

Ohio State Commits Competing In State Playoffs



As basketball season approaches its end at nearly all levels, several Ohio State commits are battling through their respective state playoffs with the hopes of securing a championship before beginning their collegiate careers.

With the Buckeyes bringing in the sixth-ranked recruiting class in 2023, the duo of Minneapolis Totino-Grace four-star combo guard Taison Chatman (6-4, 170) and Pickerington (Ohio) Central four-star forward Devin Royal (6-7, 210) each led their teams on deep playoff runs while Wichita (Kan.) Sunrise Christian four-star forward Scotty Middleton (6-6, 180) gears up for the GEICO High School National Tournament.

Royal eyed his second-consecutive Ohio high school crown entering the postseason but already left his mark prior to the playoffs by earning Mr. Basketball honors in his home state. Royal, alongside current Ohio State safety Sonny Styles, collected an Ohio state title by dispatching Indiana commit Gabe Cupps and Centerville 55-48 in the state championship last season.

This time without Styles, who enrolled early at Ohio State last year, Royal ran into Centerville for a semifinal rematch on Saturday and did not disappoint. Royal paced the Tigers with 23 points and four rebounds to dispatch rival Centerville 57-53 and advance to the state finals to play Akron Archbishop Hogan.

However, Pickerington Central's aspirations to go back-to-back fell just short as the Tigers fell 49-37 after a late 18-6 run by Hogan put the game out of reach. Royal finished with 15 points and eight rebounds but shot just 5 of 14 from the field.

While Royal's high school career has come to a close, Chatman's playoff pursuits are just heating up. Similarly to Royal, Chatman is also pursuing his second-consecutive state title in Minnesota and already gave Totino-Grace a boost by leading the Eagles to a Section 4AAA title, with a collection of strong

outings.

Totino-Grace won all three of their sectional match-ups by more than 20 points while closing out the run through the sectionals with a 77-46 win over Mahtomedi — in which Chatman produced eight points. The Eagles begin the state circuit with a quarterfinal matchup against St. Francis in the Class AAA on Tuesday.

While Middleton's sights are set on helping Sunrise Christian claim the national crown, St. Marys (Ohio) three-star center Austin Parks saw his season come to a close with a 56-55 loss to Van Wert on a buzzer-beater on March 2 in the Division II district semifinal.