



MEDIA RELATIONS

Mid-Continent Conference Media Relations

Kristina Petersen, Director
Christopher Hargraves, Assistant
340 W. Butterfield Rd., Suite 3-D
Elmhurst, IL 60126
Phone - (630) 516-0661
Fax - (630) 516-0673

mid-con.com

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Contact: Kristina Petersen, Director of Media Relations

#1 Oral Roberts downs #4 Valparaiso to advance to the 2006 Toshiba Mid-Con Men's Basketball Championship game

TULSA, OKLA. - Top-ranked Oral Roberts earned its second-straight berth into the Mid-Continent Conference Championship game with a 77-58 victory over #4 Valparaiso in the semifinals of the 2006 Toshiba Mid-Continent Conference Men's Basketball Championship being held at John Q. Hammons Arena at the UMAC in Tulsa, Okla. The Golden Eagles will play the winner of the #2 IUPUI/#6 Chicago State match-up on Tuesday, March 7 at 6 p.m., with a bid into the NCAA Tournament on the line. The title game can be seen on ESPN with **Ron Franklin** and **Fran Fraschilla** calling the action.

Valparaiso started the game on a 7-0 run, which included baskets by **Mohamed Kone**, **Ron Howard** and a three-pointer by **Jimmie Miles**. However, Oral Roberts rallied back and took a 15-10 lead with 13:42 remaining in the half. ORU, which would never trail again, continued to roll with a pair of buckets by **Caleb Green** and a three-pointer and a lay-up by **Jonathan Bluitt** for a 9-0 run in the middle of the half and entered the locker room with a 35-30 lead. The Golden Eagles kept the pressure on and led by double figures for most of the second period before posting the final 19-point margin.

Green had a game-best 23 points thanks to an 11-for-16 shooting effort. He also pulled down a team-high seven rebounds to go along with three assists. **Larry Owens** also turned in a solid performance for ORU with 18 points, six points, two blocks and two steals, while Bluitt accounted for 17 points and four assists in the win. **Dan Oppland** and Kone shared team scoring honors with 18 points apiece. Oppland also grabbed five caroms, while Kone notched his seventh double-double of the year with a game-best 12 rebounds.

The Golden Eagles reached the 20-win plateau for the second year in a row with a 20-11 overall mark. Valpo's season closes with a 17-12 mark overall and an 8-8 effort in league play.

The Mid-Continent Conference is comprised of nine member institutions - Centenary College of Louisiana, Chicago State University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), Oakland University, Oral Roberts University, Southern Utah University, Valparaiso University and Western Illinois University. The conference has two associate members in swimming & diving. The league offers championships in 19 sports.

2006 Toshiba Mid-Continent Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Game #6: #1 Oral Roberts (20-11) vs. #4 Valparaiso (17-12)

Final Score: Oral Roberts 77, Valparaiso 58

Oral Roberts Quotes & Notes

COACH SCOTT SUTTON:

General Comments:

"I'm awfully proud of our team. I thought we played a terrific game. Defensively we held an explosive offensive team to 58 points...I thought we did a great job of taking them out of their offense."

On the play of Jonathan Bluit:

"He played his heart out. He's a warrior. He was unbelievable. He made big shot after big shot...I'm awfully proud of how JB responded."

On the turnover differential in tonight's game:

"Valpo is very explosive on the offensive end and great in transition. Tonight we got 26 points off turnovers and they got two. We took care of the ball and did a nice job of pressuring them into some turnovers and getting some easy baskets."

On Caleb Green:

"He is such a weapon down there. If he doesn't score he's going to draw two or three people and when he makes good decisions he's a good passer and is going to lead to open shots. Our guards did a nice job of getting him the ball and he did the rest, like he normally does."

JONATHAN BLUIT:

On the effect of last year's game in preparing this team for this tournament:

"We've got one more game. That's all I can say...one more game of unfinished business. That's what we've been working hard for, all the two-a-day practices, lifting cars, whatever it takes, that's what we've been working for...we're looking forward to playing whoever we play."

CALEB GREEN:

On preparing for tomorrow's game:

"It really doesn't matter who we play tomorrow, they are going to be good no matter what their record is, you can throw it out the window. They didn't get to the championship for no reason."

ORAL ROBERTS NOTES:

- ORU advances to the Mid-Con Championship game for the 2nd consecutive year.
- ORU is now 18-2 when leading at halftime
- Tonight's victory was the first time ORU defeated Valparaiso on a neutral court.
- ORU's victory gives them back-to-back 20 win seasons, the first time this has happened since 1977.

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Valparaiso Quotes & Notes

COACH HOMER DREW:

General game comments

"I'm proud of these three captains. They have a lot of heart, and they all played very well. Overall, I thought we fought hard. We did not shoot the ball as well as we would have liked to, and I thought ORU shot the ball really well. I'm just really proud of how we finished up."

On the plan of action for the game:

"We really talked about how forty minutes of consistency would be the key, because we knew that ORU would get some runs. We thought that we would get some runs and the team that could be the most consistent would win the game. Shooting is what really hindered us, I thought that if we would have shot the ball better we would have had a closer game."

On ORU's players stepping it up offensively:

"I think they are playing the best they have ever played. I thought that Bluitt played one of the finest games I've seen him play. He played thirty-six minutes; he controlled the tempo of the game and hit a tremendous fade away shot, which was kind of like a dagger when we thought we could get some momentum going. We had no answer for Owens as far as easy baskets. I thought those two were the key to the game, because Green will get his points, but those two really made the difference in the game."

DAN OPPLAND:

On his future outside of basketball:

"It will definitely be tough. I'm still going to try and enjoy the time I have left with these guys at school. It's pretty hard for me to imagine right now, but it has been a great run with these guys. It will definitely be a different experience next year."

RON HOWARD:

On the struggle to develop an offensive game:

"All the credit goes to ORU. They did a great job of playing defense on me."

SETH COLCLASURE:

On the hardest struggle to overcome during the game:

"I think it was a little bit of both a strong defense played on us, and a struggle to develop an offensive game. You've got to give ORU credit for their defense. In our offensive game we played tough and we got some good looks, but they just wouldn't go down. It was a game of runs and they made more runs than we did. So overall, you have to give credit for their defense, but I think we just kind of fell asleep on offense."