

## “Be A Journalist Day”

By Rob Hendricks

The lights. The cameras. The flashes. The aura. Where else could you find these other than at Value City Arena for the OHSAA Basketball championships? This is where I got to be intertwined in experiences that will prove valuable to me as I advance my interest in sports journalism, and also in the lifetime memories of those who played in the games.

My experiences started with an elevator ride that took me from ground level, where I am used to viewing games, to the arena level, and all the insider perks that came with it. After meeting my fellow student journalists, we entered the arena, where I would make my way to press row seats. My colleague seated next to me and I had perhaps the best view of the action, seeing that we were in the front row and could feel all the intensity and action. The first game, the Division II Championship between St. Vincent St. Mary and Dayton Thurgood Marshall was a fast paced, closely matched game through the first half. However, the Fighting Irish, led by Lorenzo Cugeni and Davonte Baerd sparked a 15-1 run in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and never looked back. They would go on to win their 6<sup>th</sup> state title 57-46.

Following the first game, I attended the postgame news conference, an exciting opportunity which allowed me to see firsthand the inner workings of sports journalism. Afterwards, I would go on to hear from veterans of the business, taking in their advice and savvy wisdom. Some of these journalism greats were ESPN commentator Todd Blackledge, veteran reporter Larry Larsen, marketing specialist Bruce Wimbish II, Columbus writer Steve Blackledge, Plain Dealer staffer Tim Warsinsky, and OHSAA media specialist Bob Goldring. By the end of the day, I had taken in some great basketball action from the best teams in the state of Ohio. I witnessed Hiland defeat Harvest Prep in the Division IV championship behind the leadership of Seger Bonifant, Cincinatti Taft obliterate Cleveland Central Catholic with

excellent three point shooting and press defense to win the Division III title, and La Salle upset Michigan recruit Trey Burke and Columbus Northland for the Division I crown.

Throughout the day, I would go on to have many more amazing experiences with sports journalism. It was an opportunity I cherish and an experience I will never forget.