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(F17)

Rice holds off Southfield for regional crown

By DENNIS O'CONNOR

You could write the same script over and over and over again.

Birmingham Brother Rice's basketball team battles closely, but faces defeat for the first three quarters. But in the end, a clutch free throw here, or a timely pass there and the Warriors finish with another victory.

It happened against Bloomfield Hills Lahser, it happened in the first Detroit Catholic Central game, it happened against Detroit East Catholic.

And, in the midst of state tournament play, that same script was rewritten, as the steady but not awesome Warriors reached the quarterfinal round with a hard-earned 60-57 victory over spirited Southfield High Friday night before 2,700 fans at Southfield-Lathrup.

Rice, 20-5 overall, now takes its Birmingham Seaborn District and Southfield-Lathrup Regional crowns into Wednesday's quarterfinal game against once-beaten Ulica Eisenhower. The quarterfinal battle starts at 8 p.m. at U-D's Calihan Hall.

IT WAS A typical Rice victory. The Warriors never had the lead in the first half, although the score was tied 23-23 at the intermission. They held the lead only twice in the early moments of the third quarter, as the Blue Jays (19-6) continued to control the game's tempo with its quick transition game, holding a one-point lead, 45-44, going into the final eight minutes of action.

Then came the knockout punch. Brian Brennan, who later fouled out along with sophomore teammate Paul Jokisch, hit a jumper 54 seconds into the quarter and Rice never trailed after that.

The Warriors immediately went into a delay game, slowing down the pace, controlling the tempo and converting eight of 10 free throws down the stretch.

"I didn't want to take the chance... Southfield is the type of team that can blow us out," Rice coach Bill Norton said about going to the delay so early in the quarter.

"Paul Jokisch wasn't shooting as well as he normally does, so I felt it would be a better offense, making the free throws or getting shots off the four corners (offense). We aren't that good of a shooting team."

"I think we played their (the Warriors) game too much," Southfield coach Greg Sliwa. "We slowed it down a little too much, but, again, their size — their guards pressured ours and we had to shoot over their big guys."

"They are a well-conditioned ball club, and they play that spread well."

BROTHER RICE also followed its usual script in the scoring column, as a balanced, team attack highlighted the victory.

Rob Manilla led the Rice scorers with 12 points. Sophomore John Sliwa, a 6-10 center added 11, while Brennan, Tom O'Leary, Judd Hart and Paul Jokisch scored eight points each.

It was the play of Manilla and eighth-man O'Leary, in particular,

which led the fourth-quarter surge, saving Norton from additional gray hair when Brennan and Jokisch fouled out.

Manilla scored six points in the fourth quarter and held Blue Jay leading scorer Vince Bean at bay in the closing minutes. The 6-4 forward also finished the game with eight assists and three rebounds.

O'Leary came in and kept South-

field's Dave Sucher off the boards in the last quarter, while grabbing six rebounds himself.

Sucher still finished with 17 rebounds — eight offensive and nine defensive — along with 14 points. Bean and teammate John Piper, a senior co-captain, led all scorers with 17 each.

"I wasn't really worried about our offense," Norton said. "We were getting offense." (Continued on page 2D)



Rice's Paul Jokisch grabs a rebound. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)



Rice's Brian Brennan (dark jersey) hawks Southfield's John Piper during Friday's regional final. (Staff photo by Mindy Saunders)

CC rips Stevenson in regional final

By DOUG FUNKE

Barry Spencer and Greg Wendt continue to prove themselves to be a potent one-two basketball punch.

The duo, which has carried the scoring load for Detroit Catholic Central all season long, totaled 47 points Friday to spark the Shamrocks to a 78-61 victory over Livonia Stevenson.

The win, before a crowd of nearly 2,500 in the regional final at Livonia Franklin, sends CC to the Class A state quarterfinals 5 p.m. Wednesday against Highland Park.

That game will be played in Calihan Hall at the University of Detroit (McNichols and Livernois).

The game Friday was billed as a duel between the traditionally strong Shamrocks and Stevenson, one of the better metro west teams this winter.

Many in the packed crowd were also anticipating the duel between CC's Barry Spencer and Stevenson's Dave Hall.

The game was close only through the first quarter and the personal confrontation never really materialized with each team using zone defenses.

The Shamrocks scored the first six points of the game — all by Spencer — and never trailed. Spencer finished with 27 points.

CC, meanwhile, contained Hall most of the game with a collapsing zone defense. Joe Chops, Dan Bartels and Spencer prevented the Spartans from getting the ball inside to Hall.

"We not want them to get any easy baskets," said Bertie Holowicki, coach of the Shamrocks. "I thought we were aggressive in the zone."

CC led 18-13 after the first eight minutes.

The Shamrocks shut down Stevenson entirely from the field during the second quarter. All nine of the Spartans' points came on foul shots, as CC pulled away to a 36-22 lead at the intermission.

Stevenson coach George Van Wagoner said that his team never before this season went a complete quarter without making at least one field goal.

The problem? The shots just wouldn't fall much of the time, similar to what happened to Detroit Mackenzie earlier in the week when the Spartans lost to the Spartans.

CC's tight zone also kept Stevenson from getting inside for the easier shot.

"I think if a few had dropped, it would have helped," said Stevenson coach George Van Wagoner. "We didn't score enough at all."

"It's evident that Spencer is a fine, fine athlete. They put one on one side (Spencer) and the other one (Wendt) on the other," Van Wagoner added. "They really complemented each other."

Wendt, a forward, scored 20 points. As a team, CC shot 57 percent from the field — 33 of 58.

CC, sensing a chance to knock the Spartans completely out of the game early in the second half, went to a run-and-gun offense. The Shamrocks had three three-point plays that quarter — one each by Bartels, Chops and Spencer.

CC led 63-38 after three quarters. Van Wagoner substituted frequently during the fourth and the Spartans out-pointed CC 8-4 during the first 2 1/2 minutes, but there was no making up the huge deficit.

Herzog and Chops each added 11 points to the Shamrocks' offensive cause.

Evan Lyaal netted 15, Hall 13 and Bill Keyes 10 for Stevenson.

"We won, but it was a tough 20-point win," said Holowicki. "I thought we played well and they're a good team, well coached."

"Barry dominated. I thought he rose well to the occasion. He's a class player, a class kid and he set the tone for the game," said Holowicki.

Van Wagoner was philosophical in defeat.

"Our kids did super," he said. "I would have liked to see them win, but 20-4 (season record) is not bad. CC has a fine ball club."

As an almost fitting climax to the game, CC's Dave Rodriguez launched a ball toward the hoop from midcourt as time was running out. The ball bounced off the backboard and through the basket. Unfortunately, time had expired.

But the Shamrocks march on to the quarterfinals.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL 78 - STEVENSON 61

DETROIT CATHOLIC CENTRAL CB — Barry Spencer 11, 5-5, 27; Dan Bartels 8, 3-4, 7; Joe Chops 4, 3-10, 10; Greg Wendt 11, 5-11, 22; John Piper 1, 0-2, 2; John Mackenzie 1, 0-2, 2.

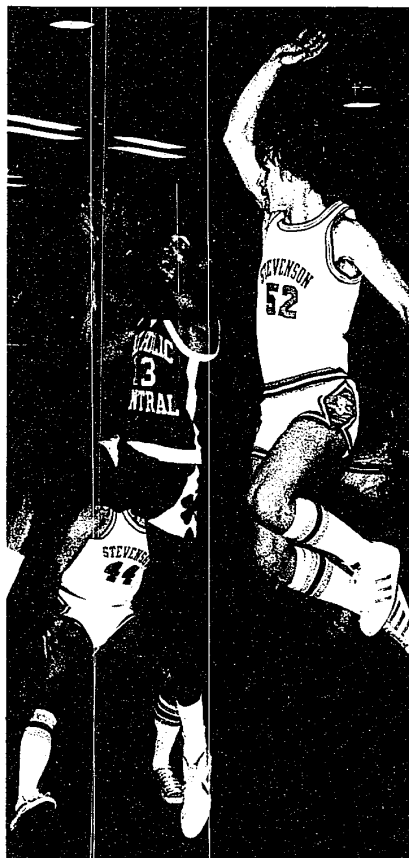
LIVONIA STEVENSON CB — Dave Hall 15, 5-10, 30; Evan Lyaal 15, 5-10, 30; Bill Keyes 10, 4-8, 20; John Mackenzie 1, 0-2, 2; John Piper 1, 0-2, 2; John Mackenzie 1, 0-2, 2.

TOTAL POINTS CC 78, Stevenson 61.

FOULED OUT CC 12, Stevenson 17.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL STEVENSON

13 8 14 21 — 41



Barry Spencer, who led all scorers with 27 points, drives between Evan Lyaal (52) and Kevin Spala (44) for a layup. (Staff photos by Art Emanuele)

Manilla, O'Leary key Warrior win

By BOB GROSS

Somehow it was fitting that Rice's final points against Southfield resulted from a Rob Manilla to Tom O'Leary pass with 13 seconds left in the fourth quarter.

Manilla came up with the ball after a tip in his own end. He brought the ball down court and dished off at the last instant to O'Leary. O'Leary laid the ball gently off the glass. He was fouled on the play, and he converted the free throw to give Rice a 60-55 lead.

"I owed these guys one," said O'Leary. "I missed almost the same shot — a layup — in the first game we lost. We lost the game by two points, so I owed these guys one. I was glad to do it for them."

"A super pass by Rob," O'Leary continued. "I knew it was coming down all the way."

But dishing off to O'Leary wasn't the first thing on Manilla's mind. Rice's scoring leader with 12 points, he was looking to add to that total.

"I was looking to drive," said Manilla, "but he (Dave Sucher) came out to cut me off. He came out from Tom's side, so I passed it over. I have confidence in Tom's scoring because I play against him in practice, and he scores against me."

The assist was Manilla's eighth, high for the Warriors.

MANILLA AND O'LEARY were also key defensive players for Rice in the fourth quarter, holding the players they were guarding — Vincent Bean and Dave Sucher, respectively — to just four points each. Bean, Southfield's all-time leading scorer, hit only one field goal in the last quarter with Manilla hawking him.

"He is the most underrated forward in Michigan high school basketball," Norton said of Manilla. "Rob Manilla is a very, very good basketball player. Any Mid-American team that passes him up is making a serious mistake."

Norton also had high compliments for O'Leary — the Warriors' third man off the bench — for his defense on Sucher.

"He passed well, he shot well, and he played great defense," he said.

The last quarter matchups were just the opposite of that they were when the game began. Manilla had Sucher at the opening tip-off, and O'Leary, when he came on in the second quarter, had Bean.

"I originally came in against Bean," said O'Leary, "but the first two times he took me to the hole, so he (Rice coach Bill Norton) switched me over to Sucher. He's very quick — I had to watch him."

Manilla found himself guarding Bean after the man who had started the game in that position, Paul Jokisch, picked up three quick fouls, and after O'Leary had been burned twice.

"I don't think he (Norton) thought Bean was as quick as he was," said Manilla.

But the quickness didn't bother Manilla that much. He's had to guard some pretty fair players this year.

"When we played CC (Catholic Central)," he said, "I had to guard (Barry) Spencer, so I've had to play against some guys with some pretty good moves."

Bean finished with 17 points, but he had to work for every single one of them.