

True GRIT

Rematch against North propels team to state

The whole season was about overcoming adversity for the team. It was all about belief in themselves. The Dragons were not a top 10 4A team yet here they were, going into overtime against the Des Moines North Polar Bears in the substate finals tied 71-71.

The North game was a rematch from earlier in the year, in which the Dragons lost 68-72 by blowing an eight-point lead in the final three minutes. "After gaining a nine-point lead we were outscored 17-4 the last three minutes which was very disappointing, but it also motivated us to improve in some areas," head coach Bobby Sandquist said. "We knew at that point that there was a chance we may play them again in either sub-state or state tournament action."

The players were not ready for the length of the North press, yet the loss was not the main concern. "Our biggest concern was the injury to Peyton (Williams)," Sandquist said. Williams injured his shoulder in the opening moments against North and never returned, missing two games.

After a two-game skid in the middle of the season, the boys hit full form reeling off nine wins in a row including beating the No. 1 team at the time DSM Hoover. This all culminated in the rematch with DSM North.

The atmosphere of the game was electric; no lead felt safe. The boys were ahead by a small margin for most of the game, with a lead of 65-61 with 3:32 left in the fourth quarter. North tied up the game with 14.1 seconds left when North sophomore Tyreke Locure stole an inbounds pass and scored putting DSM North up two with nine seconds left. He then fouled senior Boston Grimes who then calmly made two free throws to send it into overtime.

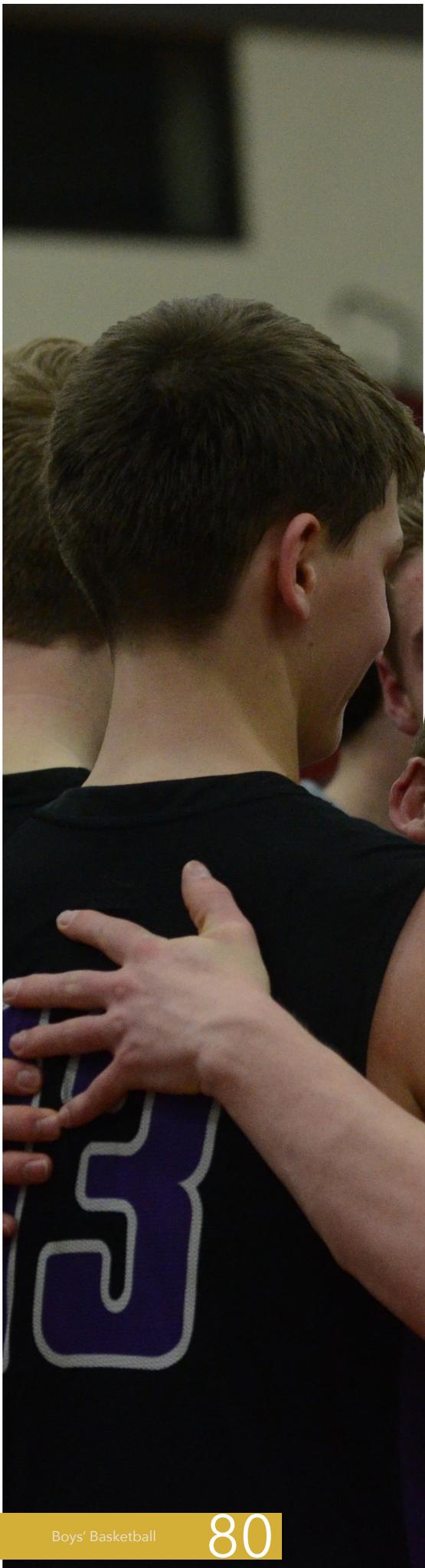
Grimes then proceeded to obliterate North. He hit two straight threes in overtime to give Johnston a permanent lead. "I wasn't really thinking about going in and doing what I did, all I wanted to do was win and get another game with my guys," Grimes said. "But the ball found me a lot in that game and my shots were falling so that's always good," The point guard finished the game with 35 points and six threes.

Grimes will never forget the year the team had. "Means a lot, we met a lot of goals and made some good memories I'll cherish forever. The Waukee loss (first round of state) seemed like it would take away some glory, but we got back to the Well. We played hard and this team is full of gritty guys who will do whatever it takes to win."

Coach Sandquist agreed. "This team epitomized toughness, togetherness and teamwork. Most importantly this team possessed great team chemistry, un-withering character, belief in each other, and an everyday yeoman's work ethic."

Des Moines Lincoln 60-23	Mason City 71-40
Ames 59-33	Fort Dodge 51-47
West Des Moines Valley 69-42	Waukee 49-54
Mason City 68-46	Dowling Catholic 45-63
Des Moines North 68-72	Southeast Polk 72-64
Urbandale 52-40	Urbandale 66-51
Ottumwa 68-29	Des Moines Roosevelt 43-57
Dowling Catholic 56-53	Marshalltown 54-51
Marshalltown 76-53	Des Moines East 87-55
	Fort Dodge 63-42
	Ankeny Centennial 68-57
	Des Moines Hoover 60-40
	Fort Dodge 61-48
	Des Moines North 87-79
	Waukee 58-60

Senior Bo Sandquist hugs the team manager senior John Khyl after beating DSM North. Khyl was a two-year varsity manager. Coach Bob Sandquist said, "John was an inspiration and considered a member of our basketball family. He was always positive and a joy to have around. Our team embraced him." (Photo by Evan Newcomb)



Boys' Basketball

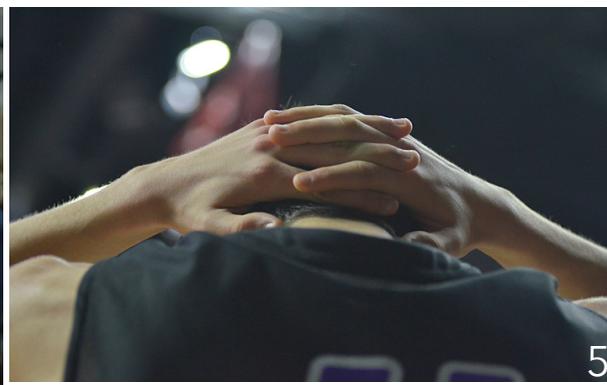
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2. Senior Air Force commit Camden Vander Zwaag and junior Nathan Newcomb contest North's sophomore Tyreke Locure's shot. The Johnston vs North game was referred to by the DSM Register as "The game to be at" for the substate finals. It lived up to the hype, as it was a back and forth contest in which overtime was needed before the Dragons could finally beat the Polar Bears. (Photo by Evan Newcomb)



3. Junior Nathan Newcomb, seniors Camden Vander Zwaag, Bo Sandquist, Boston Grimes and junior Peyton Williams hold the state qualifier banner. The five started for the Dragons the whole year - except when Williams was injured - and played nearly all of the minutes each game. When totaled together, the five accounted for 93% of the points each game, 81% of the rebounds and 89% of the assists. (Photo by Evan Newcomb)



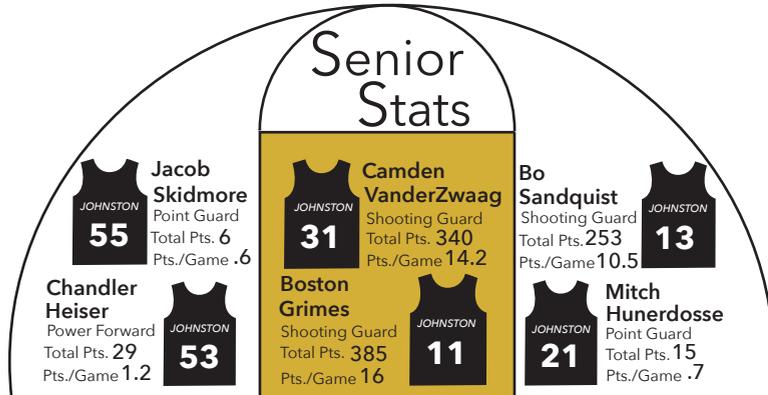
4. Senior Bo Sandquist dribbles out the clock in the 87-79 substate final win over Des Moines North. Sandquist was one of the five starters who played majority of the minutes for the team, in which he averaged 10.5 points and led the team with 62 three-pointers made. (Photo by Evan Newcomb)

5. After losing in the state quarterfinals, senior Boston Grimes has his hands on his head in disbelief. Grimes tried to will the team to a victory with a half court shot at the end of the first quarter. Grimes finished with 28 points, 6 rebounds, 6 assists, while shooting 60% from the field, 50% from three and making all eight of his free throws. (Photo by Evan Newcomb)



6. Junior Peyton Williams goes up for a contested layup against a Valley defender. Williams went down with a shoulder injury in the opening minutes against DSM North. He returned two games later with a vengeance which culminated in one of the great performances in Dragons' basketball history. In the substate final, he had 18 points, 5 assists, 2 steals, 2 blocks, and a staggering 20 rebounds. (Photo by Christina Jackson)

7. Celebrating the win against North is junior Ty Petty. "I just wanted to celebrate and it didn't seem like a lot of people were posing with the banner, so I wanted to really do something special." (photo by Evan Newcomb)



Captions by: Will Burch
 Story by: Will Burch
 Spread by: Kelsey Krois
 Mod by: Christina Jackson and Kelsey Krois

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