

REGIONAL

TUSCOLA (79)

	fg-fga	ft-fa	3-3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp
Quinn	6-7	1-1	3-3	5	3	2	0	16
James	2-7	0-0	0-0	7	0	1	3	4
Boyd	3-8	0-2	0-1	2	2	2	2	6
Hortin	4-7	1-3	1-2	5	2	3	0	10
Sweetnam	6-9	2-3	2-5	2	0	0	0	16
Musgrave	0-1	0-0	0-0	4	2	3	0	0
Barrett	7-10	0-0	3-5	6	1	1	1	17
Woodard	1-6	0-0	0-1	4	0	0	0	2
Kurtz	1-4	0-0	1-3	0	2	2	0	3
Spillman	2-2	0-0	1-1	3	0	0	1	5
Totals	32-61	4-9	11-21	38	12	14	7	79

FG%48% FT% -44% 3-FG%-52% Turnovers-5

TRI-COUNTY (14)

FG-5-35 (14%) FT-4-6 (67%) 3FG-0-0 (0%) Reb 27; TO-24.

Tri County	4	2	5	3	-	14
Tuscola	18	24	18	19	-	79

TUSCOLA (101)

	fg-fga	ft-fa	3-3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp
Quinn	7-9	1-1	2-4	6	2	0	1	17
James	9-10	2-3	2-3	5	0	3	1	22
Boyd	5-7	2-2	0-0	5	1	1	4	12
Hortin	3-6	0-0	1-3	5	5	0	0	7
Sweetnam	4-13	0-0	2-8	4	8	0	0	10
Musgrave	2-2	0-0	0-0	3	2	2	0	4
Barrett	3-3	0-0	2-2	4	2	2	2	8
Woodard	6-7	2-4	1-2	5	0	1	0	15
Kurtz	3-6	0-1	0-3	0	1	2	0	6
Spillman	0-2	0-0	0-2	2	1	0	0	0
Totals	42-65	7-11	10-27	39	22	11	8	101

FG%65% FT% -64% 3-FG%-37% Turnovers-5

VILLA GROVE (35)

FG-12-41 (29%) FT-5-6 (83%) 3FG-6-21 (29%) Reb 12; TO-18.

Villa Grove	8	12	15	0	-	35
Tuscola	31	23	26	21	-	101

TUSCOLA (63)

	fg-fga	ft-fa	3-3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp
Quinn	6-13	0-0	3-5	9	1	0	4	15
James	4-7	1-1	1-2	4	2	0	1	10
Boyd	1-2	0-0	0-0	2	0	0	3	2
Hortin	4-9	4-4	2-4	5	4	0	1	14
Sweetnam	9-15	0-0	4-8	3	1	3	2	22
Musgrave	0-1	0-0	0-0	2	1	0	1	0
Barrett	0-1	0-0	0-1	2	1	0	2	0
Woodard	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
Kurtz	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
Spillman	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	24-49	5-5	10-20	27	10	3	14	63

FG%49% FT% -100% 3-FG%-50% Turnovers-6

ARCOLA (46)

FG-19-45 (42%) FT-4-8 (50%) 3FG-4-19 (21%) Reb 20; TO-10.

Arcola	8	11	11	16	-	46
Tuscola	23	13	19	8	-	63



TUSCOLA WARRIORS won the Regional IHSA Championship Feb. 24 against Arcola. Back row: Andrew Spillman, Sawyer Woodard, Jordan Quinn, Parker James, Boston Broady, Coach Taylor. Middle row: Colton Musgrave, Josiah Hortin, Logan Kurtz, Chris Boyd, Kamden Sweetnam, Jackson Barrett, Coach Reedy. Front row: Lilly Kurtz, Lanie Yantis, Kali Fonner, Rylie Vanausdoll, Mikayla Dunn, Carleigh Kleiss, Machezie Herschberger. Photo by Moto Johnson and Dan Chamness.

Back to regional crowns for boys' basketball

By Lenny Sementi

Tuscola's boys' basketball team did something that hasn't been done in quite some time, delivering a regional title in consecutive years, and they did it in a convincing fashion. They opened the postseason with a lopsided victory over Tri-County last week and continued their dominance, posting two more big wins this past Wednesday and Friday. Coach Justin Bozarth's bunch ran past Villa Grove in the semifinals of the Tuscola Regional 101-35 and that secured advancement to the Sectional and the round of 32 with a 63-46 victory over a scrappy Arcola squad in the championship game, moving to 27-6 overall on the season.

"We were really happy with how we started both games this week. We jumped on both Villa Grove and Arcola," stated Bozarth. That's been a focus of ours late in the season is how we start games. We knew Arcola would continue to compete and they certainly did for four quarters but the large margin in the first three quarters was too much for them to overcome."

The Warriors jumped out early in the skirmish with the Riders in the title tilt utilizing a pair of sharp shooting guards to run out to a 21-8 lead at the first buzzer. Kam Sweetnam accounted for 10 of his game-high 22-points in



WARRIORS' PARKER JAMES (15) dribbles past his opponent in the Regional Championship game on Feb. 24 against Arcola. Tuscola won 63-46. Photo by Moto Johnson and Dan Chamness.

the first 8 minutes of action, hitting twice from outside the arc. Josiah Hortin delivered 7 of his 14 points in the first frame as well, including a three, giving coach Bozarth a 13-point cushion into the second quarter.

Sweetnam connected on another trey early and Parker James joined in the fun, hitting a three-ball of his own on the way to an 8-point outing in the second stanza as the Warriors pushed the lead to 17 heading to the break on top 36-19. James added 10 points to the team totals as four Warriors found their way above the double-digit

plateau. Jordan Quinn all but put it away in the third, hitting 3 of the Warrior's 5 treys in the first 6 minutes of the second half, boasting the black and gold's lead to 25 and entering the final 8 minutes on top 55-30. Quinn ended the evening with 15 points and a game-high 9 rebounds. Tuscola shot 50 percent from the arc while turning it over just 6 times total.

The fast start was even more evident in the semi versus Villa Grove as Tuscola allowed just one field goal in the first quarter and four total in the first half. James had a career in the opening stanza

connecting on 6 shots and scoring 15 points in the first 7 minutes of the contest giving Tuscola a 31-8 lead after one.

James, Jackson Barrett and Sweetnam all tickled the bottom of the net from three-point land in second as the Warriors put this one away early en route to the century mark hitting 42 of 65 from the floor in the game, including 10 threes while turning the Blue Devils over 18 times.

Quinn followed James in the scoring column, donating 17 to the cause as five players in all reached double-digits. Next up was Sawyer Woodard, who scored 15-points off the bench. Chris Boyd followed with 12 points while Sweetnam tallied 10-points and a game-high 8 assists in the contest.

"Our scoring was balanced all week long, which puts difficulty on the opponents trying to decide who to take away," commented the coach. "Jordan continues to be a consistent force. Parker, Kam, and Josiah all have big scoring night potential and we saw some of that this week. Defensively this week, it was a focus of ours to use our athleticism to speed all these teams up. As we move along in the postseason, we are going to have to be really sound in half-court man-to-man. We cannot allow teams to have easy layups. If they're going to score, they've got to earn it at this point."

Lady Warriors come up short in title game

By Lenny Sementi

Tuscola's girl's basketball team climbed into the sweet sixteen with a big win over St. Anthony, avenging their only loss of the season but came up a few points short of an elite-8 appearance falling to Neoga in a heart-breaker. Tuscola gained revenge, dropping St. Anthony in the semi-finals of a loaded Casey-Westfield sectional 45-41 thanks to a fourth-quarter rally but couldn't duplicate the magic in the title game, falling to the Lady Indians 44-38.

Coach Tim Kohlbecker's Warriors team jumped out early on the back of an inside attack from Sydney Moss. Moss scored the first 6 points of the contest for Tuscola as the two teams traded blows in the paint. The Bulldogs finished off the stanza with a 7-2 run reaching the first buzzer on top 13-6. Ella Boyer fueled the offensive fires in the second period sandwiching 4 free-throws in between a pair of treys as the two teams traded points with the Bulldogs, keeping a 5-point lead heading into the break on top 24-19.

Boyer and Moss both did damage in the third and Zoey Thomason had a big bucket late but St. Anthony answered every time, entering the final 8 minutes of action in front 35-32.

That's when Kohlbecker unleashed the defense, which directly turned into offense. Ava Boyer and Harley Woodard combined to score 10 of Tuscola's 13 points in the final act as the Warriors forced 6 turnovers in the final 5 minutes and scored on four of them avenging their only loss of the regular season, limiting the Bulldogs to just 6 points in the fourth. Isabelle Wilcox, Lia Patterson, Woodard, Moss and the Boyer sisters pressured the ball on every square inch of the floor in Casey, allowing Tuscola to score the final 10 points of the game.

The Warriors grabbed 26 rebounds and swiped 16 steals while connecting on 45 percent of their field goals and 75 percent of their free throws. Moss led all with 16 points while hauling in 7 rebounds. Ella Boyer was next up with 14 points, followed by Woodard with 6 points. Wilcox dished out a game-high 6-assists and Patterson found her way to 4 steals and 7 rebounds.

"What a terrific high school ball game," Kohlbecker quipped. "We led for the first few minutes and not again till maybe the last half minute. I felt everyone who played was effective for us—our post players, Sydney, Molly and Harley, controlled the paint and held Faraday

(1000-point scorer) to 5 points."

"Our defensive pressure, which starts with our guards, Ava, Ella, Zoey, Izzy and Lia, was what swung the game in our favor. This was a huge win, especially after losing to them by 20 a few weeks ago. Without that loss, I'm not sure we win this game."

The championship game was a reversal of fortunes as the Warriors owned a win over Neoga at the Holiday Hoopla Tournament. Also, in the shooting department on the Warrior's side of the stat sheet with Kohlbecker's crew connecting on just 23 percent from the field and 11 of 28 from the free throw line.

Woodard, Moss and Ava Boyer attacked the hoop early, each donating a bucket to an early 6-0 Warrior lead. Back came the Indians running off the final 12-points of the opening period to move in front 12-6 heading into the second. Ella Boyer answered an Indian trey with one of her own and Woodard dominated the low post but the black and gold couldn't cut into the lead, entering the breakdown 5 points 22-16.

After a pair of threes by Ella Boyer and 3 baskets by Moss, another Warrior rally looked to be in the cards as

the Warriors moved in front for the first time since the 4-minute mark entering the final frame on top by two 31-29. Woodard also hit 3 of 4 from the line in the quarter but shooting woes late at the charity stripe by Tuscola proved to be costly down the stretch. A burst by Neoga early in the fourth forced Kohlbecker's group to foul late and the Indians answered with 9 made free throws in the final 5 minutes ending the Warrior's historic 33-win season.

"Against Neoga, to a degree, we beat ourselves," Kohlbecker said. "Even being down at half, I still liked our chances, especially since we had missed a number of easy shots and struggled at the line. Our defense carried us in the second half, we got the shots we wanted but our problems at the line persisted and you just aren't going to win a sectional going shooting under 40 percent against a team the caliber of Neoga, who finished third at state last year."

"These girls have so much to be proud of, having won 5 championships this season and finishing 33-2," stated Kohlbecker. "They created memories that will last a lifetime."

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