

~PLAY@~Reynoldsburg vs Newark live High School Basketball Playoffs Game on March 11, 2026

Reynoldsburg vs Newark Live

In the basketball-rich heart of Central Ohio, the matchup between Newark and Reynoldsburg is always a circled date on the calendar. On Wednesday, March 11, 2026, these two historic programs added another chapter to their rivalry in a high-stakes OHSAA Division I Regional Semifinal at the Ohio Expo Center (Taft Coliseum).



With a combined record that commanded respect across the state, the game served as a collision of Newark's disciplined, stifling defense and Reynoldsburg's high-octane, athletic transition game.
The Backdrop: A Clash of No. 2 and No. 15

The seeds told one story, but the regular season told another. Newark (#2 seed) entered the contest as a legitimate state title contender with a 23–2 record. The Wildcats, led by legendary coach Jeff Quackenbush, had spent the winter dismantling opponents with a "hard-nosed" defensive identity, allowing fewer than 45 points per game on average.

Reynoldsburg (#15 seed), despite their lower seed, arrived at the Regional Semifinal as the hottest team in the district. After a middling start to the season, the Raiders caught fire in February, riding an 8-game winning streak that included a stunning upset in the District Finals. For Reynoldsburg, this game was a chance to prove that their "underdog" tag was a mistake.

Season at a Glance

	Team	Record	Style	Key Strength
	Newark Wildcats	23–2	Half-court discipline	Scoring defense (PA: 42.8)
	Reynoldsburg Raiders	18–6	Up-tempo transition	Forced turnovers / Dunks

Game Summary: The Battle for the Coliseum

The atmosphere at the Taft Coliseum was electric, with both communities filling the historic arena to its rafters. From the opening tip, the contrast in styles was immediate.

First Half: Newark's Wall vs. Raider Speed

Newark looked to establish a "slugfest" early. They utilized long offensive possessions, often passing the ball six or seven times before looking for a shot, effectively neutralizing Reynoldsburg's desire to run. Senior forward Steele Meister anchored the Wildcats' interior, while the backcourt provided relentless on-ball pressure.

However, Reynoldsburg's Jordan Fisher—a 6'6" matchup nightmare—refused to be contained. Despite the slow pace, Fisher found gaps in the Newark zone, punctuating the first quarter with a thunderous transition dunk that ignited the Raiders' bench. At the half, Newark held a razor-thin 28–26 lead, with neither team able to build a cushion larger than five points.

Second Half: The Turning Point

The third quarter saw the "Wildcat Way" take full effect. Newark's defense intensified, forcing three consecutive Reynoldsburg turnovers. Xavier McKinney and Noah Smith hit back-to-back three-pointers for the Wildcats, extending the lead to double digits for the first time.

Reynoldsburg attempted to press, looking to speed Newark up, but the Wildcats' veteran guards handled the heat with poise. Every time the Raiders threatened to make a run, Newark responded with a disciplined set-play or a crucial offensive rebound.

Standout Performers

Steele Meister (Newark): The focal point of the Wildcats' offense, Meister finished with 18 points and 10 rebounds, controlling the paint against a more athletic Raiders frontcourt.

Jordan Fisher (Reynoldsburg): Led all scorers with 21 points. His ability to score at all three levels kept the Raiders within striking distance until late in the fourth quarter.

Noah Smith (Newark): Provided the "dagger" with three second-half triples, finishing with 14 points and 4 assists.

Jorden Bowens (Reynoldsburg): A defensive spark for the Raiders, recording 4 steals and 8 points in a gritty performance.

Legacy of the Rivalry

Newark's 62–51 victory sends them to the Regional Final (Elite Eight), keeping their dreams of a state championship in Dayton alive. For the Wildcats, it was a masterclass in execution and mental toughness.

For Reynoldsburg, the loss marks the end of a remarkable "Cinderella" postseason run. While they fell short, the Raiders' late-season transformation proved they belong among the elite in Central Ohio.