

Hornets depart for state tournament

Written by Don Wallace

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The early morning chill was quickly replaced with red-hot enthusiasm and support for the Miller Grove Hornets.

First, the team and coaches were honored at their home school for advancing to the UIL Class 1A, Division II state playoffs in Austin.

Then, they were escorted on a chartered bus to the county seat for even more fun.

The group was presented a proclamation by Hopkins County Judge Robert Newsom called, "Miller Grove basketball team's journey to the state tournament."

Listed on the proclamation were: head coach Gary Billingsley and assistant coach Kyle Smith, team members: Trey Lester, Mark Allen, Brennan Green, Aaron Smith, Logan Miller, Nathan George, Tyler Marler, Patrick Covington, Tatom Sink, Daniel McDonald, Weston House and manager Connor Hall.

The players, all wearing long-sleeves dress shirts and neatly pressed ties, posed for photos as a group with Newsom on the stone steps of the county courthouse despite the cold conditions.

Newsom told of how the team has provided thrills with their come-from-behind victories in the playoffs. He joked that the team did not need to continue that trend, they could win by conventional means and did not have to make each contest a thrilling comeback.

The judge lauded the team for the hard work and dedication put in to make it to the state tournament. He wished them good luck "in the quest for a state championship title."

The proclamation also recognized Miller Grove's advancement to state as a historical event. The boys basketball team is the first in the history of the school to make the state playoffs in Austin.

The Hornets (27-9) meet Laneville (32-6) Friday at 7 p.m. in Austin in the state semifinals. In the other semifinal it is Water Valley(27-5) vs. Nazareth (24-12) .

The two winners meet for the Class 1A, D2 title, Saturday at 7 p.m.