

DAY 3 - December 29th 2017

All Stats and Stories by **Richard Burton**



STRANAHAN 38, NORTH MARION 37: The Dragons went home with a victory, as Inady Legiste (16 points) scored on a putback as time expired Torey Buie and Marquez Reaves scored 12 points each for the Colts, who finished 0-3 in the tournament, but two of the losses were by a combined three points.

WILDWOOD 68, VICTORY CHRISTIAN 61: Darion Wilson (25 points), Shemar Rose (12 points) and Marcus Niblack (11 points) led the Wildcats to the win. Wilson finished with 59 points in the tournament, while Niblack tallied 54. Wildwood finished 1-2 in the tournament. Wilfredo Rodriguez (22 points), Bulldog Harrison (14 points) and Kostas Altinis (14 points) led the Storm, who finished the event at 0-3.

GAINESVILLE 68, MOUNT CARMEL (Md.) 62: Christian Miller-Caldwell scored 10 of his game-high 26 points in the fourth quarter, as the Hurricanes knocked off the Cougars. Miller-Caldwell knocked down four three-pointers in the win. Dallas Tealer (12 points), Diamond Smith (eight points) and Jaden McKay (eight points) led GHS. William Miller (15 points), Rasheed Brown (14 points) and Jordon Jones (14 points, 12 rebounds) paced Mount Carmel. The Cougars led by three at halftime, but Miller-Caldwell and Tealer combined for 20 points over the final two quarters.

ORLANDO CHRISTIAN PREP 67, BISHOP SNYDER 40: Ronaldo Segu scored 14 of his 17 points in the opening half, as the Lions knocked off the Cardinals. Dejuan Lockett (12 points) and Jordan Velez (11 points) led the way for OCP, who was up 13 at halftime. The Lions played without Nassir Little. The North Carolina commit had averaged 18.5 points per games over his team's opening two contests. Curtis Bailey and Gyasi Powell scored 11 points each to lead Bishop Snyder.

WINTER HAVEN 65, APOPKA 43: Keyshawn Bryant (18 points), Dorian James (13 points) and Timothy Lowery (11 points) led the Blue Devils past the Blue Darters. Winter Haven used a 7-0 run late in the first half to go up seven at halftime. From there, the Blue Devils kept the pressure on and outscored Apopka 31-16 after halftime.

WESTMINSTER ACADEMY 70, THE VANGUARD SCHOOL 34: The Lions led by 27 at halftime in the rout of the Panthers. By the third quarter, the running clock had started, as The Vanguard School became the first in Kingdom history to have that occur on it twice. Anthony Atkinson (16 points), Sam Gordon (15 points) and Zach Scott (10 points) led Westminster in the blowout.

VANGUARD 64, ROCKLEDGE 62: For the first time since 1993, Vanguard will play for the Kingdom of the Sun championship. The Knights earned that right with a dramatic comeback. Vanguard rallied from down 17 points in the third quarter and stunned previously unbeaten Rockledge 64-62 before a packed house in the semifinals of the 44th annual Kingdom of the Sun. "We took a timeout when we were down 17 with about four minutes left to go in the third quarter and talked about getting one stop at a time," Vanguard coach Phillip Small said. "I think after we started getting some stops that our kids' confidence grew. Then we forced some turnovers and got some easy baskets and didn't have to go against their zone." The Knights took the lead for good on a pair of free throws by Dantwan Grimes with 20.2 seconds remaining. From there, the Raiders called timeout with 13.8 seconds on the clock. Rockledge would get two chances at the win. Elijah Weaver, who scored a combined 14 points in the fourth quarter and overtime of the Raiders' win over Orlando Christian Prep on Friday, missed a three-pointer and the Knights grabbed the rebound, but RHS stole the ball with less than five seconds left. Carlos Jones attempted to win it, but his shot was short as time expired. "We've been close before of late (in the Kingdom), but we were able to get the job done this time," Small said. "Two years ago, we had a chance to send it to overtime at the foul line against Dillard and last year we played a competitive game against LaSalle in the semifinals, but this time, we put it all together. "I am proud of our guys." With the win, Vanguard advances to the finals to face Buford (Ga.) on Saturday night at 7. A win by the Knights and they will claim their first Kingdom title since 1981 and fourth in school history. The 17-point comeback is the largest second half rally in tournament

history and one point off the largest rally at any time in a Kingdom game. At the 5:05 mark of the third quarter, the Raiders were rolling with a 44-27 lead, but the Knights closed it down with a 17-6 run heading to the fourth. From there, Vanguard sliced the margin to two on two occasions early, before Rockledge extended its edge back to six. The Knights kept the pressure on and tied the game at 57 on a three-point play by Keegan Kash with 4:07 remaining. Kash (14 points, 11 rebounds) helped Vanguard dominate the inside in the second half and scored eight points in the fourth quarter. "He was unbelievable tonight," said Small, whose team held a 21-10 edge in rebounding in the second half, aided by a 7-1 edge on the offensive end. With Kash dominating the paint, the trio of Grimes (21 points), Jalen Scott (10 points) and Derrick Brown (eight points) made things tough everywhere else for the Raiders. Grimes scored 15 of his points after halftime, while Scott scored seven of his over the final two quarters. The Knights would need everything they could muster in the frantic final minutes. After a pair of free throws by Weaver put Rockledge up two with 3:51 left, Kash, who had been 0-for-2 earlier, stepped up and tied the game once again at the 3:33 mark. Vanguard then took its first lead of the game on a free throw by Scott with 2:10 remaining. Rockledge answered with a three-pointer by Jones (15 points) at the 1:44 mark, but Kash tied the game for the third time in the fourth quarter at the 1:14 point. Vanguard forced a turnover Rockledge's ensuing possession and took a timeout with one minute remaining. The Knights worked the clock down and Grimes drew a foul and calmly sank two free throws to give his team the lead for good. During the fourth quarter, Vanguard was 9-of-11 at the foul line and also sank 5-of-9 from the floor. Rockledge's two misses from beyond the arc capped off a 2-of-12 performance from three-point range after halftime. The Raiders had made 7-of-18 in the first half, as D.J. Richardson (19 points) buried four in the second quarter alone on his way to a 16-point quarter. Rockledge was up 10 at halftime, but couldn't hold on. The Knights forced 12 turnovers after halftime and allowed Rockledge to shoot 8-of-24. For the game, Vanguard held a 41-23 rebounding edge (15-4 on the offensive end) and held the Raiders to 21-of-51 shooting. Rockledge did manage to knock down 9-of-30 from three-point range and got 11 points from Weaver for its third scorer in double figures. The Knights, meanwhile, made 8-of-22 from 3-point range and 22-of-57 shots overall. After an 0-for-5 effort in the opening quarter from beyond the arc, Vanguard had missed 15 straight from three-point range over a span of five quarters, but hit 4-of-5 in the second to stay in contention down 35-25 at halftime. Little did anyone know they'd see the finish at the end, as the Knights gave the sellout crowd something to cheer about.



Vanguard's Keegan Kash (22) battles to find a way to the basket as he is double teamed by Rockledge's Jesson Walker (24) and O.C. Brothers (10) during their game Friday in the Kingdom of the Sun basketball tournament at Vanguard High School in Ocala. [BRUCE ACKERMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER]

BUFORD (Ga.) 77, LAKEWOOD RANCH 64: Marcus Watson (20 points), Donnell Nixon (18 points) and David Viti (17 points) sparked the Wolves past the Mustangs in the semifinals. Viti and Watson scored 13 and 11 points respectively, as Buford built a 46-28 halftime lead. The Wolves outscored Lakewood Ranch 27-8 in the second quarter and made 9-of-10 shots from the floor to take full control. Damien Gordon led Lakewood Ranch with 17 points.

