

## College Basketball

## Butler back in Final Four

## UConn escapes Arizona with a 65-63 victory

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Of course Butler erased a late deficit. Of course the Bulldogs hit a clutch 3-pointer late in overtime. Of course they're going back to the Final Four.

This is the Butler Way. Shelvin Mack scored 27 points, including five in overtime, and Butler reached the Final Four for the second year in a row with a 74-71 victory over Florida on Saturday.

"This is a huge deal," said Zach Hahn, whose two 3-pointers helped his team stay close in the first half. "I don't know that any other mid-major has ever done this. It's hardly happened once, let alone twice. It's an unbelievable feeling."

Butler, the Horizon League champ, has vanquished three higher seeds from major conferences — top-seeded Pittsburgh, fourth-seeded Wisconsin and now second-seeded Florida — in succession. Those big wins came after Howard tipped in a winner in the final seconds against Old Dominion.

This game had another



AP PHOTO

## Kyle Marshall (23) slam dunks during the first half Saturday in New Orleans.

frantic finish.

"We just kind of stayed together, stayed the course, figured it out, and just played resiliently," Butler coach Brad Stevens. "I'm incredibly proud of these guys. They carried their coach in a big way. ... Our players did a great job, and

(they are) just a special group. We're really lucky that they're Butler Bulldogs."

Matt Howard scored 14 and Kyle Marshall added 10 for the Bulldogs (27-9), who showed again they simply won't give in, climbing out of an 11-point hole

in the last 9:25 of the second half.

Mack's 3-pointer with 1:21 left in overtime gave Butler the lead for good at 72-70.

Kenny Boynton missed a long 3 that could have given Florida (29-8) the lead with a little under 20 seconds left. Alex Tyus appeared to have the offensive rebound, but Howard tied him up and the possession arrow favored Butler.

**UConn 65, Arizona 63**  
ANAHEIM, Calif. — Derrick Williams and his Arizona teammates dunked their way to another big second-half run. This time, it wasn't enough.

In a matchup of streaky shooting teams, the Wildcats couldn't stay hot long enough to beat Connecticut, losing 65-63 in the West Regional final on Saturday.

It was a crushing end to fifth-seeded Arizona's run that came just a year after the Wildcats' streak of 25 consecutive NCAA tournament appearances ended.

Williams scored 20 points, making 9 of 12 free throws, and Jesse Perry added 14 points for the Wildcats (30-8), the Pac-10 regular season champions.

## Boys Basketball

## Taft wins state in 43-point rout

COLUMBUS (AP) — Cincinnati Taft made its debut in the state tournament memorable with a record-setting 95-52 rout over Cleveland Central Catholic in the Division III Ohio boys state championship game in Columbus.

The 43-point victory was the largest in the history of the Division III championship and tied the all-division record for widest margin of victory.

Taft set records with 30 points in a quarter and in a game for a Division III championship game.

Adolphus Washington led Taft (26-1) with 18 points and eight rebounds. Eleven different players scored for the Senators.

**Akron SVSM 57, T. Marshall 46**  
COLUMBUS

Lorenzo Cugini scored 15 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to lead Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary to a 57-46 win over Dayton Thurgood Marshall in the Division II Ohio boys state championship at Value City Arena in Columbus.

The championship was sixth in the school's history.

The Irish (19-9) blew

open a close game with a 15-1 run in the second half, holding Thurgood Marshall (22-6) without a field goal for a span of 9:38.

**Ber. Hiland 63, Harvest Prep 48**

COLUMBUS — Seger Bonifant scored 21 points and Berlin Hiland broke open a close game with a big fourth quarter in a 63-48 win over Canal Winchester World Harvest Prep in the Division IV Ohio boys state final at Value City Arena in Columbus.

The Hawks (27-1) won their second state championship in school history after outscoring Harvest Prep 26-11 over the final eight minutes.

**LaSalle 59, Col. Northland 40**  
COLUMBUS

Brandon Neel scored 22 points and Ryan Fleming added 17 to lead Cincinnati LaSalle to a 59-40 victory over Columbus Northland in the Division I Ohio boys state championship game.

Saturday's championship at Value City Arena was the second in school history for LaSalle (26-2).

## Baseball

## Baseball

■ CONTINUED FROM B1 returns and will catch, giving the Trojans a battery full of leaders.

"We have some good experience in Trey and Doug, and Dhaval brings some experience to the team, as well," Welker said. "They will anchor our team. Our battery is in good shape, and they will all play a big role in what we do day in and day out."

The Trojans also have a veteran outfield, with seniors Kalob Caudill and Barkett patrolling center field along with sophomore Devin Blakely, senior Nate Fair in left and Jordan Guilozet and Jordan Price in the mix at right, with Devin Alexander being able to play any position.

"Our outfield is loaded. Last year we struggled a little bit, but I think we've gotten more athletic again and can cover a lot of ground," Welker said.

The infield will have a new look, though, with no returning starters. Nick Antonides, a transfer from Troy Christian, will be at third, Shah or sophomore Dylan Cascaden will be at short, senior Jared Fisher — a backup last year — will be at second with Thomas Harvey also seeing time, and Burchfield and Nathan Kelkey splitting time at first.

"We have a completely different infield, but they've begun to prove themselves already this spring," Welker said. "The pitchers like throwing with those guys behind them. We're seeing a lot of ground-ball outs."

But the question for Troy is the same as last year — where will the runs come from?

"The question for us always seems to be offense. Last year we struggled," Welker said. "Top to bottom, we'll have some hitters, but we've got to fill those crucial roles — we need to find a leadoff hitter, who will be in the meat of the order. The boys have worked hard to get better."

And they have a goal, too — knock off defending Greater Western Ohio Conference North Division champ Butler after finishing second to the Aviators last year.

"I think it'll be us and Vandalia again," Welker said. "Piqua is returning a lot of letterwinners and Greenville re-entering the league adds an interesting wrinkle, but I think it'll be between us and Vandalia."

And with league series being back-to-back Monday-Tuesday affairs each week



STAFF FILE PHOTO

## Troy's Kalob Caudill crosses home plate during a game last season against Butler. The Trojans will be aiming to unseat the GWOC North champion Aviators this year.

this year, Welker thinks the schedule may help.

"That can definitely help a team like us — our staff is deep, but we don't have that one ace," Welker said. "We have multiple guys that can throw for us, so that could be a factor in our favor."

After all, the Trojans will be counting on their pitching staff this season.

## • Tippecanoe

After a 25-5 record a season ago, Tippecanoe coach Bruce Cahill hopes this year's team is ready to step up to the challenge.

As always, pitching is a point of emphasis for the Devils. And although they lost several pitchers from last year's team, Cahill hopes his new rotation is can pick up where they left off. Senior Craig Koehler is back after posting a 4-0 record last year and an ERA of 2.78. Koehler will be joined in the rotation by Nick Muse, Steven Calhoun, Cody Gingerich, Cameron Johnson and Ben Hughes. Senior Keagan Putnam, who hit .313 last year in limited action, will be at catcher.

"We have a very inexperienced pitching staff this year," Cahill said. "We graduated 21 wins from last year's team."

Seniors Braden Price, who hit .364 last year, Cody Gingerich and Kyle Pignatiello will make up most of the infield, while freshman Cameron Johnson will be at shortstop

and senior Chase Goulette will split time in the infield and outfield.

In the outfield will be seniors Casey Clack, Cameron Daniel and Jimmy Springer. Junior Nick Muse and Ben Hughes, a freshman with outstanding potential, should see time in the outfield as well.

"I think we will be a good hitting team," Cahill said. "As always, pitching will be the key for success, and even though we look inexperienced, we have some very good arms."

## • Miami East

Miami East coach Barry Coomes has high hopes for his baseball squad this year. With big bats and experience back in the lineup, it appears the Vikings are primed and ready to make a run at the CCC crown.

"We have a lot of experience coming back this year," Coomes said. "We are very capable of having a good season."

There are five players fighting for a spot in the starting pitching rotation for the Vikings. The final two of those five spots however, will join closer Bradley Coomes in relief. Garrett Mitchell and Michael Fellers are expected to see time at catcher.

The rest of the infield will consist of good defense and solid bats. Coomes, who posted a .439 batting average last year, will have a spot in the infield, alongside Colton Bowling, a .410 hit-

ter last season. Garrett Mitchell and Brandon Lowe will also have spots in the infield, along with two newcomers in Alex Henry and Michael Fellers.

Zach Denlinger is the only returning starter in the outfield from a season ago. Logan Durand, Kevin McMaken, Gunner Shirck, Luke Clark and Corey Townsend are all aiming to fill the other holes in the East outfield.

## • Bethel

Brett Brookhart returns for his 11th season at Bethel. The Bees are coming off a rough season a year ago, finishing with a 8-18 record. But many of those players are back this year with much more experience under their belts and a hunger for winning.

"We were extremely young last year, but hopefully with the experience they gained on varsity last year will pay off this year," Brookhart said.

The top pitchers on the team are expected to be senior Ben Schwieterman, junior Jon Ellerbrock and sophomore Luke Veldman.

"Depth of the pitching staff will be a key for this year's team," Brookhart said. "The addition of Ben Schwieterman, who missed last year due to a knee injury, hopefully will solidify our pitching rotation."

Senior Bryce Laycock and junior Colin Hoke are expected to see time at catcher. The infield will be anchored by Gus

Schwieterman at first base, while Scotty Young, Joe Zimmerman, Ben Schwieterman, Kyle Burrowes, Dustin Myers and Joey Serrer will make up the bulk of the infield.

In the outfield, David Elam, Ellerbrock, Jordan Elam and Austin Staggs are all expected to see time for the Bees.

## • Troy Christian

Bill Campbell returns as coach of the Troy Christian baseball squad.

Michael Seagraves is expected to be the ace of the pitching staff, while Taylor Patterson will be at catcher. The infield will feature Nathan Kirkpatrick at second and David Diltz at shortstop.

The anchor in the outfield will be Trevor Campbell in centerfield, while Taylor Ryne will be in rightfield.

"We are young, but I think we can be pretty good," Campbell said.

## • Covington

Mitch Hirsch returns for his ninth season as Covington coach.

The Buccs were 11-16 overall last year and 6-6 in the CCC. Graduating off that team were Adam Craft and Nick Long.

Returning letterwinners include seniors Jake Stewart, Ben Wilson, Andrew DeHart, Corey Haines, Brandon Flora, CJ Poling and junior Steven Blei.

"We have a good group of seniors but we need some sophomores to step up and fill some key positions," Hirsch said.

## • Newton

Coach Gregg Carnes returns to lead Newton after a 5-19 campaign last year. Newton's team is very young, but Carnes sees a bright future on the horizon as he continues to develop some of the younger players.

"We have good, hard-working kids," Carnes said. "We have 20 kids (on the team), and 19 of them are freshmen or sophomores. But if we continue to develop their baseball skills and confidence, we should be able to win. The future is bright."

Returning letterwinners include Brandon Delcamp, Mitchell Husson, Gavin Alexander and Rob Maxwell, who is one of Newton's top pitchers.

"Brandon is speedy and good at the plate," Carnes said. "He will be at catcher and in the outfield. Mitchell is a lefty pitcher who is also a good hitter. He will see time at first base and in the

outfield because of his athletic ability. Gavin is one of our top hitters. He will see time at shortstop and in the outfield.

"We want to be aggressive and play sound defense. We want to go out there and compete on a daily basis."

## • Bradford

Shane Snyder takes over as Bradford coach, a Railroader team that was 12-14 overall last year and 4-8 in the CCC.

Returning letterwinners include sophomores Aaron Yohey, Bryce Arnett and Austin Lear.

"We are a young inexperienced team this year," Snyder said. "We lost some tremendous talent last season, however I am very optimistic about the future of our young ball players."

"We have kids that love the game of baseball and seriously want to get better. We want to do our best in the CCC and compete to the best of our ability."

## • Piqua

Jared Askins returns for his second season as Piqua coach the year after the Indians finished 8-16 overall last year and 4-9 in the GWOC.

Returning letterwinners include seniors Aaron Christy, Tyler Davis, Brad Jess, Jake Causey and Trenton Hemm; and juniors Taylor Huebner, Taylor Wellbaum, Andy Draving and Brandon Wright.

"The kids have very high expectations this year," Askins said. "With nine returning letterwinners, we believe we have the ability to compete with the top schools in the GWOC North."

## • Lehman

Dave King, who has 436 career victories, is back as the coach of the Cavaliers this spring, and he has good reason to be optimistic heading into the season.

King lists 10 letterwinners returning from a team that won 20 games last season and lost just seven.

"There will be a lot of good teams out there, and we are working hard to be one of them," said King, in his 31st season as a head coach. "We have some spots to fill, but capable players to fill the void."

He lost shortstop Travis Bosse and All-Ohio third baseman David Spearman to graduation. But back are seniors Wil Fridley, Wil Vernon, Kaleb Goins, Matt Pulfer, and Devin Richard, juniors DJ Hemm, Ben Weber, Alex Smith and Joe Vondenheuvel, and sophomore John Copella.