

Boys Basketball

Jackson Center reaches title game

COLUMBUS (AP) — Gavin Wildermuth's steal and a pair of free throws with 13.1 seconds left sealed a 53-50 comeback victory for Jackson Center over Columbus Africentric in the Ohio boys Division IV semifinal Thursday at Value City Arena.

Jackson Center (27-0) plays the Berlin Hiland-Arlington winner Saturday.

Africentric (22-4) trailed 51-50 but worked for the winning shot before Wildermuth grabbed a loose ball and was fouled by Fuquan Tucker. Africentric missed a pair of

three-point tries as the final seconds ticked off.

After the foul shots, Tucker and Trevon Saunders had attempts that hit the rim before time expired.

Jackson Center trailed by as many as 15 in the first half before Wildermuth's trey with 4:58 left in the game tied the score at 46.

**Berlin Hiland 46,
Arlington 37**

Dylan Kaufman scored half of his 20 points in the fourth quarter to ensure that Berlin Hiland will defend its title after beating Arlington 46-37 in the Ohio boys

Division IV state semifinal on Thursday at Value City Arena.

Arlington (23-4) trailed 34-30 early in the fourth quarter but Kaufman, an Associated Press Division IV co-player of the year, was able to drive the lane and personally outscore the Red Devils 10-7 the rest of the way.

• **Division III
Summit 49,
St. Peter Chanel 41**

Cincinnati Summit Country Day will vie for its first title after defeating Bedford St. Peter Chanel 49-41 in an Ohio boys Division

III state semifinal game on Thursday at Value City Arena.

Country Day took the lead for good at 12-11 early in the second quarter and pushed the advantage to 43-28 with three minutes left before the Firebirds (23-4) mounted a small but futile comeback.

**Portsmouth 74,
Ottawa-Glandorf 66**
Jaylen Carter scored 23 points, including three late free throws, to quell a frenetic Ottawa-Glandorf rally as Portsmouth advanced to the Division III final with a 74-66 semifinal victory Thursday.

College Basketball

'Cuse edges Wisconsin

BOSTON (AP) — Syracuse will be playing for a spot in the Final Four because of numbers.

C.J. Fair put up some like he hadn't in a while, and the Orange finished with offensive statistics that Wisconsin just doesn't allow in a 64-63 victory in the East Regional semifinals Thursday night that wasn't secure until the final buzzer.

"Offensively we played very, very well and we had to play very, very well," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said.

Fair finished with 15 points five fewer than he had in the last six games combined on 7-of-9 shooting. The Orange scored 11 more than the Badgers allowed on average in leading Division I.

Syracuse shot 55 percent from the field, well above the 38.5 percent Wisconsin gave up this season, and the Orange were 5 of 9 from 3-point range, much better than the 28.8 percent the Badgers allowed.

All those numbers mean the Orange (34-2) will play Ohio State or Cincinnati in the regional final Saturday with a trip to New Orleans at stake.

"I can't tell you how good it feels to win a game like



Wisconsin's Rob Wilson, front, and Syracuse forward C.J. Fair, rear, scrap for a loose ball in the second half of an NCAA tournament East Regional semifinal game Thursday in Boston.

this," Boeheim said. "This was a great, great game."

And it wasn't decided until Wisconsin's Jordan Taylor missed a 3-pointer with 3 seconds left. Josh Gasser corralled the rebound but his toss toward the basket was off at the buzzer.

"It was on legs, and I felt like I got my legs into it," Taylor said. "I knew it was a deep 3, but it felt good, and then to see it kind of come

up short was kind of heart-breaking."

Kris Joseph, a 75 percent free throw shooter, had missed the front end of a 1-and-1 with 18 seconds to go with Syracuse up by a point, giving the Badgers (26-10) a chance at the victory.

Passing the ball around the perimeter of the zone but not creating much space, Wisconsin had to settle for Taylor's shot.

"We were just trying to get an open shot and try and make them rotate in the zone," Taylor said. "We did a little bit, but they did a good job of recovering to open guys there."

The Badgers finished 14 of 27 from 3-point range but couldn't make one over the final 6 minutes after a stretch in the second half when they made six straight in as many possessions.

Baseball

Baseball

■ **CONTINUED FROM 17**
Helke. "He was first team all-area last year, and he'll definitely anchor our order. He also had zero errors at first base last year, and he will also pitch — and throws hard."

Joining him in the infield will be fellow seniors Nick Antonides at third base, Thomas Harvey at second and junior Dylan Cascaden at shortstop. Seniors Devon Alexander, Jordan Guillozet and Jordan Price and junior Devin Blakely will see time in the outfield, and junior Ian Nadolny will take on the catching duties.

Senior Alex Potchik joins the team after playing mainly JV last year. Juniors Cody Fuller, Jay Swigard and Cam Weaver also will make the move to varsity, and sophomores Joey Benson, Zack Kendall, Ben Langdon and Kevin McGraw will round out the roster.

Helke, Antonides and Alexander bring the most varsity pitching experience to the staff, and Fuller, Weaver, Kendall and Langdon will all be looking to find their roles.

"If we have a question mark, it's our pitching rotation, especially our starters," Welker said. "I think we have the arms, we just don't know where they're all going to fit in. We're going to have to lean on our sophomores a bit, I think."

"Devon and Nick were mainly relievers last year, and they have to get more innings. Offensively, we've improved. Defensively, we're solid. If we can throw strikes, we've got the big bats to back them up."

Going into the Greater Western Ohio Conference North Division portion of the schedule, the Trojans know who to aim for.

"I think Butler is the team to beat — not just in the league, but in the area," Welker said. "They're definitely going into the season favored to win it."

"Piqua was improved last year and returns quite a few starters, as well, Sidney

always hits and Greenville has a new coach. I think it will be us, Piqua and Butler."

But after last season's run-rule exit from the tournament at the hands of Springboro in the second round after a bye, the Trojans loaded up the schedule this year to toughen the team up for a lengthier run.

"We've got a daunting schedule this year. Doubleheaders against Centerville and Fairmont — our schedule is not an easy one. And that's OK," Welker said. "We were a little defensive in the tournament last year. We don't want to go in already back on our heels."

"I want a team that can be ready for a playoff run, seeing good competition and the best pitching throughout the year."

Troy kicks off the season Saturday at Springfield Shawnee.

• Tippecanoe

The Tippecanoe baseball team doesn't have a lot upper-classman returning this season. What the Red Devils do have, however, is deep pitching staff — and that could take it a long way.

"The last two years we have lost seven starters each year, but we've been able to replace them," Tippecanoe coach Bruce Cahill said. "We are very young this year with only two seniors — but I feel this is the best pitching staff we have had in years."

Tipp is loaded in the pitching department. Sophomores Ben Hughes and Cameron Johnson will look to be the faces of the staff this season. Hughes had a 5-1 record and a 1.39 ERA as a freshman, while Johnson went 5-0 with a 1.44 ERA. Also in the rotation will be senior Nick Muse — who went 4-2 and had a 1.52 ERA last season — Steven Calhoun, Cole Quillen and Austin Clack, along with junior Carter Langdon.

"Carter Langdon returns from an injury and gives us a big boost," Cahill said. "Carter is 6-foot-4 and throws in the 80s. Ben Hughes and

Cameron return after a year when the combined to win 10 games as freshmen."

Four players are expected to be vying for the catching position in juniors Zach Robbins, Brad Mullins and Kyle Peura, along with sophomore B.J. Donathan.

In the infield, Johnson will be at short, Langdon will play at third and first, Hughes — who batted .492 last season — will play at third and in centerfield and freshman Zack Blair will play second. Junior Austin Hadden is expected to be in left, while senior Henry Scott — who hit .292 last season — will play in right. Clack and Quillen will also compete for time in the outfield.

"We are coming off of 24-5 and 25-5 seasons the past two years," Cahill said. "We are also coming off a district championship. Expectations are high once again, even though we lost seven starters and our No. 1 pitcher."

• Miami East

After putting together a 16-game winning streak last season, many of the same players are back for the Miami East Vikings.

"We believe we have to play hard every game," Miami East coach Barry Coomes said. "We can't look ahead. We won 16 games last year and that's not easy to do. You have to have a lot of luck — and you have to work hard."

Luke Clark and Garrett Mitchell return to bolster the Vikings pitching staff. They were the No. 1 and No. 2 pitchers last season, but Mitchell will also see time at catcher. Bradley Coomes, Colton Bowling and Michael Fellers will get time on the mound, so will lefty Jacob Hawkins.

Coomes will play second base, Colton Bowling will be at first or third, with Brandon Kirk at shortstop and Kevin McMaken is also going to see time at first or third.

Clark and Fellers will be in the outfield when not pitching, with Logan Durand taking right field. Evan Bowling,

Alex Browes will also be vying for time in the outfield.

• Troy Christian

Troy Christian brings back an load of experience from its sectional final team last season — and there's more talent on the horizon despite a continued numbers struggle.

"We have four seniors — and they're all starters — but we also have nine freshmen and 19 total kids," Troy Christian coach Bill Campbell said. "Three of those freshmen are going to contribute quite a lot on varsity, and we're pretty excited about that. We're hoping the numbers stay up. We've got a lot of young kids playing together already."

Leading an experienced pitching staff will be senior ace Michael Seagraves, with Daniel McGillivray and Ben Morrow also back and Elisha Simms, Alex Patterson and Luke Gaskell also getting work. Seth Manuel and Taylor Kolker will catch.

Morrow will play at third base, David Diltz will play short, McGillivray will play second and Patterson and Seagraves will split time at first. Nathan Kirkpatrick will anchor the outfield in center, Gaskell will patrol left and Christian Willis will play right.

"We want to win the conference and go farther than any other Troy Christian team in the tournament — those are the goals every year," Campbell said.

• Bethel

Brett Brookhart returns in season No. 12 at the helm of the Bethel Bees baseball program. And back in the saddle with Brookhart comes a wealth of experience from the 2011 team — including seven seniors.

"With seven seniors this year, we return a lot of experience," Brookhart said. "We feel we can compete in the upper part of our league. Dropping back down to Division IV is a plus for us, and we believe with contin-

Women's College Basketball

Finfrock

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shy of the single-game tournament record with 22 rebounds in the win.

Finfrock, who started 13 games during the 2010-11 season, has come off the bench all season long for the Eagles, going 18 for 42 from the field — 12 for 33 from 3-point range — and has scored 54 points, a 2.2 points-per-game average. Last season she averaged 4.3

points per game, had 28 steals — second-best on the team — and 52 assists — fourth-best on the team.

Shaw (28-6) defeated Rollins 87-71 to reach the title game, with three separate players posting double-doubles in the game.

The game will be televised on the CBS Sports Network and will also be shown on NCAA.com.

College Basketball

Spartans

■ **CONTINUED FROM 17**
Final Four five times, becoming the first coach to lead three different schools to the national semifinals. Once past the NCAA tournament's first week, he's had a knack for guiding his team farther along the bracket, advancing to the regional final all 10 times he's gotten a team to the semifinals.

Tom Izzo has been supremely consistent in 17 years at Michigan State, building teams that can handle the rigors of the Big Ten or switch to greyhound mode when the opponent plays fast. He's been as consistent as any coach in the game, leading the Spartans to the Final Four six times, including the 2000 national title, and 10 trips to the regionals round the past 15 years.

Izzo played the right hand the last time these two basketball brains met, taking the Spartans to the 2009 Final Four after they found a way to break Louisville's pressure.

Pitino had something up his sleeve this time.

With Michigan State bogging the game down, the Cardinals struggled early, missing 12 of their first 13 shots. They snapped out of it by hitting 3s.

Russ Smith hit a pair,

Jared Swopshire and Chris Smith each dropped one in and, even Dieng 0-for-2 in his career previously got one to go in.

Swopshire closed it out with a 3 from the corner to put the Cardinals up 23-15 at halftime. Louisville was 7 of 15 from the arc in the half, but got almost nothing inside, hitting 1 of 15 shots from 2-point range.

Michigan State couldn't seem to hit anything from anywhere, going 6-for-22 from the field, 2-for-9 from the arc.

Louisville shifted gears to open the second half, getting two layups and a dunk to keep its cushion. Swopshire followed with an alley-ooop to Siva for the point guard's first points, then stole the inbound pass to set up two free throws by Russ Smith that put the Cardinals up 35-25.

Michigan State managed a short run to get within four, but Louisville used its pressure to get a couple of steals and baskets to go up 43-32. Dieng followed with a couple more swats one on Keith Appling that sailed into the stands to keep the Spartans from making a run.

Louisville outscored Michigan State by six inside and had a 17-4 advantage off the bench.

ued improvement throughout the year we can make a nice tournament run. I have been very happy with the work ethic so far. With the weather cooperating so far this spring we feel that we will be prepared for a successful season."

Senior Jon Ellerbrock returns to the mound after posting a 4-1 record with 48 strikeouts and an ERA of 3.60 in his junior year. Also expected in the Bees rotation are Luke Veldman, who had a 2-2 record in 2011, Joe Serrer, who was 1-1 last season, and sophomore Jordan Elam.

At catcher will be Colin Hoke, who had a batting average of .377, along with three homers and 20 RBIs last year. Also in the infield is four-year letterwinner Joe Zimmerman at second base. The senior hit .304 last season, while Serrer will be at shortstop. Expected to be at third is sophomore Jimmy Pelphrey. In the outfield are seniors Ellerbrock and Dustin Myers, who hit .350 last season, as well as Elam.

• Newton

In its third rebuilding season after going a year without a baseball program, the Newton Indians return nine letterwinners and are looking to reach the .500 mark or better for the season.

"We're still young, but we expect a .500-plus season," Newton coach Gregg Carnes said. "The kids are working hard and working well together. We had a successful summer season, and we hope to build on those accomplishments."

The Indians returns an experienced — yet still young — pitching staff, including sophomore Cody Alexander, who pitched 43 innings and had two complete games last year. Also back are an experienced pair of juniors in Rob Maxwell and Mitchell Hussong, and sophomores Logan Welbaum and Brian Schwartz will also pitch — with Schwartz and Maxwell also catching.

Junior shortstop Gavin

Alexander brings back his .449 batting average and will anchor the lineup, with Welbaum at third, Dain Peters at second and Hussong and Cody Alexander at first. Luke Stull — the team's lone senior — juniors Rick Webb and Brandon Delcamp and freshmen Dustin Coate and Tyler Denlinger will compete for the outfield spots.

• Covington

Mitch Hirsch returns to coach the Covington Buccs this season. The Buccs' top two pitchers will be senior Steven Blei — who will also play third — and Austin Angle. The catcher position will be a battle between two juniors and a sophomore.

Sophomore Justin Williams will be at third, while junior Bryton Lear is at shortstop, junior Sheldon Rank will be at second and junior Ryan Craft is at first. The Buccs have six different players vying for the three outfield spots.

"We lost some good players from last season, but we have a good group coming back and a good freshman class coming in," Hirsch said.

• Bradford

Shane Snyder is back as coach for Bradford — which returns one senior from last season.

"We're still a young and inexperienced varsity team," Snyder said. "But we have a strong core of new and upcoming talent. We have very high expectations for the varsity and reserve team. We are excited to compete."

The top pitchers for the team are expected to be sophomore Brandon Wysong and junior Austin Lear. Newcoming hurlers include juniors Luke Hafer, James Canan and Jake Cline.

The top infielders include Bryce Arnett at second and Brandon Wysong. The team will have an all new outfield with newcomers Hafer, Canan, sophomore Daniel Cassel and freshman Craig Wyan all expected to battle for spots.