

‘The Miracle’ Continues as ORU Beats Florida to Move On in the NCAAs

The miracle continues for the Oral Roberts University basketball team.

Only two days after they beat Ohio State to win their first NCAA men’s basketball tournament game in 47 years, the Golden Eagles ensured their first Sweet 16 appearance since 1974 with a stunning come-from-behind 81-78 victory over Southeastern Conference powerhouse Florida. That year, ORU advanced to the Elite Eight when it lost to Kansas, 93-90, in overtime.

The Golden Eagles became the second No. 15 tournament seed to advance this far and the first No. 15 seed to make it to the Sweet 16 since 2013. That year, Florida Gulf Coast stunned the tournament world by making it that far. Ironically, it was Florida that ended its run in the third round.

The charismatic Christian school now plays No. 3-seed Arkansas on Saturday at 7:25 p.m. for the right to advance to the Elite Eight. The Summit League champion, ORU had made its first NCAA tournament appearance since 2008 and has defeated two Power 5 Conference teams in its first two games.

The Golden Eagles overcame an 11-point deficit in the final 9:43 to defeat Florida. It took a 77-76 lead on Kevin Obanor’s basket with less than three minutes to play, and then a 3-pointer by DeShang Weave gave ORU the lead for good, 80-78, with 2:08 left.

“It’s really just mind-blowing,” Obanor told the Associated Press. “We’re grateful.”

As ORU school founder Oral Roberts used to say, “Expect a

miracle.” The Golden Eagles are doing just that every step of the way.

ORU fans blew up Facebook and Twitter Sunday night after the Golden Eagles’ victory:

– “Awesome feeling tonight. Congrats. Keep God first, keep having fun. We an awesome ride no matter what. Keep the faith.” – *Joshua Rhoades*

– “Who busted brackets? Who silenced the doubters? Who believed in miracles?” – *Oral Roberts University Facebook page*

– “Recognition ... we’ve been getting a lot of it lately!!! Why? Because an ORU education is more than just a degree ... it’s growth, leadership and impact.” – *Oral Roberts University Facebook page*

Oral Roberts student Drew Forsmsma tweeted: “I’m a proud student of Oral Roberts University! We love Jesus and we love basketball.”

I’m a proud student of Oral Roberts University! We love Jesus and we love basketball #college #Orubb #oralroberts @OralRobertsU

– *Drew Formsma (@drewformsma) March 19, 2021*

Loyola Stuns Illinois

Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt is at it again. After Loyola-Chicago’s 2018 trip to the Final Four, the team’s venerable 101-year-old chaplain said a prayer Sunday calling for Loyola to hold Illinois under 30 percent from 3-point range. It happened, and the Catholic school from Chicago, a No. 11 seed, upset top-rated Illinois 71-58 to move on in the tournament. Schmidt had previously received her COVID-19 vaccination and clearance to travel to Indianapolis.

Illinois shot 4-for-14 from three-point range Sunday, or 28.6%.

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