

2001 IHSAA Boys Basketball State Finals

Class 2A Championship Results

HARDING SURVIVES COMEBACK FOR FIRST STATE TITLE

Harding's Trai Essex hit two free throws with :07.3 seconds remaining and the Hawks survived a last-second three-pointer by Batesville to win their first IHSAA state championship in boys basketball 73-70 on Saturday (March 24) at Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

It was the school's third title and the first in a boys sport. The Hawks won girls track and field state championships in 1995 and 1996.

Harding (23-5) controlled the game through the first three quarters holding leads of 18-15 after one, 36-26 at the half and 55-42 after three. Harding led by as many as 16 points in the third quarter before Batesville made its move in the fourth quarter.

With 7:12 remaining and Harding holding a 57-43 advantage, Batesville proceeded on a 27-12 run capped by Chris Steinfort's two free throws with :30.2 left that put the Bulldogs in front 70-69. It was their first lead since late in the first period.

On the ensuing play, Harding guard Courtney Reese, who finished with six points, drove down the lane for a layin to put the Hawks back on top 71-70 with :12.7 left. Batesville then turned the ball over by losing it out-of-bounds in setting up its possible last play with :07.3 to go. The Bulldogs fouled Essex on the in-bounds sending him to the line for his last two free throws. Batesville's Matt Robbins last second three-point attempt clanged off the iron.

Essex finished with a double-double of 23 points and a Class 2A record 14 rebounds. David Tubbs added 12 points and J.T. Langston 11 for Harding.

Batesville's Jacob Garvin, averaging 14.0 points this season, finished with a Class 2A record 30 points. He hit 9-for-16 from the field, including 12-for-15 from the line. Steinfort hit for 16 and Dustin Hertel chipped in 10 for the Bulldogs.

Coach Al Gooden led the Hawks to their first appearance in the state finals and the first appearance by a Fort Wayne school since Fort Wayne Northrop won it all in 1974. Mel Siefert coached Batesville to its third appearance overall, but its first since 1943. The Bulldogs lost in the semifinals that year to another Fort Wayne school – eventual state champion Fort Wayne Central.

BATESVILLE'S ROBBINS NAMED TRESTER AWARD RECIPIENT

Matt Robbins of Batesville High School was selected by the IHSAA Executive Committee as the recipient of the Arthur L. Trester Award for Mental Attitude in Class 2A Boys Basketball.

A starting guard for the Bulldogs, Robbins led his team in scoring this season at 16.9 per game and helped Batesville to the state finals for the first time since 1943. He also has participated in tennis for four years as well as track and field.

Academically, Robbins ranks first in his class of 141 students and serves as part of his school's National Honor Society. He has been involved with his local church youth group as well as several other community service projects. He plans to enroll at the University of Kentucky.

Farm Bureau Insurance, the corporate partner of the Indiana High School Athletic Association, presented a \$1,000 scholarship to Batesville High School in the name of Robbins.

CLASS 2A POST-GAME QUOTES

Batesville Coach Mel Siefert

"The way the game was played in the first half didn't lend to our style of play. It was too physical and they (Harding) were able to hit some shots that may have been uncharacteristic for them."

"Everybody all year long has told them (players) that they couldn't do it (getting to state) but they did it. We just came up three points short. We played good but we couldn't get the job done."

"We didn't have anyone to match up with Trai Essex and we allowed (Courtney) Reese to penetrate too much."

(On Jacob Garvin's play) "You look at him coming off the bus and he doesn't look like anyone who could score 30 points. He played well inside but we should have gotten him to the line more."

"Their man-to-man defense was outstanding. It was the best we've faced all year. We handled it pretty well and I wasn't displeased. We were able to get to the basket more in the second half. It was key that we got into the double bonus early in the second half."

"In the first half we might have been too perimeter-oriented. Our kids played hard and we were able to run our offense the way we wanted to in the second half."

(On Matt Robbins winning the Trester Award) "He was very deserving. We struggled at school because we had three or four players deserving of the award."

(On last play) "We were not doing anything special. We just wanted to get a good shot off."

Harding Coach Al Gooden

"Right now it feels so good. So many people in Fort Wayne called and wished us good luck. They told us to bring the title back to Fort Wayne, and we did. (This was the first time a Fort Wayne school has been to the State Finals since Fort Wayne Northrop won the championship in 1974)"

"Down the stretch we missed some layups and free throws that gave Batesville a chance to get back into the game. They (Batesville) are such good shooters and they do a great job of running their offense, setting picks and breaking down the defense. And, they did that. They stayed in their offense the whole game and hit some big shots."

"We were more concerned with their outside shooters and Jacob Garvin going one-on-one inside. We've seen him put up points (30 in the game) like that before."

Harding's Trai Essex

(On the Batesville comeback) "I was saying we can't let this go (the lead), we had to win this state championship. Last year we lost by one point in the semi-state to Westview. This year we built up a lead and weren't going to let it go."

Josh Weigel	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Eric Neumeier	4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tim Salvitti	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Totals	160	22-47	5-11	21-26	29	8	20	3	12	70
Percentages		.468	.455	.808						

Team Rebounds: 6

Score by Quarters:

Harding	18	18	19	18	--	73
Batesville	15	11	16	28	--	70

Officials: Marvin Davis, Jay C. Smith.

Attendance: 12,077 (two-game session)