

Olympus led by experienced Williams

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Sam Williams wanted another chance. Another shot.

At the end of overtime on Dec. 22 at Box Elder, just minutes after his jump shot was blocked to force overtime, the Olympus point guard again found himself open as time expired.

This time he hit it, to lift the Titans to a 69-67 win.

"To get a second shot at it was for sure redemption," said the senior. Williams finished that game with 23 points, and averages 12 points for 8-4 Olympus.

Williams is one of the few Olympus basketball players for whom this entire year is a second chance. Last year, Williams was thrust into the starting point guard role after guards Spencer Harris and Joe Bourne went out with midseason injuries.

Williams was effective in the role, helping the senior-heavy Titans to an 18-4 record and a second-place finish in Region 6 before losing in the first round of the 4A playoffs.

"It made him mature more," said Titans forward Colton Stewart. "It forced him to make better decisions."

Stewart leads the Titans in scoring and is frequently the beneficiary of Williams' passes. This year, however, Williams is



Sam Williams accepts congratulations from his teammates after leaving the court.

much more of a scorer than last season. Williams said he was timid and afraid to assert himself offensively, yes, but also as a leader.

"That was one of the hardest things for me," Williams said, "trying to talk and trying to gain their trust."

That has not been an issue for Williams this time around. He and Stewart, as well as many of the other seniors, have played together since they were sixth-graders. Williams has flourished, both as a leader and scorer.

"For us to be good, he has to score," coach Matt Barnes said.

He is one of the best shooting point guards in the state, as illustrated as his four three-pointers in the Box Elder game. Williams has hit three or more treys in five of the Titans' 12 games.

"We have confidence in Sam," Stewart said. "He's clutch. If there's a last-second shot, we want it to go to Sam."

That was the situation in which Williams found himself at Box Elder last month.

Stewart left the game injured in the first half, so Williams and senior Tanner Curtis carried the load. Curtis led the Titans with 24 points in the win, while Williams finished with 23, his season high.

"For me, that was a fun game, just because I had the opportunity to have a scoring role," Williams said. But at the end of the game, when the Titans needed a go-to guy, there was little doubt who it was.

"It's comforting as a coach to know you can put the ball in his hands and good things will happen," Barnes said.