

ORU Shocks Ohio State, Wins First NCAA Tournament Game in 47 Years

Major upsets have become commonplace in the NCAA Men's basketball tournament over the past few years, but Friday's 75-72 South Regional overtime victory for Oral Roberts University over Ohio State shocked many in the college basketball world—and for many reasons.

ORU, a private charismatic university in Tulsa, Oklahoma, became only the ninth No. 15 seed ever to defeat at No. 2 seed in the post-season tourney. No. 15 seeds, as of this game, are 9-132 overall in the NCAA Tournament.

Moreover, it was the Golden Eagles' first victory in the NCAA tournament since 1974. That season, ORU made to the Elite Eight before losing to Kansas, 93-90.

The nation's leading scorer coming into the tournament, Max Abmas, scored 29 points to spark ORU to the major upset over a Big 10 Conference program that had gotten used to advancing deep in the NCAAs nearly every year. Kevin Obanor led ORU with 30 points.

The Golden Eagles advanced to the round of 32 where it will play No. 7 seed Florida on Sunday.

The last time a No. 15 seed defeated a No. 2 seed in the tournament was 2016, when Middle Tennessee State shocked Michigan State.

ORU, considered a "mid-major" school by NCAA standards, last made the NCAA Tournament in 2008, when, as a No. 13 seed, the Eagles lost to Pittsburgh in the first round.

The Associated Press reported that the Summit League

champions, “bowed their heads in a prayer circle after their victory over the Big 10 Conference powerhouse.”

“I know growing up, all my life, I was always like the underdog,” Obanor told the Associated Press. “The school is not a big school. Just to prove people wrong, it’s a blessing just to have people that are really committed and believe that we’re the better team. “When they rank them, it was only just a number at the end of the day. We put our shoes on just as the other team puts their shoes on. We just had the mindset of, ‘Show us that you deserve to be No. 2,’ and we came out with a lot of confidence.”

A tweet on ORU basketball’s twitter account said it all for ORU Friday:

“What was it Oral Roberts used to say? Oh right ... EXPECT A MIRACLE.

What was it Oral Robert’s used to say?

Oh A MIRACLE!! #MarchMadness

– ORU Basketball (@ORUMBB) March 19, 2021

According to , % of BCG users correctly picked Oral Roberts to beat Ohio State. In fact, almost as many players had Ohio State winning the title (%) than the Eagles winning this game.

Oral Roberts took a six-point lead over the second-seeded Buckeyes with two minutes remaining. Ohio State fought back, but it wasn’t enough. {eoa}

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