



Senior Drew Bianco watches his free throw go in the goal.

Senior Jaqaun Webb tries to catch the rebound.

Sophomore Tykel Owens shoots a freethrow.

Senior Hiram Wadlington runs down the court.



Love Your Boys' Basketball Team



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Coach Drew Tyler receives an award for his 500 wins.

Coach Tyler's 500th win

Jan. 5 marked a major milestone in basketball head coach Drew Tyler's career with his 500th win in his 21 seasons at Oxford High School against Tupelo.

The first regional game on the road was not only one of the first tests in the 6A division for the team, but also with a win, the game would be Tyler's 500th victory.

"There was so much attention of the fact that Oxford was in 6A sports, so I was just trying to be 1-0 in our 6A basketball, Region II," Tyler said "Yes, I was at 499 and if we could win on the road it would be 500. But those are more of my players wins rather than Drew Tyler's wins. That has to do with my past and present players. But I do think we answered a lot of doubt because I don't think many people thought we could beat Tupelo at Tupelo. So it was a great feeling to beat Tupelo, be 1-0 in the region and that being the 500th win it does draw more attention to it so it was a real good feeling,"

Tyler made an impact, not only on the basketball program, but also in the lives of his players, including Oxford basketball alumni Stantavious Ivy.

"He inspired me to stay in the gym and stay off the streets," Ivy said. "I want to thank coach Tyler for being a great person and inspiring me to do my best."

Ivy went on to play football at East Mississippi Community College and is now an Oxford police officer. Along with Ivy, fellow alumni Jeremy Barr's life was impacted by Tyler's words and lessons throughout Barr's high school career.

"He is, first off, a great father, great coach, was a role model and led by example. He also played the game, so he showed us the correct way to do a lot of things," Barr said.

The celebration of the 500th win was

not only special to Tyler, but also to his past players.

"[Tyler's 500th win] represents all the years of his success, and I am just glad to be apart of it," Barr said.

The emotional night included a presentation of a signed basketball from Tyler's players, the game winning ball from Tupelo and a plaque in honor of the record. For Tyler, the recognition and appearance by the previous players showed one of his goals he's strived for throughout his years.

"There are some I don't just keep in contact with, so I had a surprise look to see some of them," Tyler said. "But then again, I think it validates what we are doing within our basketball program, teaching life lessons through basketball."

Tyler's 500th win was a symbol for not only wins and basketball skill level but also the personalities that have come through Oxford High under Tyler.

"You think back about players, see their faces, think about the highs and lows and different times you had with them. Building relationships and I think teaching and coach is about building relationships," Tyler said.

According to Tyler, the number "500" humbled him, and he wants to show his gratitude to Oxford High and Oxford School District for the opportunity to have 500 wins at one school.

"I appreciate the loyalty Oxford has shown me. There is a bond between Drew Tyler and Oxford School District," Tyler said. "The longevity here at the school district means, I think, we are doing things the right way here at Oxford."

(By Grace Logan, sports writer, The Charger)

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