

Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc.

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Blake Ress, Commissioner

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EAST CHICAGO CENTRAL CAPTURES FIRST BASKETBALL STATE TITLE

The East Chicago Cardinals used a balanced attack and defeated the North Central Panthers, 87-83, to capture the Class 4A basketball state championship.

Three Cardinals ended the night with 20 or more points. Senior guard E'Twaun Moore took game honors with 28, sophomore Angel Garcia added 25 and junior Kawaan Short finished with 20. Short also led the Cardinals with 10 rebounds.

North Central (21-5) was coached by Doug Mitchell, who was in his 14th season at the Indianapolis school. The Panthers were led in scoring by senior Eric Gordon with 25. Fellow seniors Adnan Hodzic, Joey Brown and Kevin Gant also finished in double-figures with 18, 14 and 12 points, respectively. Hodzic added 11 rebounds to lead the team in that category. Gordon's 25 points tonight moves him to 14th on the career scoring list in Indiana with 2,178 points. It was the first runner-up finish for the Panthers to go along with their 1999 state title.

Trailing 21-20 at the end of the first quarter, East Chicago (23-3) picked up the intensity in the second and North Central's shooting cooled off as the Cardinals built a 19-point edge and took a 50-32 lead into the lockerroom. At halftime, East Chicago had three players in double figures and was dominating the inside game with 26 points in the paint.

Just as it seemed East Chicago was about to run away, North Central began to chip away at the lead. They cut it to eight at 63-55 on a long three-pointer by senior Joey Brown at the third quarter buzzer.

Brown continued his hot shooting connecting on two more from beyond the stripe in the first two minutes of the fourth quarter, the latter drawing North Central to within 67-65. He had only made four three-pointers throughout the season and finished with four in the game.

The Panthers pulled even twice in the final quarter at 69-69 and again at 71-71 but could never retake the lead. East Chicago converted 10 of 16 free throws over the final 2:46 of the game to seal the victory. East Chicago finished the evening with a 42-32 advantage in the paint.

This was the first East Chicago team to win the state title since 1971 when an undefeated East Chicago Washington team defeated Elkhart 70-60. Second year East Chicago coach Pete Trgovich was a player on that 29-0 squad. Trgovich also became just the fourth individual to win a state championship as a player and a coach.

This was the fourth meeting between the two schools in the last four years and second this season. It was East Chicago's first victory over that stretch and follows a 73-62 setback on December 29 in North Central's holiday tournament.

Several 4A game records were set including East Chicago's 87 total points, the 170 points between the two teams and North Central's 51 second half points. East Chicago had scored 50 in the opening half.

E'TWAUN MOORE NAMED TRESTER AWARD WINNER

Following the game, members of the IHSAA Executive Committee named E'Twaun Moore of East Chicago Central High School as the winner of the Arthur L. Trestler Mental Attitude Award.

The award is presented annually to a senior participant in each classification who was nominated by his principal and coach and has demonstrated excellence in mental attitude, scholarship, leadership and athletic ability.

Academically, Moore owns a 3.2 GPA and ranks 33rd in his senior class of 236 students. Among his volunteer efforts, he has served as a mentor for elementary students in the East Chicago Schools.

He has earned a scholarship to Purdue University where he will study Business and also play basketball.

"There isn't a better young gentleman that has a pleasant persona, is mild-mannered and approachable" says East Chicago Central Principal Darnell Adell of Moore.

He is the son of Ezell and Edna Moore of East Chicago.

Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance, the IHSAA's corporate partner, will present a \$1,000 scholarship to East Chicago Central High School in the name of E'Twaun Moore.

The award is named in honor of Arthur L. Trester, the IHSAA's first commissioner who served the Association from 1929-44.

VSN MEANS ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY

Visit our friends at [Visual Sports Network](#), the IHSAA's official photographer for all state championship events and one of the leading action photographers in the Midwest. VSN, which was on site Saturday, has captured hundreds of images from this year's State Finals and will have them ready for viewing and purchase beginning Monday.

CHAMPIONSHIP MERCHANDISE STILL AVAILABLE

For t-shirts and other merchandise commemorating this year's tournament or for any of our events, visit our friends at [Morris, Inc.](#)

STATE FINALS PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Couldn't be there for the state finals? You can still purchase a copy of the official souvenir program while supplies last! Programs are \$3.00 if you purchase in person at the IHSAA Office (9150 N. Meridian Street in Indianapolis) or \$5.00 by mail (postage included). To order, have your Visa or MasterCard ready and call us at 317-846-6601 during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. EST).

POST-GAME QUOTES

Pete Trgovich, East Chicago Central Head Coach

"We played an outstanding first half. We could not have played any better. They (North Central) came on real strong in the second half and that is a mark of a truly good team."

"Give North Central credit, they came back and tied the score--unbelievable. It's too bad that old saying someone had to lose the game."

(On Gordon and Moore's play)

"Both of them played at a high level, just like you expected they would. IU and Purdue have two good players coming next year."

"This is the first time for a state championship in the school's history. I am so excited for these kids. I know what it felt like to win as a player. It's a lot more fun as a player than as a coach."

East Chicago's E'Twaun Moore

"It's great... we came in underdogs, but played hard and got a victory."

(on playing against Eric Gordon)

"I'm looking forward to playing at Purdue against Gordon at IU. ♦ I love playing against him, he's a good man."

Doug Mitchell, North Central Head Coach

"They're a very good team. ♦ You just can't spot them 18. They hit a lot of good shots tonight and worked hard to get those shots. ♦ They were hitting a lot better earlier in the year. ♦ We contested a lot of the shots they made. ♦ They were on fire early."

"They did a very good job doubling Eric (Gordon) and made him work hard to get his shots."

"They've improved quite a bit since the earlier game. ♦ Moore (E'Twaun) was tremendous tonight. ♦ We cut it to two a couple of times but just couldn't get over the hump."

"I'm very proud of the men our team has become."

North Central's Eric Gordon

"They made a lot of big shots. ♦ I thought we played tough on defense. ♦ They hit the big shots. ♦ That's what it came down to. ♦ It was getting out of hand early. ♦ I thought it was the best two teams here. ♦ I'm glad we had the opportunity to be here. ♦ E'Twaun is a good player. ♦ We've got a lot of heart. ♦ We've been in that position before. ♦ It was a good atmosphere. ♦ It was great to see a lot of fans here."