

Chambers Leaves Legacy of Growth and Gratitude at Collinsville High

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
February 26 2024 8:17 AM



GRANITE CITY - Zach Chambers, a senior center for the Collinsville High boys basketball team, scored 11 points in what turned out to be his final varsity game, the Kahoks' 58-56 heartbreaking loss to Belleville West in double overtime in the IHSA Class 4A regional final Feb. 23 at Granite City's Memorial Gym. But as he looks back, he also knows that there are many great memories to look back on as he gets ready for the next phase of his life.

Chambers had a great season, averaging 15.3 points and 7.5 rebounds-per-game, also having 29 assists, 21 steals and 83 blocked shots, as the Kahoks finished 28-5 on the season, winning their first 17 games, and also capturing both the Southwestern Conference championship and the championship of their own Prairie Farms Holiday Classic over Quincy, who also advanced to the sectional.

In his postgame interview, although he felt very disappointed with the loss, he also felt grateful for the fan support and how the Maroons won their games in the regional, hitting four straight shots, including three in the final, at the last second to win.

"For being honest, I feel terrible," Chambers said, "and feeling great at the same time. It's an honor to lose like that to such a great team. I mean, four buzzer-beaters, it's kind of a way to go out. It was a nice atmosphere, a lot of people came out to see us, and I really appreciate it, even if we lost. But I'll be fine. It's just basketball."

Chambers had a very good career with the Kahoks, especially this season, and with what turned out to be a 28-5 final record, much pride in the team's accomplishments, along with a hope that he and his teammates will keep in touch with each other.

"Yeah, we all heard that in the locker room," Chambers said. "Coach (Darin) Lee said he was really happy with us, anyway. He said we're grateful guys, and I really thought that we come out and support each other, no matter what. I hope we continue that through life, through basketball, and further into life. Contact and everything, and keep supporting each other."

Looking back on his time with the Kahoks, Chambers is most proud of his growth from his freshman year in 2020-21 to this season.

"It's easy to say this year," Chambers said. "But my growth from my freshman to senior year. I broke my wrist and sprained my ankle really bad, and I had to kind of recover from that for a year. But just to even be part of the Kahok varsity team and have such a good record is an honor."

As far as his future, Chambers is hoping to play NCAA Division-II basketball at Augusta College in Augusta, Ga., or attend another four-year school and study biology. His career plans include being either a doctor or marine science.

Looking back at everything accomplished in his Collinsville career, Chambers knows that the precious memories will always be there, and there's nothing to hang one's head about.

"Yeah, definitely," Chambers said. "it's just the fact we get to look back, and we can have the memories we shared, which is what I'm really sad about. I'm going to end up going home, and I'm going to sit there and think about it. It's going to hit then; it hit in the locker room, like, kind of waving at us. But when I go back and think about all the nice times we had, with me, Nick (Horras), and Jamorie (Wysinger) throughout the years, it's really going to be like 'dang, it's over.' But, still, our brotherhood transcends basketball, and I hope everybody on the team realized that."

And to those who are coming back to the team next season, along with future players, Chambers had one thing to say.

"Go future Kahoks!," he said with a big smile and laugh. "Do better than us."