

Local players gain recognition from OHSAA

By **BRIAN LOVE**

It was a high school career many people would envy.

In the past four seasons, the Olmsted Falls girls basketball team ran off a 76-14 mark, winning an impressive 84.4 % of the games played. The Bulldogs made it to this year's Ohio High School Athletic Association Division I State Final before losing to Princeton.

Last week, the OHSAA named Paige Kohler to its First Team Division I All-State team, while fellow senior Mia Kalich was selected Third Team All State.

Several other players including Ava Patti of Rocky River, Abby Rosol of Magnificat, Leila Discenza of Fairview and Ruthie Bisson of Bay received recognition.

This season, the Bulldogs were 25-4. In the 2021-2022 season, the Bulldogs were 22-3,

while they were 12-3 in the COVID-shortened 2020-2021 season. As freshmen, Olmsted Falls was 17-4

For Coach Jordan Eaton, the success by his two seniors wasn't surprising.

"It's been an amazing four years," Eaton said. "They've done everything we've asked them to do. And beyond just specifically, one of them never turns the ball over and the other one gets all the rebounds. So you're going to win a lot of games when that's what's happening on your team. They've been instrumental in all of our success. So it's been a blast. We're definitely going to miss them."

Kohler, the point guard, averaged 16.5 points per game, but more importantly directed the offense. Meanwhile, Kalich was setting a single season rebounding record with 245, averaging 8.4 a game, plus she is the all-time

leading rebounder in school history with 675.

The award is nice, but it's not the most important thing to Kalich.

"It's really cool to receive an award like that," Kalich said. "But we were not really all about the awards. I just like hanging out with my teammates and playing basketball.

"I think it was an amazing season. We had a lot of fun together, and we won a lot of games. Obviously, you want to win the state championship. That's like a huge goal of ours. But we still got there."

Kohler agrees that the experience of playing with friends has been meaningful.

"It's just been an amazing experience, from freshman year till now," she said. "Just seeing the growth from even myself and my teammates, just getting to this point. Even off the

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ourt, it's the experiences we've had, those will last a lifetime. And even though we came up short, I'll never forget these moments with my teammates."

Teammate Danielle Cameron proved to be an asset this season, averaging 15.3 points per game. As a result, the junior was named All State Special Mention.

Kohler pointed to the OHSAA Region 2 Championship game this year, a 63-21 win over Springfield, as a highlight of the past four seasons.

"We played to the best of our ability that game," Kohler said. "I think we just worked really hard that whole game and I think the core showed that we played well together."

Kalich pointed to a game when the pair were sophomores. Olmsted Falls went on the road to beat a solid Laurel team.

"That was one of the craziest games," Kalich said of the 70-66 win. "There weren't many people there, but it was just so much fun."

"(Laurel) was ranked No. 2 or 3 in the state," Eaton said. "I have to give them a lot of credit for playing us. They didn't have to do that. They really didn't gain anything except to play a tough team."

The Olmsted Falls trio aren't the only players

Meanwhile, Rocky River's Patti was named to the OHSAA Division I Special Mention team.

She proved to be a strong scorer for the Rockets, who finished 19-6 and lost in the OHSAA Division I, Region 2 final. Whenever a basket was needed, the 6-foot junior usually came through. For the season, she averaged 19.9 points per game.

Coach Jamey Pfahl knows the value of his player.

"Ava is an unselfish player, dedicated to playing team basketball," Pfahl said. "She loves celebrating her teammates' success and helping to make them and the team better. Ava is ALL OHIO and a captain in both soccer and basketball because she is the ultimate competitor and more importantly the ultimate teammate."

Also named Special Mention was Magnificat's Rosol. As a senior, Rosol averaged 7.9 points per game in leading the Blue Streaks to a 20-6 record. Coach Danny Gallagher know the importance of the 5-9 player.

"Abby is an incredible kid who is very special to me and our program," Gallagher said. "She has provided a great example to follow for all of her teammates. She lives her life every day by the values of our program and Magnificat Community. She has helped our program take significant steps in her time at Magnificat. We are very lucky to have had her as a leader. She will do great things at the next level in the classroom and on the basketball court. Even more impressive than her All-Ohio special Mention is that she was named to the All-Ohio Academic Team by the OHSBCA. She has put so much time into her studies and basketball and the Magnificat Community will be forever grateful for all of her hard work."

Bay's Bisson caught the eye of the state when she had a 31-rebound game against North Olmsted. That mark is good enough for 10th place on the all-time OHSAA record. She made the All-State Honorable Mention team.

Bisson averaged 10.1 points per game as the Rockets had a

"It's a really cool, special accomplishment," Bay Coach Lauren Heldt said. "I'm sure she's happy about it. I posted about it on social media, and she was liking it and retweeting it, and doing all that, but I'm proud of her, proud of her. Her stat line is really solid. I think that's what got it for her, her rebounding."

Named to the OHSAA Division II Honorable Mention Team was Leila Discenza of Fairview, who averaged 14.2 points per game.

Discenza had a solid senior campaign after suffering a knee injury in the previous season.

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