

Owensboro, playing in its record 43rd State tournament, also won in 1949, '72 and '80.

Dylan Sanford led a balanced scoring attack with 21 points, hitting all four of the Red Devils' three-pointers.

"My teammates got me the ball right where I needed it," said Sanford, a 6-foot-1 senior. "Everybody knows I'm a shooter, and they got me the ball in the pocket and I hit some shots."

Then there was the inside tandem of senior big fellas Aric Holman and tourney MVP Justin Miller.

"He dominates," Coach Rod Drake said of Holman. "He gets there, and he changed the game."

Holman, a 6-9, 185-pounder, netted 20 points, 14 rebounds and eight blocks.

"It feels amazing," Holman said. "Especially when you work your butt off, you and your teammates. You do everything together, and when you work as hard as we do, we knew what our goal was. And we're just glad we accomplished it before we left."

Miller, a 6-7, 290-pounder, played through what he called a groin/hamstring injury and finished with 11 points, 10 rebounds and five assists.

"I was about 30 percent, honestly," Miller said. "But I wasn't going to let that stop me from playing my last game with my brothers, so I'm just glad we got it done."

Jacoby Harris, a 5-10 sophomore, added 14 points and five assists as the 3rd Region team won its seventh game in a row.

The Red Devils (31-4) beat Bowling Green twice during the regular season—79-71 on Jan. 3 and 69-66 on Feb. 10. But that didn't make them overconfident.

"To be honest, we had a little doubt," Holman said. "Because to beat a team three times in a row is pretty hard. So we just took it as we never played them before. . . . Took it back to square one, and that's how we got here now."

This marked the first finals between Western Kentucky schools since 4th Region Edmonson County beat 2nd Region Christian County in 1976.

Fourth Region champion Bowling Green (31-6), in its first State finals and 15th tourney, was led by Terry Taylor with 16 points and nine rebounds. Tucker Sine had nine points and seven boards, and Kyran Jones netted eight points and eight caroms.

"Coming into this tournament, we were playing as well as anybody," Purples Coach D.G. Sherrill said. "And in this championship game, we just kind of ran into a buzz saw. We ran into a team that shot a little better, they fought around the rim a little harder, they hit their free throws (20 of 23), and it was just a tough game for us. But we got beat by a bunch of good players and a great coaching staff over in Owensboro."

Owensboro jumped to a 4-0 lead to start. Ahead 4-3, the Red Devils went on a 9-0 run, only to see the Purples come back with a 9-0 rally to leave the score 13-12.

Owensboro led 16-12 through one quarter and 27-23 at halftime.

The Devils opened the third quarter with a 7-1 run to push the lead to 34-24.

Then, a 9-0 blitz widened the gap to 43-26. Holman started the action by converting a three-point play for a 37-26 lead.

Darion Marrow, who finished with six points, hit a short jumper.

Sanford scored on a fast break, and Marrow flipped in a shot from the lane.

The lead was 49-33 through three quarters. The closest Bowling Green came from there was 61-49 with 3:06 left, when Taylor scored on a put-back.

Both teams came into the finals having shot 55 percent from the field during the first three rounds of the tourney.

Owensboro nearly matched that Sunday, going 25 of 48 (52.1 percent), but Bowling Green came in 23 of 64 (35.9 percent).

"Defensively, it's all about heart," Sanford said. "And our team has a lot of heart."

"The basket got a little small for us tonight," Sherrill said. "We picked a bad game to have one of our lower performances in the shooting from the field. But to come in here and play in a state championship time for the first time in Bowling Green history . . . I'm still so proud of them. We're taking home a big old silver ball tonight. That means we accomplished something up here."

RECOGNIZING THE COVINGTON HOLY CROSS GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I believe my U.S. Senate colleagues are well aware of how seriously we take our basketball in my home State of Kentucky. I rise to congratulate the statewide champions in girls' basketball in Kentucky, the Covington Holy Cross Indians, who won the Kentucky High School Athletic Association, KHSAA, State Basketball Championship this March 15.

It was a dramatic ending to a spectacular season for the Indians, who finish with a 33-to-3 record. The score in the final game against the Allen County-Scottsville Patriots was tied at 32 with just under 20 seconds to play when senior forward Abby Hassert, who had not scored all game, drove the lane from the top of the key to score a layup and win the game. It was the Indians' first appearance in the State tournament in 39 years, and the game was enjoyed by over 5,000 fans at E.A. Diddle Arena in Bowling Green, KY.

I want to recognize every member of this championship team that is bringing the KHSAA trophy to Covington. Team members include Justice Arce, Zyah Beal, Olivia Crigler, Kate Dreas, Morgan Gabbard, Abby Hassert, Ally Mayhaus, Cessie Mayhaus, Dajah McClendon, Candace McNama, Tara Niehaus, Hannah Niemeyer, Alexis Riep, Aleah Tucker, Courtney Turner, and Deja Turner. The coach is Kes Murphy.

The Lexington Herald-Leader recently published an article about the Indians' victory. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Lexington Herald-Leader, Mar. 15, 2015]

GIRLS' SWEET SIXTEEN: COVINGTON HOLY CROSS TAKES STATE TITLE (By Mark Maloney)

BOWLING GREEN.—Abby Hassert picked a fine time for her only points of the game Sunday.

Hassert drove down the lane and put in the winning basket, plus a free throw, with 5.5 seconds left to vault Covington Holy Cross to a 35-32 victory over Allen County-Scottsville in the Houchens Industries/KHSAA Girls' Sweet Sixteen championship game.

"I knew I had to do something," said Hassert, a 5-foot-10 senior. "I knew that we had to get the ball to somebody to score and I saw the lane wide open, and I knew I had to take it."

An E.A. Diddle Arena crowd of 5,335 roared.

After multiple timeouts, Allen County-Scottsville had a last shot to tie. But Morgan Rich's long three-point try from near her team bench hit off the backboard and rim.

"We got exactly what we wanted," Patriots Coach Brad Bonds said. "We got Morgan in the right spot for the shot. We threw it up to Savannah (Gregory), who threw it to Morgan. It was perfect. It was executed great. We got the shot we wanted."

Holy Cross (33-3), out of the 9th Region, ended the season on a 22-game winning streak.

The Indians, with a school enrollment of 406, also won the All "A" title back on Feb. 1. They are the fourth team ever to sweep the KHSAA and All "A" titles in the same season, joining Nicholas County (1993), Hazard (1997) and Lexington Christian (2007).

"It doesn't matter the size. It really doesn't matter the size," said Deja Turner, who led Holy Cross with 13 points and five rebounds, and who was named tourney MVP. "We came in here against some big, big teams. We knocked off some very big teams, and we came through and we pulled it out twice."

Ally Mayhaus added 10 points for the winners.

Holy Cross also beat the Patriots on Dec. 22, 61-54 in Lexington.

In the Sweet Sixteen, Holy Cross opened with a 51-33 win over Bell County, then edged top-rated Elizabethtown 41-40. In the semifinals, the Indians beat Male 47-37.

Allen County-Scottsville (30-5), the 4th Region champion, had an eight-game winning streak snapped.

"Bottom line, they made a big-time play. A big-time play," Bonds said. "And that's what the State Tournament's all about is kids and very high-quality basketball teams going at it, and unfortunately we came out on the short end of the stick. But a lot of credit to them. I thought it was two outstanding basketball teams battling on both ends."

Rich, a 5-foot-10 University of Kentucky recruit, led all scorers with 20 points. She also had three rebounds and two assists.

Gregory was the next-highest ACS scorer with five. She and Holly Robinson grabbed seven rebounds each.

Holy Cross Coach Kes Murphy, whose sister Donna was Kentucky's first Miss Basketball in 1976, credited the championship to a killer schedule that had his team well prepared for Sunday.

The game was tied 18-18 at halftime, with ACS holding a 12-3 advantage in rebounds. Robinson has six of those.

But Holy Cross had a 9-0 edge in points off turnovers.

The Indians led 27-24 through three quarters.

In a game that saw seven ties and six lead changes, the Patriots took their final lead, 32-31, when Rich hit two of three free throws with 2:29 left.

A Mayhaus free throw at 1:09 tied the score.

With the Patriots patiently looking for a game-winning shot, Holy Cross point guard Dajah McClendon picked Rich's pocket with 32 seconds left.

"I just knew I had to get up and get one for my team," McClendon said. "We needed that."

Holy Cross took a timeout at 19.6, which led to Hassert's game-winning play.

"She'd better make it," Murphy said he thought at the time of the drive. "And you know what, she's not an offensive player. For what we need. But we know she can play, we know she can make passes and for her to finish and give us this, it means everything."

RECOGNIZING AID FOR AIDS OF NEVADA AND THEIR 25TH ANNUAL AIDS WALK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I recognize Aid for AIDS of Nevada and the 25th Annual AIDS Walk in Las Vegas, NV.

Established in 1984, Aid for AIDS of Nevada, AFAN, is the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the State. Each year, AFAN serves more than 3,500 individuals and families in southern Nevada who are living with HIV/AIDS. This organization provides a range of services to help people living with HIV/AIDS manage their disease, including medical case management, housing assistance, and nutritional services. AFAN is also committed to reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and works with community stakeholders to implement prevention initiatives, including educational seminars for high-risk groups.

This year marks the 25th year that AFAN will host AIDS Walk Las Vegas, which is not only AFAN's biggest fundraiser, but also one of the largest events for HIV/AIDS in the State of Nevada. Last year, more than 10,000 people participated in AIDS Walk Las Vegas and raised nearly \$440,000 for AFAN. The money raised each year from this event helps AFAN provide health care referrals, food vouchers, bus passes, rent assistance, and other essential services to thousands of Nevadans affected by HIV/AIDS.

I commend AFAN on their 25th Annual AIDS Walk Las Vegas, and I applaud their decades of dedicated service to southern Nevada.

RECOGNIZING CARLA SLOAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor the career of Carla Sloan as she retires from her position as the American Association of Retired Persons, AARP, Nevada State director.

For more than 30 years, Carla Sloan has been a leading advocate for Nevadans. She has held positions ranging from the founding director of the Howard W. Cannon Senior Services Center in Las Vegas, senior services coordinator for the Las Vegas Housing Authority, administrator for the State of Nevada's Division for Aging Services, and founding Nevada State director for the AARP.

Through these positions, Ms. Sloan led a statewide coalition of senior organizations and developed initiatives to help seniors throughout the Silver State live more independently. She also worked to ensure Nevada's publicly funded programs address the needs of older individuals and connected thousands of Nevada's seniors to essential resources, including health care, housing, and financial planning services.

In addition to these roles, Ms. Sloan has effectively represented the interests of Nevada's seniors by providing

an expert perspective on several community and State boards, including the Governor's Commission on Aging; the Nevada Legislative Task Force for a Healthy Nevada; the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Center for Aging; and the Nevada Elder Abuse Prevention Council.

Carla Sloan has devoted her career to improving the lives of Nevada's seniors. I commend her dedicated service to the Silver State, and I wish her the best in her future endeavors and retirement.

JO MACKKEY ACADEMY OF LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL COMMUNICATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Jo Mackey Academy of Leadership and Global Communication in North Las Vegas, NV. Since this elementary school opened 50 years ago, the school has been dedicated to educating our young citizens while preparing them to succeed in our culturally diverse society. Mrs. Jo Mackey spent her life focusing on the welfare and betterment of all children, and she would be proud to see her name on an elementary school with such notable success.

Jo Mackey Magnet School has made remarkable strides in the last 50 years to ensure excellence in the education of the children of Clark County. They offer special exploration classes to foster intellectual growth in areas such as communication, mathematics, art, foreign language, and many other subjects. They have hired a team of enthusiastic and dedicated staff whose effective teaching is evidenced by the high test scores of the students. In the last school year, Jo Mackey Magnet School had a higher percentage of students meet or exceed Nevada's standards in reading, mathematics, and science when compared to the county and State percentages. They also exceeded State and county rates in attendance and reported zero incidents of bullying or suspensions. Additionally, the Jo Mackey Academy of Leadership and Global Communication was recently recognized by the Magnet Schools of America Merit Awards Program as a Magnet School of Excellence.

Since its founding, Jo Mackey Magnet School has prepared Clark County's children to embark in a world of diversity. Students of many different ethnic and racial origins work together on projects both inside and outside of the classroom. Within the last year, students built and harvested from a school garden and learned about the importance of healthy eating.

I sincerely thank Principal Kemala Washington and the dedicated staff of Jo Mackey Academy of Leadership and Global Communication for their hard work in educating our children. Congratulations on 50 years of standing as a shining example of what a magnet school should be.

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN AZERBAIJAN, SAUDI ARABIA, AND ETHIOPIA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we have a number of challenging foreign policy issues at the moment—from Russian aggression in Ukraine to ISIL and the Syrian civil war to stemming climate change.

Yet amid these larger demands, it is important to remember there are many smaller struggles going on all over the world that are also important—struggles for basic political freedoms which can still result in jailings or worse.

Today I would like to mention a number of such brave individuals who are being detained for exercising or advocating for such democratic values.

First, I am deeply troubled by the recent crackdown on human rights activists in Azerbaijan—part of a disturbing pattern in that country that has significantly deteriorated during the last year.

The New York Times summed it up nicely in its recent editorial by describing Azeri President Aliyev as a modern-day “Jekyll and Hyde” who is able to convince the world that he plays nice with the West while creating one of the worst human rights records at the same time.

Aliyev wants the world to believe that Azerbaijan is a model country that promotes moderate Islam, has strong relations with the West, and is an ideal host for the upcoming European games, yet it currently holds more political prisoners than Russia and Belarus combined—not a great distinction to be sure.

At the end of 2014, Aliyev's henchmen brazenly raided Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty offices in Baku, just weeks after the government arrested one of the country's best known investigative reporters, Khadija Ismayilova. After more than 2 months of detention, she was charged with embezzlement, illegal entrepreneurship, tax evasion and abuse of power—similar charges to those of other human rights activists.

Last August, Senators CARDIN, MURPHY, and I sent a letter to President Aliyev expressing our concern over the imprisonment of Anar Mammadli and Bashir Suleymanli, the chair and the executive director of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center, an organization that promotes free and fair elections in Azerbaijan.

Recently, Bashir was finally released but his colleague Anar remains behind bars.

Just prior, police arrested Leyla Yunus, the director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy. The very next week, the police followed up by arresting her husband, Arif Yunus; fellow activist, Rasul Jafarov, a human rights defender and chairman of the Human Rights Club; and Intigam Aliyev, the country's most prominent human rights lawyer and the 2012 winner of the prestigious Homo Homini Award for his work defending the rule of law in Azerbaijan.