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The Forgan Bulldogs are headed back to the state tournament for the fourth straight season after a 56-50 win over the Okeene Whippets in the area championship game.

Chandler Bryer sealed the game for the Bulldogs when he sank both free throws with 27.6 seconds left to put Forgan up by six.

Bryer was big throughout the fourth quarter, scoring 10 of his 16 points, that included a pair of threes, in the final six minutes.

“The area game is always the most stressful for my kids.,” Bulldogs coach Todd Kerr. “There's just something about it that makes our players tight and not play their best. But our guys stepped up in the tough situations, and played big.”

Forgan opened the game with a 16-10 lead in the first quarter, led by Jace Kerr's 8 points. Okeene rallied in the second with a 13-9 advantage to cut the Bulldogs' lead to just two at half

(25-23).

“We jumped out on them pretty quick,” Kerr said. “They changed to a zone defense and we struggled to find our range from the outside. I think we settled a little bit and didn't play real well on offense. They had something to do with that. They're long and athletic and hard to score on.”

Okeene continued to play well in the third quarter, and took a five-point lead. But Forgan answered with a pair of threes by Luis Ordonez and another by Bryer to retake the lead.

“We had a stretch in the third where we couldn't hit a bucket,” Kerr said. “The guys stayed the course and got them to go down when we needed them.”

Forgan led by just one (43-42) with 5:54 left in the fourth, but the Bulldogs took control from that point and finished the game off by making 6 of 8 free throws.

Tough atmosphere, tough game.

“We made a couple of adjustments in the fourth,” Kerr said. “They were doubling us in the post and we weren't able to get shot in the there. So we had to get them outside and get guys in comfortable spots so they could hit those. They stepped up and hit them at the right time.”

Forgan was 15-21 from inside the arc, 6 of 22 outside, and 8 of 13 at the line. Okeene was 19-37 from two, 2-8 from three, and 6 of 9 at the free throw line.

Jace Kerr finished with a game-high 18; Chandler Bryer hit three 3-pointers and scored 16, Demetrius Alston added 9, and Luis Ordonez hit a pair of threes for 6 points.

No.1 Forgan (26-1) will start the state tournament on the same court they began their last state

championship run when they take on Cave Springs (23-2), Thursday at 8:30 pm at Carl Albert High School.

“To make it to the state tournament four straight years and five of the last six years is incredible,” Kerr said. “We don't ever want to take that for granted. We've been blessed, and I think it's a product of doing things the right way as well.”