

At Olympus,

Success is so common because the bar is set high

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

Olympus High School opened in 1951. Regrettably, the school has never won a boys basketball championship.

It seems odd, but it's true. The Titans are currently one of the most powerful high school teams in Utah. As coach Matt Barnes looked back on the 2010-11 season, he felt this year's team had a great chance.

"We've never felt that total jubilation," he said, "but I couldn't have been prouder."

The school continued its intense pride for its basketball program. Led by Barnes, an Olympus grad who has been part of 12 region titles in his 16 years here, the Titans finished with a 16-7 and claimed second place in Region 6. This year, they earned a berth in the 4A state tournament, where they lost to Woods Cross in the quarterfinals.

"It was a very special season," said Barnes, who started the year with just one player that had any varsity experience. "Region 6 had to be the toughest region in 4A and, for us to play for the region championship says something."

While championships have been elusive, winning games has not. With that success has come large crowds and one of the loudest, most supportive student sections in the state. Going to varsity boys basketball games is among the fondest memories of many Titan students.

Olympus plays with pride. It wins and loses with class. Technical fouls are a rarity and great passing and rebounding is a staple.

"We play as a team," said senior guard Sam Williams, who was Oly's point guard and offensive catalyst. "Although we didn't get very far (in the state tournament), I hope we all remember how much



Sam Williams was the team's point guard. He led in three offensive categories. (See team statistics, Page 43)

A winning tradition

Oly's 16-7 record this year continued the school's series of success in boys basketball. A look at the last 10 years:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Pct.</u>
2010-11	16-7	.692
2009-10	18-4	.818
2008-09	19-5	.792
2007-08	13-9	.591
2006-07	16-6	.727
2005-06	19-5	.792
2004-05	22-2	.917
2003-04	17-5	.773
2002-03	19-3	.864
2001-02	11-11	.500



Coach Matt Barnes

camaraderie we had and how well we worked together."

That was probably noticed quickly. After all,

Continued on next page

OLYMPUS BASKETBALL: 2010-11 season recap



LEFT: Leading scorer **Colton Stewart** played with lots of emotion at times.

MIDDLE: Junior **Will Cannon** had a good year and will be counted on heavily next season.

RIGHT: Team camaraderie was well-noted.

Continued from previous page

Oly's junior varsity team finished undefeated in 2009-10 and its sophomore team was an impressive 17-3.

Barnes put together the toughest non-region schedule he could for the 2010-11 season, and the Titans started off by beating 5A schools Cottonwood, Davis and Murray. They also had defending 5A champ Alta, Bingham, neighborhood rival Skyline and West Jordan on their plate.

"Beating Davis up there really gave us a lot of confidence," said Barnes. "That set the stage for the rest of the season."

The Titans had a 9-3 region record. They beat Bountiful twice, avenging two losses last year, including a season-ending defeat at home that cost Oly the region championship last year. The only thing they didn't do was beat Highland, which ended up winning region and the 4A title.

"We came really close," said Barnes. "We take a lot of pride in winning the region championship. After we lost to Highland, we had to dig deep and refocus twice and we did that."

Williams was the cog in the Titans' machine. He averaged 12.2 points per game and led all of 4A in assists. Many of those passes went to Colton Stewart, a 6-foot-5 senior who averaged 14.6 ppg and 6.8 rebounds. Stewart was a huge presence because he could post up underneath or run out to the perimeter and nail a three-pointer.

Three-point shooting was Oly's strength. The Titans shot almost 40 percent from beyond the three-point arc and connected on an average of seven treys each game. Williams, Stewart, Jordan Marsh, Tanner Curtis and Carter Young were the leaders in that area. All told, 11 players hit threes.

Against Tooele, the Titans just missed a school record with 17 three-pointers. That helped Oly amass 33 points in one quarter en route to an amazing 94-52 victory.

By contrast, one of the Titans' drawbacks was free-throw shooting. Williams led the team at almost 80 percent from the line, but Oly was at 66.3 percent for the season. Faulty shooting cost them a win at Alta, and played a big factor in both of its postseason games.

"Olympus basketball. We like to get up and go," said Barnes. "That was our trademark this year. We flourished when we played at a fast pace."

While Stewart and Williams received all-region and all-state honors, Barnes said he felt Tanner Curtis was the most improved. He was also impressed at how Jordan Marsh improved, even after Curtis replaced him in the starting lineup.

The Titans will lose nine seniors from this year's team, but the program is now set up for success. A state title is still missing, but that could happen at any time.