

OPINION

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Banner season for winter sports teams

If the success of scholastic sports teams is measured in the number of championship

EDITORIAL

Red Division. Shaker wrestler Kevin Agee qualified for the Division I state tournament.

banners they bring home to their schools, then it was quite a successful winter sports season for area scholastic teams. Three squads from the eastern coverage area of Sun News earned state titles in their sports, two of whom added to historic runs of dominance in their fields.

The Hawken girls swim team won an incredible 15th straight state championship while the Hathaway Brown girls basketball team brought home a record fifth-straight Division II state crown. Hawken coach Jerry Poltre and HB coach Paul Barlow have been at the helm throughout their teams' amazing runs and deserve plenty of credit for constantly getting the best out of their student-athletes.

The Shaker Heights hockey team also won a state championship this winter, climbing back to the top of the mountain after a 12-year title drought. This was the Raiders' fourth hockey championship in school history and head coach Mike Bartley has been in charge for all four titles, dating back to 1981. Bartley has put up quite an incredible run of excellence in his own right, having won a state record 640 games in 37 years of coaching.

While these three teams captured the headlines, and deservedly so, with their amazing runs this winter, many other local teams also enjoyed great success during the winter season.

Beachwood's boys basketball team won a school record 23 games, clinched its first-ever district championship and advanced to the Division III regional final before losing to Leavittsburg LaBrea, with guard John Davis III being named the Associated Press district Player of the Year. The girls basketball team also had its best season ever with a school record 23 wins and a first-ever district title and also reached the Division III regional finals before falling to Orrville, with Mike Corono being named AP district Coach of the Year. Wrestler Ryan Harris won the 160-pound Division III state championship and teammate Sammy Gross finished third in the 120-pound weight class.

The Shaker Heights boys basketball team advanced to the Division I regional final before bowing out against eventual state champion Mentor, but did place Esa Ahmad and Kash Blackwell on the AP Division I district first team and finished with a 20-7 record. Raider hockey players Jacob Shick, Jonathan Greenberg and Eric Sterin were all named first team all-

Cleveland Heights hockey players Ben Urbas and Isaac Brown were named to the first team among all Blue Division teams. Wrestler Bobby Upshaw reached the Division I district tournament. The boys basketball team won the Lake Erie League championship and reached the Division I district semifinals before losing to St. Ignatius.

Among area private schools, the Benedictine boys basketball team had a difficult regular season, but made up for that with a stellar run into the Division II regional semifinals, losing to Lima Bath. Bengal hockey player Mike Adamowski was named first team all-Blue Division.

Gilmour's boys and girls basketball teams both reached the Division III district finals before losing to Beachwood. The Lancers' Kelsey Dugger was named the AP Division III district Player of the Year, while David Linane was named to the first team Division III district team. The girls swim team finished sixth in the Division II state meet.

Hawken swimmer Carrie Bencic set a state record in the 200-yard freestyle at the state meet and was part of a state record-clinching 200 freestyle relay team at states. The boys swim team finished third in the Division II state meet. Wrestler Seth King finished seventh in the state in Division III at 152 pounds. Hathaway Brown placed eighth in the Division II state swimming meet and Laurel's girls basketball team recorded an 11-9 mark on the season.

University School's hockey squad took eventual state champ Shaker Heights into double overtime before falling in a district final, with Andrew Musser named first team all-Red Division. The Prepper swimmers finished second in the Division II state meet.

It will be hard for the spring sports teams to match the tremendous feats accomplished by their winter sports counterparts, but we are sure they will give their best efforts and we look forward to cheering them on every step of the way.

That's what we think. Share your opinion on this editorial or other topics by sending a letter to the editor to rjablonski@sun-news.com, faxing your letter to 216-986-2340, or mailing it to Ray Jablonski, Sun News East Group editor, 5510 Cloverleaf Parkway, Cleveland, 44125. All letters must include the author's name, city and a daytime phone number for verification.