

# Black & Gold

## Warriors finish second at Holiday Hoopla

**By Daniel L. Chamness**  
 After posting a 3-0 record in the Gold Pool at the Monticello Holiday Hoopla, the Tuscola Warriors were poised and ready to defend their Holiday Hoopla Championship. They had held the title since 2019, as there was no Holiday Hoopla in 2020. Even though they had the "Gold Basketball" symbolizing the 2019 title, they wanted to add another one. Standing in their way: the Monticello Sages, who were not only playing on their home floor, but entered the game with an undefeated record. They were 3-0 in the Purple Pool. The game between the two powerhouses, who will be in

different classes when the playoffs start, did not disappoint as the Warriors bowed 50-34 to the Sages. Immediately following the game, two Warriors, namely Preston Brown and Jalen Quinn, were both named to the Holiday Hoopla All-Tournament team. The Sages, who only led by four points at halftime, had expanded the lead to nine points, 37-28, by the end of the third quarter. To end the second quarter, senior Tanner Buehnerkemper scored the final three points of the quarter in the final 1:13 of the half. With 1:13 to play, Buehnerkemper nailed a free throw. He would follow that with a regulation

bucket. Monticello, who had led by as many as six points with 2:51 to play, saw their lead shaved to one point at the 1:31 mark, when Jalen Quinn hit a three-pointer from beyond the arc. The three-ball, from the left wing, cut it to 22-21 in favor of the home squad. Easton Cunningham knotted the score at 26-26 with his own three-pointer, from the left corner, at the 5:32 mark of the third quarter. It was the final time that Tuscola tied the score. Monticello's Ben Cresap hit his own three pointer just inside the two minute mark and the Sages were on their way to winning third title since 2000. With 6:09 to play in the

game, Buehnerkemper put the Sages up by 12, 42-30. "Monticello has a group of athletes with a great skill set," said Tuscola head coach Justin Bozarth. "They played man-to-man defense better than anyone we have seen this season. They really were able to prevent Jalen's dribble penetration with multiple guys guarding behind. On top of that, their top six athletes are incredible quick laterally." The two teams battled, sometimes bucket for bucket in the first half. Monticello managed to lead at all the breaks, but Tuscola managed to close the gap in the final minute of the first quarter. In

the final 30 seconds of the first quarter, Jalen Quinn would nail a pair of three pointers, one at 3:15 and another at 1:32, in the second quarter. While he was working from beyond the arc, Preston Brown and Jordan Quinn would hit from the free throw line. Jalen Quinn scored 15 of the Warriors' 34 points. Jordan Quinn supported his older brother with eight points. Cunningham (six points), James Parsley (three points) and Preston Brown (two points) rounded out the scoring for the Warriors. "I think the game showed us that we need to improve on some little things," said Jalen

Quinn. "One thing would be rebounding. We continuously are trying to get better. When you are playing a bigger school, you expect to face some tougher competition, because they have more to pick from. We just want to keep playing and playing our best basketball when we hit the postseason." The Warriors are now 11-3 This week, they hit the road twice. On Friday, January 7, they will play at Clinton. On Saturday, January 8, they are in the final varsity game at St. Joseph-Ogden, taking on the host Spartans at 8 p.m. to close the varsity show. The junior varsity team will be playing the Spartans at the same time.

## Tuscola posts 3-0 mark in pool play

**By Daniel L. Chamness**  
 On Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, the Tuscola Warriors showed they can make a good team look average. And let's not mince any words, entering the game with a record of 11-2, there is no doubt the Fithian Oakwood Comets are a good team. But, they lost a 20-point decision, 62-42, to the Warriors. As an exclamation point on the game, the final points of the game, Jalen Quinn slammed the ball, his second such bucket during the game, to punctuate the game was nearly over and victory was close at hand. But, while the Warriors have been great at vanquishing opponents quickly this year, this was one of two or three examples where they managed to use their bench and their overall depth to wear the Comets down. Tuscola had 12 Warriors hit the hardwood during the game, with seven of those athletes playing 13 or more minutes. While the Warriors held only a three-point lead, 26-23, at intermission, they blew the game open in the third quarter. After Oakwood scored two points, Jalen Quinn hit two free throws, then a regulation

bucket and then hit a slam. Haven Hatfield got into the act, nailing a three-pointer at the 4:00 mark of the third quarter. The 14-2 run to open the stanza gave them a 40-25 lead midway through the third quarter. "We came into this game wanting to make a statement," said Hatfield. "We played a few more guys tonight and really wore them down. I think the fact that we have a number of athletes that played a fall sport and it really helped us a great deal. We came into basketball season in pretty good shape and it shows. I hit a couple of threes against Okaw Valley. When I got the ball in that position today, I thought why not and let it fly." The lead had ballooned to 16 points by the end of the quarter. Oakwood would score only four buckets in the quarter. Within the first eight seconds of the final quarter, Quinn, Jordan Quinn, that is, hit a layup to give the Warriors a 49-31 lead with 7:52 to play in the stanza. Jalen Quinn would lead all scorers with 26 points. The senior was 50 percent or above in every single shooting category, hitting 8-of-15 from the floor, which included a 2-

for-4 performance from beyond the arc, and an eye-popping 8-of-9 from the charity stripe. He only missed a double-double by one board, grabbing a team-leading nine boards. The NCAA Division I Recruit also had three steals and two assists in his 25 minutes of play. "He was pretty good again," said Justin Bozarth, Tuscola's head coach, of Quinn. "Overall, this was a really good game for him. He makes everyone on the court better. He took on the task of guarding their best player tonight. It is a big chore on him. He captains the offense and then on the defensive end, he will control what their best player does." The 6-foot-3 senior was joined in double figures by Jordan Quinn and Hatfield. Jordan Quinn emerged off the bench and played 13 minutes. He made the most of his time, draining 4-of-7 from the floor, including a pair of treys. He also grabbed five boards. Hatfield, who started, played 19 minutes. He also had 10 points. In 19 minutes of play, the Warrior three-sport athlete, drained 4-of-6 from the floor. He was 1-of-2 from both the charity stripe and the from beyond the arc. Hatfield also had two rebounds.

Three other Warriors scored in the contest. Sophomore Josiah Hortin finished with nine points and two rebounds. Preston Brown had five points, six rebounds and two assists. Easton Cunningham had the other two points. The junior also had five rebounds and two assists. "We had a bad loss last week and it did not make any of us feel good," said Hortin, a sophomore guard. "We came out here today knowing that we could play better, but wanting to prove that to everyone. We concentrated on playing tough defense during the entire 32 minutes and we made some big shots. We played well today and I think to a man, we wanted to atone for that loss." Today, the Warriors will be tasked with playing two games. At 10 a.m., when most of us are on our first coffee break at the office, they will play Ridgeview. Then in the main event, in the prime time slot at 7:30 p.m. is the Warriors against the Paxton-Buckley-Loda Panthers. Their placement on those pair of games will determine when they play on Wednesday, the final day of the tournament. With the loss, the Comets slipped to 11-3.

The Warriors would win two more games on December 28 after the Monday thrashing of the Comets. They would down Ridgeview 62-38 in their first game on Tuesday. On Tuesday evening, they would get all they could handle from Paxton-Buckley-Loda, but getting a one-point, 58-57, victory over the Panthers. "The Panthers really made us fight for that win," said Hatfield. "Great teams find a way to power to victory even though we did not have our best night. We have not had many games where we had to come from behind and it was good to see how we would respond to that situation. It prepares for the future." Jalen Quinn and Hatfield were both in double figures. Quinn finished with 19 points. The 6-foot-3 senior, who had been held to just seven points in the first three quarters, exploded for 12 points in the final stanza. Hatfield did all of his scoring in the first three quarters and had seven second quarter points. Four other Warriors scored as well as Jordan Quinn barely missed double figures bucketing nine points. Preston Brown (eight points), Hortin (six points) and Easton Cun-

ningham (five points) rounded out the scoring for the Warriors. In the first win of the day, the victory over Ridgeview, Preston Brown stepped up and poured in a career high 20 points to lead the Warriors. "It was a very early game and I was so tired, given the early time and that we had played one day earlier," said the senior. "But, when the game started, I hit the first four shots that I took. I knew then, this was going to be a good game and I had a hot hand." By the end of the first quarter, he had eight points and boasted 14 points at the end of the first half. He drilled two treys by the end of the first stanza. Jalen Quinn got off to a quick start, hitting five regulation buckets in the first quarter to finish the first eight minutes with 10 points. He would have 14 points by the end of the game. Six other Black and Gold clad Warriors scored as Jordan Quinn finished with seven and Cunningham had six. Thomas Brown, Hortin and Jackson Barrett had three points each, while Colton Musgrave had two points.

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