

SPORTS

SECTION B • FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 10-11, 2017 • COLUMBIAMISSOURIAN.COM

OLE MISS 86, MISSOURI 74



WADE PAYNE/The Associated Press

Missouri forward Reed Nikko, center, tries to get away from Mississippi defenders Cullen Neal and Terence Davis, right, during the first half Thursday's game at the SEC Tournament in Nashville, Tennessee.

Tigers sputter in season finale

BY RICK MORGAN
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The chant was faint, yet audible for those watching on TV. "MIZ-ZOU!"

Not many Missouri fans traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, but those who did brought spirit. The chant came with 10 minutes left in the game, as the Tigers (8-24, 2-16 SEC) were down 68-51 to Ole Miss (20-12, 10-8). Missouri lost its final game of the season Thursday, an 86-74 loss to the Rebels in the second round of the SEC Tournament.

The loss marks the final game of Kim Anderson's career as head coach of the Tigers. On Sunday, the Missouri athletics department announced that athletics director Jim Sterk asked Anderson

to step down at the end of the season. An improbable comeback and 86-83 overtime win over Auburn on Wednesday extended Anderson's dream job one more day. There wasn't enough left in the tank for Missouri to give him another 24 hours.

Ole Miss rode the hot shooting of junior guard Deandre Burnett, who scored 23 points and hit four of his five 3-pointers. Burnett did not miss from the field in the first half.

Missouri fell behind by as many as 17 points in the second half, but pulled within comeback distance at certain points. A 3-pointer from sophomore guard Terrence Phillips and a put-back from junior guard

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JAY LAPRETE/The Associated Press

Indiana head coach Tom Crean instructs his team during Saturday's game in Columbus, Ohio.

Coach hunt focuses on quick results

BY RON DAVIS
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A telling sentence of Jim Sterk's comments when he asked Kim Anderson to step down was the lack of current interest in the Missouri men's basketball program.

As Sterk dives into his search for the next basketball coach — a pursuit he vows will be nationwide — he will take into consideration the immediate return a coach will bring.

Early on, the seemingly top potential target is Indiana's Tom Crean, and he would bring just that.

Crean, 50, is enduring a tough, injury-plagued season in Bloomington, Indiana, and has a current record of 18-14. The Hoosiers pulled off a 95-73 victory over Iowa in the second round of

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Small town brings a big crowd to Mizzou Arena

BY THEO DEROSA
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Prairie Home, Missouri, lies along Highway 87, about 30 miles from Columbia. Home to a single K-12 school, it's a small town with a population of 268. Prairie Home is usually quiet — unless the girls basketball team is playing.

On Thursday night, Dalton Armontrout's six players (three seniors, two juniors and a freshman) competed in Prairie Home's first state semifinal. Raucous teenagers — if not all of the 29 Prairie Home students who aren't on the team — stayed on their feet in the first few rows of Mizzou Arena.

Parents and alumni donned the red and black school colors en masse, packing sections 104, 105, 106 and 107. Prairie Home, by far the smallest high school in the Class 1 Final Four, had moved to Columbia.

The Panthers (22-9) lost the game 57-36 to Walnut Grove (28-4). But you could hardly tell from the crowd.

"I don't think there's that many people in Prairie Home," Armontrout said of the crowd after the game. "Alumni came out, community members came out, so it was good to see that."

The students' chants of "You can't

do that!" and "You got swatted!" failed to intimidate perennial powerhouse Walnut Grove, though. The Tigers blew the game open by outscoring Prairie Home 17 to 4 in the second quarter and refusing to yield in the second half.

Walnut Grove junior Bayley Harman led the team with 21 points, knocking down three 3-pointers to go with eight rebounds and six assists. Earlier in the day, Harman was named to the All-Polk County First Team and was chosen as the county's MVP.

She won a state title her freshman year. Walnut Grove also won it the year before. Last year, the Tigers fell 37-32 in the semifinal to Naylor High School.

"I'm looking forward to being back in the championship game," Walnut Grove head coach Rory Henry said. "We didn't like not playing in it last year. We were very disappointed."

"That's been on our mind, and we've been telling ourselves all year that we were going to accept nothing less than to get back to this game."

During the regular season, senior forward Shianne Rhorer, of Prairie Home, broke a school scoring record set by Jennifer Lenger, who was on the 1999 team that made it to the state's Elite Eight.



MONIQUE WOO/Missourian

The Prairie Home High School girls basketball team brings its final player, Elizabeth Fairchild, out to the court before Thursday's state semifinal at Mizzou Arena.

Rhorer had 16 points Thursday to lead the Panthers. She put up seven straight points to end the first quarter, in which she scored 11.

"She got loose a little bit there," Henry said. "She just plays hard."

Henry said that his senior forward Raylie Hejna was a bit tired to start the game, but Hejna's defense on Rhorer improved. Henry also switched other players onto Rhorer

when Hejna was out of the game.

"We just threw some different people at her and tried to always have someone around her," Henry said.

Hejna, who won a state title in her first year and another in her second, had 15 points on 7-of-12 shooting. The 6-footer had success against

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LOOKING AHEAD

COLLEGE GYMNASTICS

No. 15 Missouri vs. No. 12 Kentucky

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Where: Hearn Center

Online: SEC Network Plus

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Rock Bridge boys vs. Kickapoo

MSHSAA Class 5 Quarterfinal

When: 1 p.m. Saturday

Where: Southwest Baptist University (Bolivar)

Rock Bridge girls vs. Branson

MSHSAA Class 5 Quarterfinal

When: 2:45 p.m. Saturday

Where: Southwest Baptist University (Bolivar)

TRACK & FIELD

Karissa Schweizer goes for her second national championship on Friday at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships.

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