April 26, 2013

Oklahoma Christian Men’s basketball 2012-2013 Season Review

As the award banquets begin, another season bid its farewell. The OC men’s basketball season was one for the books, capturing many memories, setting many records, and finally making their way into the NCAA Division II program.

The season started off rocky as the players could not find consistency in their game. OC commenced the year by winning two games back to back in early November but then fell short to USAO by 3 points. Following that disappointing lose, the Eagles came back to win against Southern Nazarene by nearly 10 points.

Consistency was starting to become a problem for the Eagles. That was until March 2013. March was the month the Eagles took flight.

March 13, 2013, a game that started off rocky led coach Hays to sit his players down at halftime and give a pep talk worth millions. Whatever he said worked because the players came out ready for a victory. Spring Arbor had no idea what had hit them and neither did coach Hays. After 35 years of coaching, Coach Dan Hays hit the 700 win mark in his career. Oklahoma Christian beat Spring Arbor 83-59 in the first round of the National Christian College Athletic Association Championship at the [Orthopedic](http://www.oceagles.com/news/hays-wins-700th-oc-runs-past-spring-arbor-in-nccaa-tourney) Capital Center and coach Hays became a part of history.

“We made a couple of defensive adjustments … and they made a big difference,” Hays said. “We played a terrific second half. I thought our three key guys off the [bench](http://www.oceagles.com/news/hays-wins-700th-oc-runs-past-spring-arbor-in-nccaa-tourney%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) – Willie (Harper), Nick (Tate) and Eric (Randall) – when they came in, that was the difference, them knocking down those shots.”

“It was a very effective, workmanlike job and I feel good about it.”

On March 14, the next round of games began and OC wasted no time getting on the boards. OC rallied ahead of Cedarville almost immediately, in what was known as the Eagles most defensive game yet.

Will Reinke, OC’s senior center, lead the boards with 23 points and 11 rebounds. Kendre Talley scored 12 points and was 10-of-10 from the free-throw line in the final minute of the game beating Cedarville 79-66 to advance on.

“Everyone was shooting well and they were getting me the ball real well,” Reinke said. “When that happens, we’re hard to beat.”

The whole season led to the game on March 16. OC came out on fire leading most of the game, but Shorter University wasn’t letting the championship go that easily. With OC leading 77-74, Will Reinke fouled out of the game putting the pressure on with just under two minutes to play. The defense was starting to suffer and Shorter seized full advantage. A fluke 3-point shot by Shorter took the game into overtime. The Eagles couldn’t get control back of the game and lost to Shorter 90-87.

With the bad comes the good. After a depressing loss against Shorter in the national championship, Will Reinke, the senior center for OC, received honors and was named to the All-America first-team list.

Reinke averaged 19.3 points, 9.9 rebounds, 2.6 blocked shots and 2.2 assists per game. Reinke shot 58.4 percent from the field and 76.1 percent from the free-throw line. He led the Eagles to a 19-12 mark and within a fluke shot of the national championship.

“Will was one of the most dominant low-post players that we’ve ever had at Oklahoma Christian,” OC coach Dan Hays said.

Also representing the OC Eagles in a bright light is Brandon Troutman. Troutman was named NCCAA men’s basketball Scholar-Athlete. This is the second time Troutman has received the honor joining seven other OC players.

To qualify for the NCCAA award, a player must be at least a junior academically and have a grade-point average of at least 3.4 on a 4.0 scale. Troutman is a physical [education](http://www.oceagles.com/news/oc-s-troutman-named-as-nccaa-men-s-basketball-scholar-athlete) major with a 3.60 GPA.

April brought changes to the program when Bob Battisti, assistant men’s basketball coach for OC, announced on March 17 he was taking the new head coaching position at Southwestern Oklahoma State. Battisti, who spent the last two seasons at Oklahoma Christian, commented to reporters on how amazing it has been working for Dan Hays and sent a big thank you out to him and the program. Reports say that OC will not fill his position and the team will stay set with two assistant coaches.

The Oklahoma Christian Eagles fought hard this season. Ending the year with a 19-12 overall record and a 12-1 home record, the Eagles accomplished many goals. Next season will face hardships losing Will Reinke, the star center, but also gaining new recruits John Moon and Zach Norris.