



TUSCOLA Warrior Pride

2023 IHSA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Better Newspapers, Inc.

Commemorating third place state finish Thursday, March 9, 2023

March 15, 2023

Dream season

By Lenny Sementi

A historic dream season for Tuscola's boy's basketball team will end with the program's first ever State Tourney hardware. And, the 22-2023 Warriors will hang a banner in the gym for the first time since the Elite Eight squad of 1989. Coach Justin Bozarth and his assistants Jacob Hilgendorf, Luke Johnson, Chase Reedy and Bob Taylor and the boys in black and gold ended the year with a program best 31-wins finishing with a 31-7 record overall collecting a third place trophy at the IHSA State Tournament.

Included in the historic were titles at the Monticello Holiday Hoopla, the Tuscola Regional, the Altamont Sectional and the SIU Carbondale Super Sectional. All-State 2nd team selection Jordan Quinn and his buddies used a two-game slump early in February as motivation producing an eight-game winning streak earning a spot in the final four and a trip to the State Farm Center. A lopsided 64-38 win over Altamont at the Central Illinois Conference/National Trail Conference shootout got the ball rolling.

The Indians were ranked number one at the time but couldn't keep pace with the sharp shooting Warriors that connected on 65 percent of their forays outside the arc tallying 17 threes in all. Altamont made another run at Bozarth's bunch in the Sectional Championship with a spot in the Elite-8 on the line building a 16-point lead early in the 2nd half, but a three barrage by Quinn and the Warriors along with a smothering defensive effort by the Warriors led by senior Colton Musgrave erased the deficit and the Warriors moved on in a four-overtime 72-68 victory. Musgrave was a constant on defense the entire year and hit the boards hard grabbing 104 on the year.

Tuscola lived on the arc during the season boasting five players in all with over 30-threes on the season. Sophomore Kam Sweetnam led the way with 88 treys on the year en route to a second best 438 points. Quinn, a junior, was next up with 57 delivering a team best 514 points. A pair of Quinn's classmates, Jackson Barrett and Josiah Hortin, followed with 39 and 36 respectively. Parker James, another second-year player, ended his season with 34 makes from the arc helping him climb above the 300 plateau donating 302 points to the cause.

Chris Boyd did his damage in the paint; the senior capped off his career with a double-double in the third-place win over Bloomington Cornerstone grabbing 10 rebounds while adding 17 points to the team totals. He eclipsed 290 points on the season and none were bigger than a three ball in the comeback win against Altamont in the sectional title game. Boyd, who hauled in 170 rebounds over the past four months, was only behind Quinn who brought in 284 boards.

Also making the trip north to the state tourney were injured seniors Hunter Branca, Boston Broady and Grant Kauffman. Sophomores Andrew Spillman, and Sawyer Woodard, along with freshman Logan Kurtz, got on the floor late in the final skirmish of the year. Woodard scored 110 points this season as a post alternative when Boyd was not on the floor for the Warriors.



JORDAN QUINN, Chris Boyd and the rest of the Warriors boy's basketball team place their thumbs on the 2022-2023 state third-place trophy. Photo by Dominik Stallings.



WARRIORS' CHRIS BOYD (55) looks at the Scales Mound defense before jumping up for two points in the first state competition game Thursday, March 9. Photo by Dominik Stallings.



WARRIORS' JOSIAH HORTIN (5) weaves past a defending Scales Mound player in the first state competition game Thursday, March 9. Photo by Dominik Stallings.

Bozarth finished his sixth season and now owns three 20-win seasons and now has a 30-win campaign finishing with 31 this year. When asked about the season, Bozarth grinned and said, "This group never ceased to amaze me. No matter what kind of day I had, they always brought a smile to my face. I was never so proud as I was when Chris was asked at the pep rally

before we left for state how he thought things were going to go. And he simply said, 'We just need to trust in the Lord.' It's an unselfish group that just wanted to succeed. Our seniors will be missed."

Quinn, an All-Tournament selection at the Hoopla, grabbed 2nd team All Illinois Coach Association accolades, and Chicago Sun Times

2nd Team honors, as well as a unanimous selection to the CIC All-Conference team and also collected the squad's MVP and rebound award. Hortin and Sweetnam's prowess in the front court earned them both 2nd team All CIC honors. Hortin came home with the team's free throw award from the end of the year banquet.

Great job, Warriors! We're proud of you!

Congratulations!

MONICAL'S PIZZA RESTAURANT

Rt 36 • Tuscola • (217) 253-4749