

Broncos fall in NACA tournament

BY **JEFFERY SIMMONS**
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Dayton has been a home away from home for Boyd athletics the last few years. Playing in the NACA tournament has provided some of the biggest moments in the program's history, including championships by the boys team in 2015 and the girls team last year.

The Broncos hoped for another run to a title this year, but fell in their opening round matchup of the Division 6 NACA tournament. Covenant Christian (Ala.) downed Boyd 75-67 Wednesday.

Boyd got a game effort from three seniors, with Jayden Reno scoring 20 points, Josh Argo adding 15 and Tyler Pomales finishing with 10. It wasn't enough though, as Jonathan Sullivan carried Covenant to victory with 34 points.

The Broncos got out to an early lead with a group effort and strong outside shooting. Reno, Pomales and Joel Smith all sank 3-pointers in the first quarter as Boyd led 20-18.

Sullivan proved to be a one-man wrecking crew from the opening tip. The Covenant forward had 12 points in the first quarter, then sank two 3-pointers going to halftime that gave his team a 40-34 advantage at the break.

Reno went off in the third quarter, keeping Boyd within striking distance. Boyd's leading scorer relentlessly attacked the rim, getting layups and runners on his way to a 10-point quarter. A late 3-pointer by Smith, who scored eight points in the contest, helped Boyd close to 57-53 entering the fourth.

Sullivan was just too much to overcome. Ryan Cagle and Sullivan combined to swish 7-of-8 free throws in the final minutes to hold off Boyd.

Jordan Hoover and Bryson Stiles each scored six points for Boyd, with both hitting two 3-pointers apiece. Aiden Lawrence added a basket in the fourth quarter for the Broncos.



Jeffery Simmons photo
Dallas Greene is pictured playing last week in the MTAC tournament. Boyd lost 75-67 to Covenant Christian Wednesday. The Broncos fell to 10-18 with the loss.



B'IANA MCKINLEY



KASEN MULLICAN

State medalists

Two local wrestlers earned their way onto the podium at the TNAAU state wrestling tournament held over the weekend in Franklin.

B'iana McKinley placed third in the girls 69-77 weight class, while Kasen Mullican finished fourth in the boys midget 103-pound class.

McKinley earned her spot in the top three by taking down Sydnee Stahley from the Alliance

Wrestling Academy. McKinley, representing the local AAU Pioneer Pride team, pinned Stahley in the final second of the second round.

McKinley advanced to a matchup with Coffee County's Kylie Swarthout, but lost by a 7-0 decision in the third round of the tournament. McKinley also was defeated by the eventual champion Kaycee Baldwin in her opening match.

Mullican found himself facing a familiar face in his opening match at the Williamson Expo Center. Mullican took on his teammate, Grady Collier, in the opening round. Mullican topped Collier in 27 seconds, setting up a matchup with Tanner Tapp.

In a back-and-forth match, Tapp was able to gain an edge and pin Mullican at the 1:15 mark. Mullican didn't let the loss linger. He bounced

back with a victory over Ethan Stacey in the consolation bracket, a victory which put the Pioneer grappler in the top four.

Mullican had a chance to match his teammate with a top-three finish, but fell again in the consolation finals.

Other state competitors for the Pioneer Pride included Collier, Brant Damon, Huck Damon, Treyvion Mathis and Zerek Keel.

Coaches ready for NFL combine

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Lured out of the broadcast booth with a \$100 million contract that makes him the highest-paid football coach ever, Jon Gruden sauntered up to the podium and flashed that mischievous smile.

"I'm very excited to be back here in Indianapolis," Gruden declared. "I sure have missed the combine."

Gruden is navigating an offseason NFL landscape that's changed drastically since he last roamed the sideline nearly a decade ago. "It's a lot different because you're not allowed to have any interaction with the players, and I've always complained about that since the new (collective bargaining agreement) came into place," Gruden said Wednesday.

On the next podium was Matt Patricia, who, unlike his former colleague Josh McDaniels, didn't balk at leaving Bill Belichick's brigade.

Then there was Andy Reid, in the midst of another major roster shakeup, and his protege, Doug Pederson, still basking in Philadelphia's first Super Bowl triumph in just his second season as coach of the Eagles.

All are gathering this week in Indianapolis hoping to better their chances of winning in 2018.

Top college prospects,

including a group of quarterbacks that could produce five first-round draft picks, will spend four days getting poked and prodded, tested and timed.

GMs and coaches will pepper them with questions either in formal 15-minute interviews or during a mixed zone after their physical assessments.

"It's a chance to get to know these guys, to know exactly what you're getting when they come into the building," said new Texans general manager Brian Gaine.

He said their athleticism and acumen are already well-known, and they'll flash their strength, speed and swiftness this week at Lucas Oil Stadium.

What the GMs and coaches want to do is get a look under the hood.

"We'd like to talk about football as much as we can, but we need to know everything we can to find out about these players," Gaine said. "So when they come into our building (we know) that they're a good fit for us in the locker room, in the weight room, in the training room, in the meeting rooms, out on the practice field."

After this week, teams will retreat to their headquarters and begin preparing for the annual flood of free agents that will hit the market in mid-March.

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