

# Tourney

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punched their ticket to the championship with a 20-point, 91-71 win over Campbell.

In a rematch of their 40th District championship game, the George Rogers Clark Cardinals and Montgomery County Indians tipped off in the 10th Region boys basketball championship. The Cardinals outshot the Indians this time around, earning a 70-58 win to advance to the KHSAA state championship tournament.

George Rogers Clark will face Johnson Central in the

first round of the state tournament on Thursday, March 19.

The 10th Region girls basketball tournament concluded at Harrison County on Saturday, March 7, with first-round games held throughout the region. All four quarterfinal games were held on Monday, March 2 at the home gyms of the district championship winners.

The Mason County Lady Royals hosted the Pendleton County Lady Cats, picking up a 59-42 win to advance to the semifinals, led by Amirah Reed and Kyleigh Kirk, who both totaled 15 points. Reed shot four 2-point goals, one 3-pointer and four free throws, while Kirk scored

four 3-pointers and three free throws. Pendleton County's offense was led by Laci Tackett, who scored 15 points.

The Nicholas County Lady Jackets hosted the Bracken County Lady Bears, pulling ahead for a 61-39 win, led by Maggie Simons and Zoe Brown, both with 19 points. Simons shot eight 2-point goals and three free throws, while Brown made four 2-point goals, two 3-pointers and five free throws. Bracken County's stat report has not yet been filed.

The Campbell County Lady Camels hosted the Montgomery County Lady Indians in their quarterfinal matchup, winning 76-61. Kendall

Augsback led the Lady Camels' offense with 32 points, shooting six 2-point goals, six 3-pointers and two free throws. Elaine Burvis led the Lady Indians with 20 points.

The George Rogers Clark Lady Cardinals hosted the Bishop Brossart Lady 'Stangs and flew to a 77-23 win, led by Kennedy Stamper with 22 points, shooting seven 2-point goals, two 3-pointers and two free throws. The Lady 'Stangs were led by Avery Wietholter, who scored seven points.

Mason County, George Rogers Clark, Campbell County and Nicholas County then each took to Harrison County for the semifinal round on Friday, March 6.

The Lady Cardinals displayed their strength in their semifinal game against Mason County, picking up a 101-37 win over the Lady Royals to advance to the championship game. Campbell County then outscored the Lady Jackets by 11 points for a 66-55 win to secure their spot in the championship against the Lady Cardinals.

George Rogers Clark then earned yet another victory in the championship game, beating Campbell County 74-41 to advance to the state championship tournament.

The Lady Cardinals will face North Laurel on Thursday, March 12 in the first round of the state tournament.

# Cats

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fouls early and played just five minutes in the opening half. Pope said Garrison's six points in the first half were beneficial and provided a lift with Moreno looking on from the bench.

"I thought BG was tremendous," Pope said. "He gave us a real boost after Malachi's two fouls in the first half."

Denzel Aberdeen, who finished with 16 points, said Garrison "came in and stepped up big-time."

"He always comes to the game ready 110 percent," Aberdeen said. "He's not backing down to any challenge. I'm just proud of him today for him coming up and step-

ping up."

Playing in his first game since returning from a broken foot, Kam Williams finished with three points in 17 minutes. Pope said he hopes Williams can continue to contribute regularly in the postseason.

"We just felt like he was at a place where we could throw him out there," Pope said. "He hasn't made it through a live practice yet, a whole practice."

Aberdeen enjoyed his return to Nashville. Aberdeen helped lead Florida to the tournament title last season and is looking forward to another great experience.

"Just being at an SEC tournament is amazing, something I experienced," he said. "It's a

dream every kid wants to dream of."

## SEC TOURNAMENT

First round, Wednesday

G1: No. 9 Kentucky 87, No. 16 LSU 82

G2: No. 12 Auburn 79, No. 13 Mississippi State 61

G3: No. 15 Ole Miss 76, No. 10 Texas 66

G4: No. 11 Oklahoma 86, No. 14 South Carolina 74

Second round, Thursday (times are ET)

G5: No. 8 Missouri vs. No. 9 Kentucky, 12:30 p.m. (SECN)

G6: No. 5 Tennessee vs. No. 12 Auburn, 3 p.m. (SECN)

G7: No. 7 Georgia vs. No. 15 Ole Miss, 7 p.m. (SECN)

G8: No. 6 Texas A&M vs. No. 11 Oklahoma, 9:30 p.m. (SECN)

# Cards

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have to do," said Zougris, who played four seasons in the Greek Basketball League before coming to Louisville. "It's been a long season for me, ups and downs, but it's been a long season for all of us, as well. I just tried to keep showing up every day and I think it's paying off right now."

After spending most of the season coming off the bench in relief of Sananda Fru and Aly Khalifa for a few minutes, Zougris had earned his third straight start Wednesday.

"He deserves to be in the starting lineup because of his approach, his toughness, his mentality," UofL coach Pat Kelsey said. "He just gives guys courage around him because he's so passionate and plays with such emotion it's infectious."

Evidently that was the case with Conwell because shortly after Zougris' spree, and after missing seven of his eight 3-pointers, the senior guard came alive and scored seven of the Cards' last eight points, starting with driving for a layup to tie the score at 56-56 with 3:46 remaining.

Jaron Pierre retaliated with a basket to return the lead to SMU with 2:40 remaining, but that was its final basket. The Cards inched closer on a Zougris free throw and then Conwell swished a difficult triple from the left wing for a 60-58 lead with 1:17 left and scored

the game's final points on a driving layin. The Mustangs missed their last six shots.

Conwell finished with 16 points, while Adrian Wooley had 14 points and six rebounds. McKneely added 10 points and found other ways to contribute despite hitting just 2-of-9 shots, leading UofL in rebounds with seven and assists with five. UofL played its third straight game without point guard Mikel Brown Jr., who has been ruled out of the entire ACC tournament.

With the two highest-scoring teams in the country going at each other, the way the game unfolded came as a surprise. UofL was averaging 85.9 points per game, SMU 84.0. In splitting their two regular season meetings, they combined to score 162 points in the first game and 180 in the second. But defense was the name of the game this time around in a physical, grueling affair that lacked offensive rhythm most of the way.

The score was deadlocked 26-26 at halftime after a sloppy first half that included 14 turnovers, along with 35% shooting overall and 20% (5-25) from 3-point range. UofL wound up at 39.6% and 23.1% (6-26), while SMU was 42.9% and 33.3% (9-27).

"We proved we could win with defense," McKneely said. "The emphasis, especially as of late, is really homing in on defense because defense wins championships in March. Super proud of our defense today. If we can win shooting like

this, it makes us a really tough team to beat when we're shooting it well."

The Cards set the tone in the first half, limiting Boopie Miller and Pierre, who had combined to score 48 points in the Mustangs' 95-85 win last month, to four points on 2-of-11 from the field. Pierre finished with 17 points and Miller 10, but the latter was 4-17, including 0-8 from distance.

"Back-to-back games when it came right down to the wire, out last game at Miami on their Senior Day, big game," Kelsey said. "Then this one today showed great resolve down the stretch. Proud of our guys. You know, on a night we didn't shoot at our best, we just figured out a way to win. What do they say in a tournament? Survive and advance, and I think that applied tonight."

Meanwhile, SMU coach Andy Enfield took issue with the disparity in fouls. UofL made 14-of-20 free throws, the Mustangs 1-of-3.

"It was a very physical game," Enfield said. "Somehow we shot three free throws and they shot 20, and they had two team fouls with 30 seconds left. I have never been in a college basketball game like that when they're grabbing and holding on every possession and they have two fouls."

As for the physicality and competitiveness, Kelsey expects more of the same against Miami.

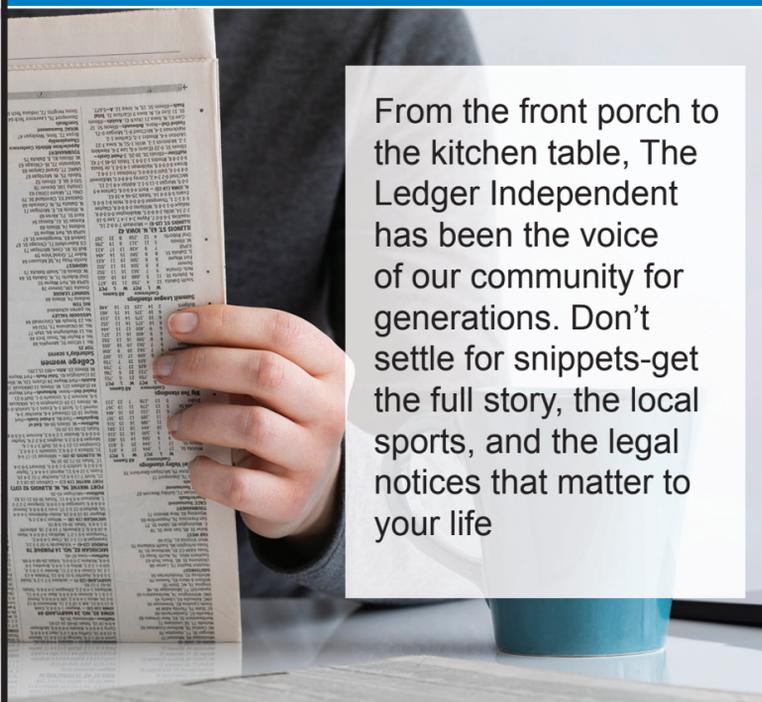
"It's going to be a battle," he said. "We've got to get a good night's rest and recover."

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