

KELLER CITIZEN MARCH 8, 2017 3:59 PM

Blacksmiths claim first-ever boys basketball state title



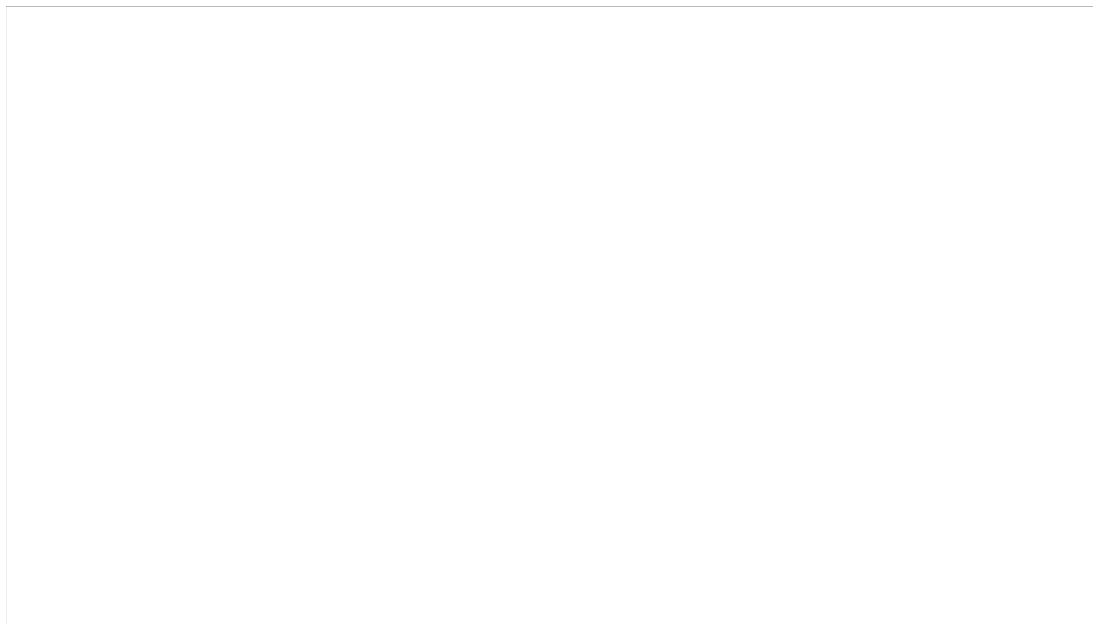
BY JOHN ENGLISH
Special to the Star-Telegram

The state finals are nothing new to the Westlake Academy boys basketball team.

The Blacksmiths have reached the final game four of the last seven seasons, but had never won a state title — until last Saturday.

Westlake Academy defeated Nazarene Christian Academy by a score of 63-49 to claim its first ever state championship in boys basketball, and coach Chad Nothe said he is extremely proud of his team.

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“Overall, this season has been one of the most successful seasons in Westlake Academy history,” Nothe said. “We claimed our first state championship title for the men’s basketball program. We had back-to-back 20-win seasons for the first time in school history and were district champions.”

Nothe said the game against Nazarene Christian was “lively and very exciting to witness,” said he had a couple of standout efforts in the game.

“When I think of outstanding performances during the championship game, I think of our 6-5 freshman Brendan Myers, who was named on the all-tournament team,” Nothe said. “He hit some big shots to start the third quarter and that helped the team continue their momentum the rest of the game.

“We had four players in double figures, including our district MVP Grant Olson and Josh Cortinas. Senior Garrison Luckett was named as the all-tournament MVP and will be playing at Rhodes College next season in Memphis, Tennessee.”

Nothe said he believes there are a couple of things that make this year’s team special.

“The mindset is very unselfish,” Nothe said. “We’ve come with a balanced approach to games and know everyone plays a significant role on the team. We try to keep a team ball mindset on the defensive and offensive ends.”

Nothe said the state championship victory was important for the Blacksmiths program and said the friendships formed between teammates is equally important.

“This was a unique experience, given it was our first state title,” Nothe said. “They’ll always remember being the first boys state championship team. Ultimately, I know the team will miss the bus rides and the time they’ve spent together the most.”



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