



A leaping Daran Armstrong looks for an open teammate or a little room to shoot while driving the lane.

Kimball overcomes Birmingham Groves in tournament thriller

By BRAD EMONS

The magic carpet ride finally came to a halt for Birmingham Groves in the regional final at Southfield-Lathrup Friday.

The much taller and more physical Royal Oak Kimball squad came through with a big fourth quarter to stop the giddy and determined Birmingham team, 66-60 after a packed crowd of 2,500.

The methodical Groves team found themselves down only 45-44 with just 6:48 left in the contest after Ali Ucar hit a jumper from the baseline.

Kimball then ripped off 12 straight points in the next two minutes to virtually put the game away.

Refugee guard Scott Abro did most of the damage in that stretch for Kimball as he canned three long jumpers. He came off the bench to score 10 points.

Point-guard Matt Tammi hit the other two points on free throws to give the Knights a commanding 57-44 advantage with 4:15 to go.

"They hit well from the outside in the fourth quarter and that was the difference," said Groves coach Jay Schwalm.

"We played a good ball game and I'm disappointed at all with our performance," Schwalm said.

Not to be denied, Groves would not quit in the last four minutes.

UCAR finished the evening with a game-high 27 points, scored six straight points to put the Falcons to within seven points, 57-60, with 3:29 left.

Kimball went into its deadly offense and forced Groves to foul.

The Knights cannot be stopped in five points.

Ucar's acrobatic drive with 21 seconds remaining closed the gap to 63-68, but thereafter, Kimball controlled the ball and secured its first-ever regional title.

"Groves played well and was really prepared," said Kimball coach Chuck Jones.

Jones complimented the play of his whole team but particularly Abro, who he said, "has been doing a job for us all year."

Kimball, now 23-2 overall, faces tournament-tough Pontiac Central in a Class A quarterfinal at Calhan Hall Wednesday.

"We have to stay focused and run with them," said Jones, whose team is noted for getting down the court in a hurry themselves.

John Gervais, a 6-5 senior forward, led a well-balanced Kimball attack with 15 points. Dave Rowland, a muscular 6-3 forward, added 14, but could only tally one free throw in the second half.

Rowland and Bertelson each grabbed nine rebounds.

Riker and senior guard Rusty Liebertz each had nine points for Kimball.

Groves' slow tempo offensively seemed to both Kimball much of the game as Schwan directed his team to work the high post and run and overhand the Kimball zone defense.

"We had to work hard to get off a good shot because they double-teamed the ball a lot, especially in the first quarter," Schwan said.

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Groves' cinderella showing in the tournament, with its 27 points against Kimball, eclipsed a single-season school scoring record.

Kimball won its way to the regional final with a 23-21, at half-time.

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Groves never led in the second half. They were down, 23-21, at half-time.

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Kimball scored six points after Riker scored, taking a 12-9 lead beginning the second quarter.

Staying ahead much of the second period, Kimball outscored Groves, 17-15.

Groves shot 23 of 50 for 46 per cent from the floor while Royal Oak hit 24 of 58 shots for 41 per cent.

The big Kimball squad only out-rebounded Groves, 35-31, as Gervais.

KIMBALL 66 — Bruce Brown 4, 5-7, 13, Matt Tammi 2, 4-4, 8, Fred Tyrell 3, 9-9, 8, Dave Rowland 12, 3-3, John Gervais 1, 1-1, 2, Ali Ucar 5, 0-0, 10, Matt Bertelson 1, 1-1, 2, Matt Riker 3, 0-0, 6, Tony Tricceppi 4, 1-1, 5, Paul Pichette 5, 0-0, 6, Jeff Forhan 4, 0-0, 4, Jim Schwan 1, 1-1, 2, Jeff Piotrowski 1, 0-0, 1, Dan Bertelson 1, 1-1, 2, Jeff Forhan 1, 1-1, 3, Arnie Kander 1, 2-2, 4, John Galecki 1, 0-0, 1, Matt Tammi 1, 0-0, 1, Matt Bertelson 1, 0-0, 1, Total Points: Kimball 66, Groves 18.

Points Out: none

KIMBALL 23 — Bruce Brown 4, 5-7, 13, Matt Tammi 2, 4-4, 8, Fred Tyrell 3, 9-9, 8, Dave Rowland 12, 3-3, John Gervais 1, 1-1, 2, Ali Ucar 5, 0-0, 10, Matt Bertelson 1, 1-1, 2, Matt Riker 3, 0-0, 6, Tony Tricceppi 4, 1-1, 5, Paul Pichette 5, 0-0, 6, Jeff Forhan 4, 0-0, 4, Jim Schwan 1, 1-1, 2, Jeff Piotrowski 1, 0-0, 1, Dan Bertelson 1, 1-1, 2, Jeff Forhan 1, 1-1, 3, Arnie Kander 1, 2-2, 4, John Galecki 1, 0-0, 1, Matt Tammi 1, 0-0, 1, Matt Bertelson 1, 0-0, 1, Total Points: Kimball 66, Groves 18.

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TOTAL FOULS: — Flittergeld 12, Groves 11.

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