

# Will Watkins:

### Bingham, Box Elder games provide best memories as team chased 4A title

By Bruce Smith  
MatchupUT.com

The 2009-10 Olympus High School boys basketball season was marred by injuries to a couple of players. Ironically, it was also an injury that gave senior forward **Will Watkins** his best memory.

The Titans had jumped to a 4-1 record when Bingham, the top-ranked team in 5A came to visit, and the Miners had been a thorn in Oly's side for years.

"We had played with Ben (Clifford) and Shad (Sommerville) for six or seven years and they always seemed to get the best of us," Watkins said. "That was probably the biggest highlight of the year to beat them."

Watkins had 12 points and seven rebounds as the Titans pulled out a 68-63 win. Watkins was in the starting lineup, despite a deep cut just above his eye that he suffered a week earlier when he bumped heads with teammate **Spencer Lindsley** in practice.

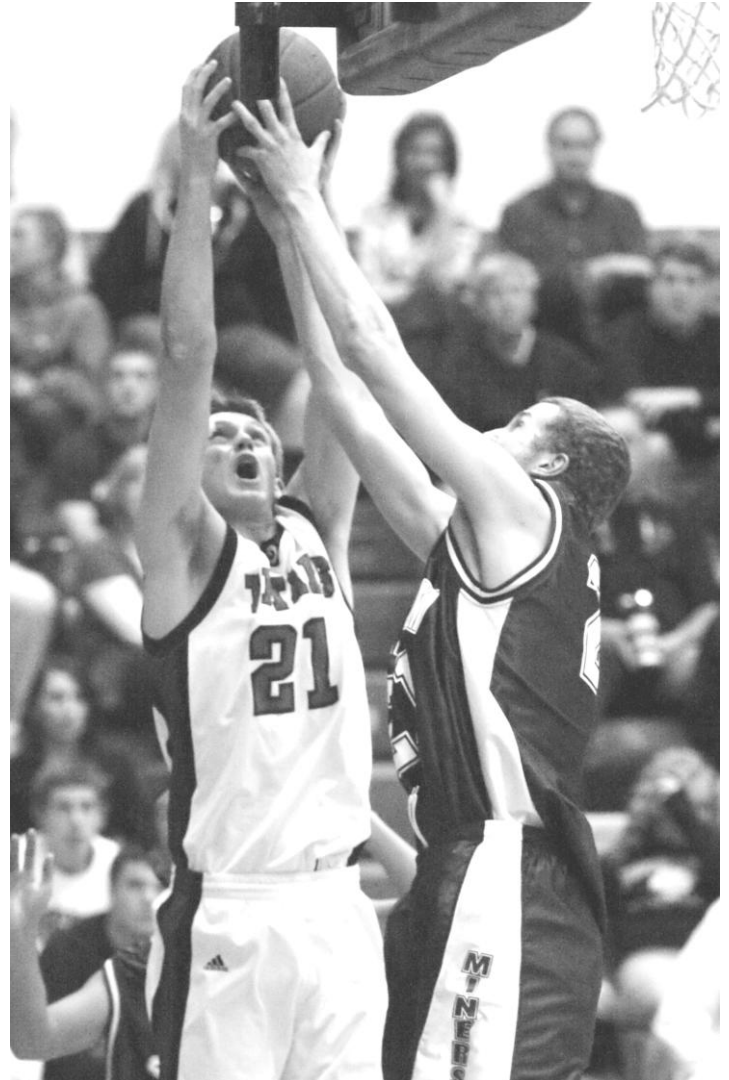
In the game's final minutes, Watkins grabbed a key rebound and collided with Bingham's Nate Girsberger, which drew a foul. Watkins was hurt again, and blood appeared in nearly the same position above his eye.

"We thought I had just reinjured it, but it was a whole new cut that was perpendicular to the other one," he said.

Watkins was forced to leave the game, and went to the locker room to have a trainer dress the wound. Ben Sonntag replaced Watkins and hit both free throws that stopped Bingham's comeback and helped Oly regain the momentum.

Watkins returned a few minutes later. On the court afterward, he was a happy man while accepting congratulations from his teammates and fans.

"That was a very fun game," Watkins said. "I had seven stitches from the earlier cut, and the new



**Will Watkins battles for a rebound with Bingham's Ben Clifford.**

one had nine. It was definitely worth it, though."

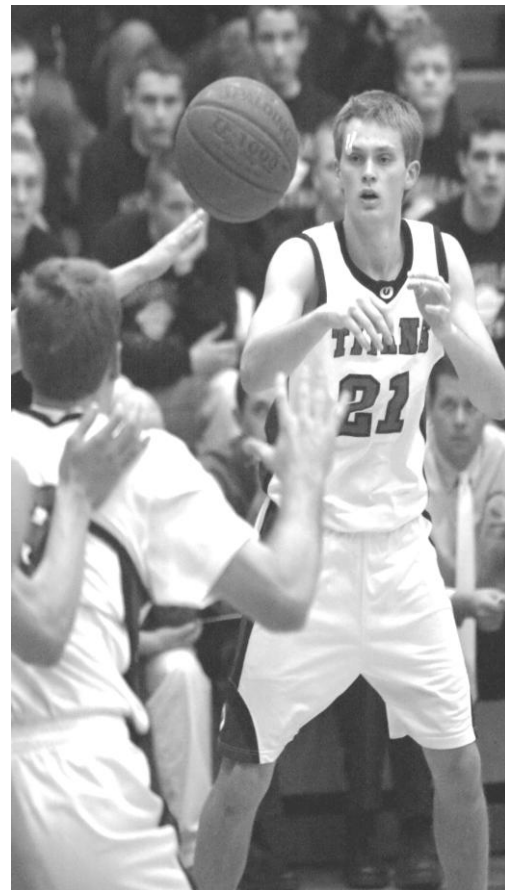
It was also inspiring to his teammates. That, as it turned out, was Watkins' role while he played at Olympus.

"I felt like I had to wear the emotional motivational leader hat for our team," he said. "I had to get the guys fired up, or calm them down, depending on the situation."

Watkins also was among the team's most-consistent players. He started every game, and averaged 8.3 points per game. He also grabbed 3.4 rebounds and had the second-most assists.

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## OLYMPUS BASKETBALL: Senior profile



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He had a season-high 16 points in Oly's 50-36 win over Box Elder early in the season. But Watkins doesn't recall the game for his offensive exploits. Instead, he remembered being called on by coach **Matt Barnes** to guard the Bees' high-scoring guard Brant Mecham.

"He had really lit us up last year ... 30 or 35 points, and I looked forward to guarding him," Watkins said.

Mecham had just three points this time, and was 0-12 shooting. It was easily his worst game of the year.

At that time, Watkins was one of many players who felt that Olympus had the potential for winning the 4A state championship. He was one of six seniors on this year's team who were given the opportunity to play varsity for three seasons.

They never did win that coveted state title, but relished the chase.

"This team accomplished a lot and I don't have any regrets," Watkins said. "I believe, if any team at Olympus was to win the state championship, it was this team.

"The community, and the school thought we had state championship potential and certainly the team thought that," he said.

At the team banquet in mid-March, Barnes addressed his talented team and had an answer that Watkins appreciated.

"Coach said he always figured we (this senior class) would win a state championship or two. He said to not look at this as a failure, but we were one of the best teams he had."

Watkins and his teammates also provided Barnes with some great memories. For Watkins, more are on the way, although they will likely involve a textbook as he continues his education at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

