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Friday, March 6, 2026

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Bethune-Bowman Varsity Boys Advance to State Championship Under Leadership of Head Coach Charles McCray

Orangeburg, SC – Bethune-Bowman varsity boys basketball team is headed back to the state championship, marking another historic milestone for the program under the leadership of Head Coach Charles McCray. McCray, who serves as a parent liaison during the school day and leads the varsity boys basketball team in the evening at Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School, reflected on the emotional victory over Carvers Bay High School in the Lower State Championship. The Mohawks secured their spot in the state championship with a thrilling 69-65 victory over the bears. When the final buzzer sounded, securing the win after battling back from a 14-point deficit, McCray described his reaction in one word: thankful. “I had a lot of different feelings, but I had to stay humble. I was thankful. This isn’t something given to anybody, it’s earned. For God to give us the grace and favor to make it back to state, I was just thankful,” he expressed.

The victory marks the third consecutive Lower State appearance for the program and the second state championship appearance in that span, a testament to the consistency and culture being built within the Mohawk basketball program. After trailing by 14 points in the Lower State title game, McCray’s steady

leadership proved pivotal. Instead of panic, he preached poise. “My main thing was to remain calm and encourage them. I told them, ‘We’re built for this. We’ve been down before. This is just a bigger stage. I told them everybody makes a run, it’s about how you respond,” he said. The Mohawks responded with resilience, a word Coach McCray uses to define his team. “If I could describe this team in one word, it would be resilient. No matter what adversity they face, they come together. They understand they need each other to win. Do not lose character. Do not change who we are. When you start trying to be somebody else, that’s when you lose yourself. Our identity is defense. Let’s show the world what our defense is made of” he said.

According to McCray, the difference-maker in the championship matchup will come down to three fundamentals: defending, rebounding, and executing. Senior leaders, including Terrance McFadden and Jaedon Bell, have set the tone throughout the season, leading more by action than words. The Mohawks’ coaching staff has also played an instrumental role in the team’s success. The head coach credits his assistants for their dedication to player development, game analysis, and maintaining strong relationships with student-athletes. “In order to be on my staff, you have to love the kids on purpose. You can’t correct a player if you don’t love them. Every coach on my staff plays a valuable role,” he shared.

In preparation for the championship, Coach McCray, along with players Terrance McFadden and Jaedon Bell, participated in an official state championship press conference hosted by the South Carolina High School League. The trio joined their opponents and other high school teams competing for state titles to discuss the upcoming matchup and represent Bethune-Bowman on a statewide platform.

The Boys Class 1A State Championship game will tip off Saturday, March 7, at 2 p.m. at the Colonial Life Arena in Columbia, South Carolina. As the Mohawks prepare to take the floor, Coach McCray remains focused not on legacy, but on purpose. With resilience, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to their identity, the Bethune-Bowman Mohawks are ready to seize the moment and compete for a state championship title. As they gear up to face C.A. Johnson High School for the crown, McCray’s message to his team is simple and steady: stay true to who you are.

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