

# Catholic Central stops Mackenzie

By Brad Emons  
Staff writer

Something had to give. And it finally did in the final quarter Tuesday night as Redford Catholic Central broke open a tight duel and went on to oust Detroit Mackenzie, 59-53, from the Class-A regional basketball tournament before 2,400 fans at Livonia Franklin.

The Shamrocks, who advanced to Friday's final, scored nine unanswered points during a three-minute stretch to put the Stags away.

Mark Howard hit a pair of free throws with 7:27 remaining to give Mackenzie its final lead of the night, 52-51.

It was all CC after that as center Mike Maleke started the spurt when he took a charging foul and followed by hitting a free throw.

Point-guard Stan Heath then fol-

lowed by making three straight free throws. He made a key play with 5:15 to go when he stole the ball and passed it to Bob Elwell then connected on a 12-foot baseline shot to give CC a 58-52 advantage and followed with two more free throws.

Mackenzie, meanwhile, went stone cold down the stretch. During one possession the Stags missed six shots, including three tips.

The Stags broke their five-minute scoreless drought on a rebound basket by William Fazzell, but CC answered right back on a short jumper by Tom Malone with 1:45 remaining to seal the verdict.

"This team has risen and thrived on pressure," said CC coach Bernie Holowicki, whose team is 20-3. "We took some key charges in the fourth quarter, and that steal by Stan was a big play."

Mackenzie coach Elbert Richmond,

meanwhile, pinpointed his team's shortcoming.

"We've had a problem all year in that we haven't been patient," he said. "And that comes with leadership at both guard spots."

"There was a four-to-five minute stretch where nothing went right. We were careless with the ball and it caught up with us. We made foolish mistakes and you can't do that against Catholic Central. They're a good, smart team."

Mackenzie guard Tim Russell, who had 10 first-half points on five-for-seven shooting, hit his first shot of the second half and then missed his next 11.

His running mate at guard, Michael Collins, finished with 16 points and Howard added 12.

CC, meanwhile, relied on a balanced attack led by long-range sophomore bomber John McInyre, who came up with another poised performance, finishing with 19 points and five assists.

Maleke, a 6-6 senior, added 16 points (seven-for-seven shooting) and grabbed 13 rebounds. Heath, who had

six assists, and Tom Malone each added 12 points. Elwell came off the bench to score eight.

"Bobby Elwell has been a pleasant surprise as our sixth man," Holowicki said. "And 'Mac' and Stan have blended together."

"We've had more talented teams here, but when they played together as a team, this is one of the best teams we've ever had."

In the first half of play, Mackenzie came out red-hot as the 5-10 Russell and the 6-2 Collins took charge.

The Stags (20-3) broke CC's full-court zone press with relatively ease and scored baskets on the transition. But Maleke and McInyre kept CC close with their scoring. The two teams were tied after one quarter, 17-17, and at intermission, 37-37.

"They went right through our press," said Holowicki. "And that's a tribute to Elbert. That's why we didn't use it until the fourth quarter."

"They pounded the boards every time. One time they had three-or-four tips."

"The ball just didn't fall for them."

Something had to give.

## Avondale triumphs

By Jim Hughes  
Staff writer

Avondale's Yellowjackets, who earned a spot at Oxford's Class B Regional championship with Tuesday's 58-55 victory over Fenton, nearly made the grave mistake of celebrating their reservation a bit too early.

With less than four minutes to play and the Yellowjackets on top, 52-53, Avondale's 6-foot-4 senior center rejected a Fenton shot which was responded to by a thunderous roar from the crowd and triggered a series of high fives.

But the Tigers, who finished the season with a 19-4 record, refused to go down without making a serious run. And Avondale helped them back into the game by missing the front end of five bonus situations in the last 2:13 of the fourth quarter.

With 16 seconds to play, senior guard Andre Hopkins broke the pattern as he sank two free throws which gave Avondale a 59-53 lead. Fenton's Dave Hintz followed with a field goal three seconds later, and, after another missed one-and-one by Avondale, the Tigers came down the floor as the seconds ticked off.

In the final frantic seconds, Fenton got off no less than five shots inside the lane.

"All I could see was a three-point play at the end," Avondale coach Larry Mathis signed after.

Although Avondale had missed four one-and-one opportunities prior to Hopkins' successful conversion, the slick guard was confident he'd be the one to break the string. Avondale finished the game with a 16-for-27 performance from the line.

"I told the guys on the bench I was going to make them," Hopkins said. "They had to be made. I just tried to blank everything out of my mind."

The win, Avondale's 23rd in as many games, sends the Yellowjackets into Friday's regional final against the winner of last night's Flint Powers-Croswell Lexington game. And it was a win the Yellowjackets may have thought they had seen up long before the issue was decided.

"You have a tendency to do that when you have a big lead," Mathis responded when posed the same question. "But we wanted it and we felt we were going to get it (the win). We feel we've got to win. We have no choice but to win if we're going all the way."

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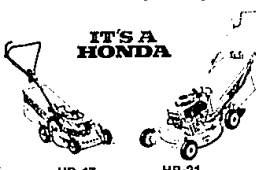
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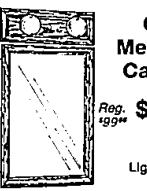
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