

# HEIGHTS

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it was never overdone.

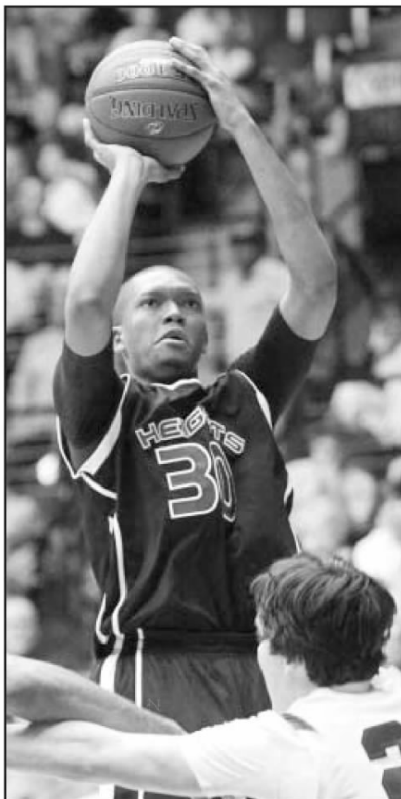
The Falcons became the first to win four consecutive large-classification championships since South from 1978-81, doing so while staying true to themselves. They beat BV Northwest for the last three titles.

"Yes, yes, we can talk about it," Auer said. "It's been a goal that we haven't talked about. What an incredible accomplishment, an unbelievable accomplishment. Couldn't be more proud of our guys."

Ellis finishes his career as the most successful City League player in history: The league's career scoring leader, with 2,231 points, emerged from his tenure with a 95-5 record and he'll soon be the first player to make the All-State team four times.

Terrence Moore joins Ellis with four championships, the Pippen to Ellis' Jordan and the player who defines Heights' attitude as well as any. While Ellis personifies the Falcons' style by showing no emotion and expecting good things, Moore embodies it by giving the Falcons an edge that all great teams need.

They've had an effect on another senior, Gavin Thurman. He attended Heights briefly during his freshman year before transferring to Southeast. He spent three years trying to beat the Falcons, losing to them in the



Fernando Salazar/The Wichita Eagle  
**Heights' Gavin Thurman scores in the fourth quarter Saturday night at Koch Arena.**

championship game in 2009.

Now, Thurman is a big part of the last of four titles. He was calm while accepting his medal and when talking to his relatives, exhibiting the Falcons' collective four-year demeanor. Thurman said that wouldn't last.

"I'm pretty sure I'm about to break down as soon as I hit that locker room," Thurman said. "I can't even put into words how happy I am right now. I'm so happy for my team. We made it. I finally did what I always wanted to do."

BV Northwest had a 43-42 lead after three quarters. They

didn't have Ellis, though, and he seemed sure to take over the final eight minutes of his career. Ellis scored 10 points in the fourth to finish with a game-high 29, but it was a group effort by the three stars that lifted Heights.

Moore scored nine of his 17, including seven straight free throws after he missed six of his first seven from the line. Thurman put Heights up 57-52 with 1:57 to go and also made clutch free throws late.

"Our will to get the ball inside was greater than their will to keep us from getting it inside," Auer said. "We did a great job identifying that there were some foul problems, and we got the ball inside and it made a big difference in this game."

Pressure built on the Falcons throughout four years. Ellis was a blue-chipper before he played a game and four titles were practically expected. They replaced three starters this season but kept winning, establishing a state record with 62 straight wins but collapsing briefly after that.

Losses in their final two regular-season games cast doubt on Heights for the first time. The Falcons stayed the course, narrowing their minds to the small picture rather than looking to history on the horizon.

"As a teenager, it takes a while for it to sink in," Moore said. "I'll be thinking about it all night and eventually it will become real that it actually happened."