers who made it all the way to the final four this year. And in Division IV, Columbus Grove and Richmond Heights, reached the state tournament a year after the plug was pulled on their regionals.

Seven of the teams in last week's girls state tournament were already in Columbus or on their way to it for last year's state tournament when the OHSAA called it off.

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# DOW zeroes in on area where CWD found

Now that there are two confirmed cases of CWD in Ohio's wild deer herd, the next step for the Division of Wildlife (DOW) is trying to zero in on the area where both were killed and also the population that exists there.

Both deer, a mature buck and a mature doe, were taken within a 10-mile radius of where the buck was killed in Wyandot County. The buck was harvested on private property while the doe was taken on the Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area near Harpster.

The DOW plans continued surveillance in that specific area and plans on thinning the herd in the Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area. By reducing the deer density there, the wildlife agency hopes it can remove deer that have CWD. Citing a need for more tissue samples, the DOW is using this science-based method for that purpose. The agency wants to accomplish this before spring fawning season. The DOW had allowed additional deer to be killed on the area after the first deer was found to have CWD.

The deer taken during this operation will be held in cold storage. Following testing, those that do not have CWD will be processed with local food pantries being the recipients of that meat.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects white-tailed deer and other similar species, including mule deer, elk, and moose. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no strong evidence that CWD is transmissible to humans.

Lima area bass pro Kyle Weisenburger had a couple of up and down tournaments during March.

After dealing with more cold and frozen weather and breaking ice to fish the first day of the Lake of the Ozarks event in Osage Beach, Missouri, in the Plains Division of the Toyota Series, the Columbus Grove angler wound up 29th and in the money.

He actually managed to get a limit in the last hour the opening day and sat in 21st place with 12



**Al Smith**  
Guest columnist

pounds, 8 ounces. He had four keepers the second day that weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces and wound up with 19 pounds, 12 ounces for his two days.

"After the week of practice I had, I will call that week a success," Weisenburger said.

That finish made him decide he would fish the other two tournaments in the Plains Division. His next tournament in the division is April 8-10 on Grand Lake in Grove, Oklahoma. The final tournament in that division is May 6-8 on Lake Dardanelle in Russellville, Arkansas. The top 25 anglers in each division of the Toyota qualify for the season-ending championship.

Weisenburger was not near as successful the following week on Lewis Smith Lake in Cullman, Alabama, on the Tackle Warehouse Pro Circuit.

He would up 129th in the event and caught five bass that weighed 8 pounds, 14 ounces. His first day total was 3 pounds, 11 ounces on two

keepers and his second day total was 5 pounds, 3 ounces on three keepers.

"This past tournament definitely did not go as well as I had hoped and really set me back in the points race (122nd). It's time to regroup and get the train rolling on a hot streak," Weisenburger said.

Lawmakers have identified symbols to represent the state since the early 19th century since Ohio became a state in 1803. Over the next two centuries a dozen natural animals, plants, etc. have been among these symbols. Some of them are:

Quite likely the most recognizable is the northern cardinal. The cardinal is the state bird in seven states. The male is easily recognizable by its red color. It is a year-round resident of the state and has a beautiful song that it starts singing in the spring shortly before the sun rises. It was adopted as the state bird in 1933.

Another easily recognized state symbol is the white-tailed deer. Although it was extirpated from the state in

the early 20th century, the population came back as deer were brought into the state or either made their way from Michigan or Pennsylvania. Deer now populate every part of Ohio, including suburbs and cities. A fun fact shows the state tree - the buckeye - is named because its nut resembles a male deer or a buck's eye. The white-tailed deer was adopted in 1988.

The buckeye tree was adopted as the state tree in 1953. Ohioans referred to themselves as Buckeyes at least a century before that. The tree grows in conditions many other trees won't and survives in an array of weather conditions. Its wood does not burn well and its nut is toxic.

The state frog is a bullfrog, which is known by its deep croak that connects male bullfrogs with their own chorus line. It legs make great table fare although it is not easy to catch. It was adopted in 2010.

The Black Racer is the state snake, which was adopted in 1995. It can grow to five feet

long and has sharp teeth which inflict a painful bite. It can climb as high as 10 feet into trees. It is found mainly in eastern Ohio.

The state amphibian is the spotted salamander which was adopted in 2010. It is nocturnal, moving under the cover of night. It spends most of its time underground.

The state insect is the ladybug, which was pushed for by school children in Toledo. It was adopted in 1975. It's a favored insect because it is not harmful and eats other insects. It also traveled into space as part of a NASA experiment.

The state wild flower is the large-flowered trillium, which was adopted in 1986. It is a perennial that can bloom for up to 25 years. The flower is a favorite of white-tailed deer, which eat it like children would candy.

Ohio does not have a state fish. Species have been proposed, but a consensus of which one has never been reached.

Al Smith is a freelance outdoor writer. You may contact him at flyfishman7@hotmail.com and follow him on Twitter @alsmithFL

## AREA ROUNDUP



Jose Noguera | The Lima News

Lima Family YMCA Barracudas who qualified for the Great Lakes YMCA Zones Swimming Championship are, from left, front row, Angela Fronzaglia, Kari Diller, Madelyn Sterrett, Levin Essinger, middle row, Kaitie Phillips, Mason Latham, Aidan Latham, June Essinger, Lily Baumgartner, CeCe Schaff, Thomas Koh, back row, Coach Jeff Bowlus, Coach April Dorman, Daniel Koh, Coach JT OK, Jackson Bowlus, Aidan OK, Andrew Baldauf, Mason Shank, Colton Clark, Niel OK, Xavier Diller, Allison Diller, Arleigh Amspoker and Morgan Schimmoeller. Qualifiers not present include Addilynn Baldauf, Abby Beck, Grace Beck, John Briggs, Paige Cole, Luke Marshall, Carlie Oldfield, Karlyn Rex and Allyson Sharp.

## 31 Lima YMCA swimmers qualify for five-state competition

By Staff Reports  
sports@limanews.com

The Lima Family YMCA Barracudas had 31 swimmers qualify for this weekend's Great Lakes YMCA Zones Championship at Bowling Green State University.

The championship is held every year for the top YMCA swimmers from Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan and West Virginia.

The Zone qualifying times are based on the top times of the region from the previous year. Competitors often represent the top 10 percent of the fastest swimmers in their state age group. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, swimmers are limited to five events at this year's championship.

"We are proud of our Lima Barracuda swimmers who have trained hard and earned their spot to compete," coach April Dorman

said in a news release. "This season was one of our largest qualifying teams. Our swim team is unstoppable, or I should say unsinkable. Our coaching staff is confident that they will do their best and are wishing all teams at the zone championships good luck."

### Basketball All-District 8 selections

Shawnee's Goerge Mangas (player of the year), Mark Triplett (coach of the year) and Nick Bertke (assistant of the year) received top honors in Divisions I, II and III. Crestview's Kalen Etzler (player of the year) and Minster's Mike McClurg and Columbus Grove's Chris Sautter (coaches of the year) received top D-IV recognition.

Joining Mangas on the D-I-II-III first team were AJ Adams (Findlay), Brennen Blevins (Ottawa-Glandorf), Khalil Luster (Lima Senior),

Owen Nichols (Ottawa-Glandorf), Owen Treece (Van Wert) and Tyson Elwer (Shawnee).

Joining Etzler on the D-IV first team were Alex Eyink (Marion Local), Blake Reynolds (Columbus Grove), Brayden Knight (Perry), Dylan Hughes (Parkway), Joshua Thorbahn (Ottoville), Justin Nixon (Minster), Landon Newland (Ridgmont), Luke Erhart (Kalida) and Tayt Birnesser (Columbus Grove).

### All-star games

ELIDA — The District 8 All-Star Games will be held next week at the Elida Fieldhouse. The Division I-II-III game will start at 6:30 p.m. Monday followed by the D-IV girls game.

The boys Division I-II-III game will be at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday followed by the D-IV boys game. Go to 2C to view the rosters.

Reach The Lima News sports department at 567-242-0451.

## QUICK HITS

### Ohio State opens spring practice

COLUMBUS (AP) — Ohio State on Friday opened what coach Ryan Day hopes will be an uninterrupted spring practice as he seeks a new starting quarterback and some normalcy after a tumultuous 2020.

Spring workouts were cut short last March when the coronavirus spread across the country. The Buckeyes practiced three times before spring break and didn't return to the field as a group until the fall ahead of a delayed and abbreviated season that saw them eventually lose to Alabama in the national championship game.

Although Ohio State's football activities were paused last week because of an uptick in positive tests, the first of 15 workouts began on schedule Friday and will culminate in the annual spring game on April 17, which may or may not have fans involved. The

event in normal years typically draws a big crowd — nearly 100,000 in 2015 — but it's also critical for coaches in evaluating young players under game-like conditions.

### Bengals cut Atkins

COLUMBUS (AP) — The Cincinnati Bengals addressed two of their problem areas — offensive and defensive lines — through free agency and bid farewell to longtime star Geno Atkins.

Cincinnati bolstered its offensive line, which was a glaring weakness in a 4-11-1 season in 2020, with the signing of ex-Vikings tackle Riley Reiff as the team seeks better protection for quarterback Joe Burrow. The Bengals also are expected to add an offensive lineman early in the NFL draft next month, perhaps with the No. 5 overall pick.

## O-G

From page 1C

to tip the scales in their favor after Ottawa-Glandorf, using a box and 1 type defense to shut down 6-foot-8 Jalin Billingsley to 10 points. But BJ Busbee, who

had 11 points, and Jalen Knott who scored 13 points, combined to go 8 of 14 from behind the 3-point arc.

As a team, Lutheran East was 7 of 14 from treyland.

Titan Owen Nichols finished with 15 points and admitted he got tired towards the end of

the game after having the unenviable task of covering Billingsley in the Titans' zone defense that was effective for much of the game. Unfortunately for O-G, the Falcons perimeter shooting proved to be too much.

Reach Jose Noguera at 567-242-0468.

## OSU

From page 1C

"Their two players that obviously concerned us were terrific, so give them, their coaches, their players, their program, their university a lot of credit for this win," Ohio State coach Chris Holtmann said. "We had no illusions that this was going to be by any stretch anything other than a really challenging game, and it obviously was that from the very jump."

Ohio State could have tied it in the closing seconds of overtime, but Duane Washington Jr.'s open 3-pointer from straight away bounced off the side of the rim, and Oral Roberts celebrated its first tourna-

ment win since 1974.

The Golden Eagles' roster is full of lightly recruited players who found their way to the small, private Christian school in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Summit League champions bowed their heads in a prayer circle after their victory over the Big Ten power.

"I know growing up, all my life, I was always like the underdog," Obanor said. "The school is not a big school. Just to prove people wrong, it's a blessing just to have people that are really committed and believe that we're the better team."

The Golden Eagles (17-10) will play seventh-seeded Florida in the South Region on Sunday. E.J. Liddell had 23

points and 14 rebounds to lead the Buckeyes (21-10). Washington had 18 points and 10 rebounds but made just 7 of 21 shots.

Oral Roberts scored the game's first seven points, including a 3-pointer by Abmas from the logo that drew a collective "Ooooh!" from the socially distanced crowd.

The Buckeyes led by eight before the Golden Eagles rallied. Abmas hit a 3-pointer with about five minutes left in the first half to give Oral Roberts a 26-25 lead, prompting a chant of "O-R-U!" He hit another 3 moments later to force an Ohio State timeout. He made 5 of 7 3-pointers in the first half and had 18 points at the break as the Golden Eagles led 36-33.