

# Buzzer shot sends OLSM to defeat

By C.J. Rink  
staff writer

As luck would have it, well, St. Mary's College just didn't have any.

Troy Pelak banked to a three-point shot at the buzzer to take Aquinas College from certain defeat to a joyous 100-100 victory over the Eagles Saturday in an NAIA District 23 opening-round mens basketball playoff game at Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes campus.

Victory seemed certain for St. Mary's after Jerome Washburn sank two free throws with :35 left, giving the Eagles a 100-99 lead. But it was not to be, after an Aquinas timeout, the Saints were allowed to inbound the ball all the way down court to Pelak, who dribbled once, set himself on the right

wing, then knocked in the game-winner off the glass.

"Believe it or not, when St. Mary's beat us in the first game of the year, he missed the same shot," said Aquinas coach Larry Randall. "But the play worked, so we called it again. He can either hit the cutter going through or take the jumper. He was wide open, so he took the shot."

LUCK HAD little bearing on Pelak's play. It was a plain poor defense. "We made the free throws at the end, but we let them get the ball in way too far down there," said St. Mary's coach Glen Donahue.

And yet, had the Eagles had a bit more luck, the game might never have come down to a final shot. The ball simply wouldn't drop, not without two or three shots a trip.

"We never put them away," said Donahue. "We didn't have the killer instinct. We missed a lot of inside shots that could have put them away."

The Eagles were also missing from outside. They had just two three-pointers in the game, and their key three-point man, Jim Butcher, was scoreless. They only had two triples in the game.

The Saints' Paul Lauer had three times that himself. His two triples in a 44-second span midway through the first half allowed Aquinas to match his big lead, seven points. Lauer had six three-pointers in the game and scored 38 points. A junior guard, Lauer led the district in scoring, averaging 27.4 a game, and Donahue knew stopping him would be pivotal. He was right.

"I would have liked to make him work harder for some of his points," the St. Mary's coach said.

THAT SEVEN-POINT lead was the biggest for either team in the game. St. Mary's biggest advantage was five, at the start of the second half, and it was gone by the 16-minute mark. Neither team played tough enough defense to make a sizable run.

Down the stretch, both teams went to their big guns: Lauer for Aquinas and Washburn for St. Mary's. Washburn hit a short baseline jumper with 1:10 left to give the Eagles a two-point lead, but Lauer answered 15 seconds later with a triple, putting the Saints up by a point.

Washburn rebounded a James Lakes' miss

with :35 left, but the ball was batted away from him by Brian Jacobs. Lauer was fouled and hit two free throws to put Aquinas up 99-96 with :31 showing.

Denny Butcher hit two free throws, then St. Mary's to within a point, and then the Saints' Tim Critchlow missed the first in a one-and-one situation with :20 to play, leaving the door open for the Eagles. Washburn's free throws seemed to take advantage of it — until Pelak's shot.

Pelak finished with 21 points. Jacobs had 22 for Aquinas, now 14-19 and headed for the district semis at Saginaw Valley State to night. Washburn's 25 points topped St. Mary's, which finishes at 16-17. James Curtis added 24, Lakes had 14 and Denny Butcher 11.

## Catholic Central wins district title

By Brad Emmons  
staff writer

The Redford Catholic Central Shamrocks saw a tough draw ahead in their own district basketball tournament.

But they came through in the clutch Friday by conquering Detroit Redford, 67-65, for coach Bernie Holowicki's 12th district crown.

Forward Scott Hauncher played a pivotal role in the victory with a team-high 23 points. CC now advances to Wednesday's Class A regional to face two-time defending Class A champion Detroit Cookey (21-1) at Southfield-Lathrup. (Game time is 7 p.m.)

It was only a week earlier that the Shamrocks were humbled in the Operation-Friendship final by Detroit Southwestern, 65-44, but Hauncher, who scored the final six CC points, said playing the Public School League champs "helped us a lot."

"That game with Southwestern kind of lowered us down," said the senior captain. "When we play hard we can play with anybody, but when we don't we can be beaten by anybody. We just can't show up. We don't have a lot of talent so we have to play hard. That's why we've been up and down all season."

THE SHAMROCKS, who escaped with earlier district wins against Detroit Henry Ford and Southfield, appeared to be treading water again when the Huskies opened up a 17-3 first-quarter lead.

But the game began to sway back in CC's way when 6-foot-4 forward Marco Britton picked up his third foul late in the opening period.

"He (Britton) was one of their best leapers and when he got three fouls right away that helped when he went out," Hauncher said.

The Huskies, however, held their own without the talented junior to lead 36-29 at the half.

"We knew the key to winning the game was rebounding (rebounding) with them," said Holowicki. "They (Redford) have multiple leapers."

"In the second half I had us go into our '75 press.' We didn't want to lay back. We wanted to attack. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Tonight it was working."

And Ray Richards, a 6-5 senior,

got untracked in the second half, scoring nine of his 13 points.

Point-guard Terry Boykin contributed 14 before fouling out late, while Jeff Schaner added 11.

JUNIOR DEREK HARDY tallied a game-high 27, while Robert Morgan added 12 for the Huskies, who bowed out with a 10-7 record.

Meanwhile, Brittan was held to seven and fouled out.

By the end of third quarter CC had all but seized the momentum, trailing 46-45.

Schaner's three-pointer to open the fourth quarter gave CC the lead and a three-point play by Richards with 5:55 remaining put the Shamrocks ahead for good, 51-49.

But Redford stayed close right until the final seconds.

Phil Mingo's basket with 23 seconds to go made it a two-point deficit, 67-65. And the Huskies got a break they were looking for when CC turned the ball over with 15 seconds to play.

Coach Marvin Miles then called a timeout to set up a final shot.

When play resumed the Huskies patiently moved the ball around CC's match-up-zone, but Don Gross failed to convert the equalizer, missing a shot near the three-point stripe with two seconds remaining.

"It was a real battle," Holowicki said. "It seemed every time we get a bit of lead, they'd hit a three-pointer."

HAUNCHER'S game-winning basket with 33 seconds left seemed to typify the Shamrocks' night. He scored a layup when he got behind the Redford press.

"It was a very determined athlete and one of the smartest players I've ever coached," Holowicki said. "We let him call a lot of our plays."

And Ray (Richards) came up big in the second half. He played hard and went to the hole.

The CC coach said the win was particularly satisfying from the standpoint of overcoming adversity for most of the season.

"It's rewarding for them because they've worked hard," said Holowicki. "We had a bad start (1-4) this season and turned it around, and then we got embarrassed by Southwestern, but that seems like ages ago."

## Spartans rally past Salem

By Dan O'Meara  
staff writer

The reason for Livonia Stevenson's basketball success this season is its ability to win the close games, according to coach Bob McIntyre. That was never more true than it was Friday night when Stevenson presented the veteran coach with his first district championship at Plymouth Canton High School.

The Spartans rallied from a 20-point deficit early in the second half to overcome favored Plymouth Salem in a wild, emotional and controversial finish, 71-70.

"This year's group of kids have found ways to cover for each other and come up with a victory," McIntyre said. "I couldn't be more happy and prouder of the kids."

Stevenson, 16-6, will play Woodhaven, 21-0, at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the regional tournament at Wilford Run High School. The final is slated for 7 p.m. Thursday.

FOR SALEM, the Western Lakes Activities Association champion which ends with a 20-3 record, the defeat was a crushing experience, especially since it appeared the Rocks had the game under control, leading 50-30 in third quarter.

"I think we had a great season, and no matter when you lose, it's tough to take," Salem coach Bob Brodie said. "It just hurts when it happens."

"It's tough to have a game in hand and let it slip away. I guess it's like Yogi (Berra) says, it isn't over until it's over."

Stevenson's amazing comeback was sparked by Chris Nazelli, who scored 18 of his game-high 24 points in the second half.

Ron Baran scored 12 points, Scott Kosikowski 11 and Eric Schwedt, who scored the game-winning basket with 47 seconds remaining, 10. Baran (3), Kosikowski (2) and Laven (2) combined for seven 3-point field goals, also.

"The thing I'm most happy about is that we knew what we had to do at the right time," Nazelli said amidst the euphoria in the Stevenson locker room. "If we needed the ball at a certain place, we got it there. It was a great team victory."

SALEM GOT 22 points from sophomore center Jake Baker, who was the key to the Rocks extending their 41-30 halftime lead in the third period. Jeff Elliott and Jeff Gold scored 12 points apiece

and Craig Marshall eight.

Elliott, who had a chance to win the game with :02 on the clock, was at the center of the controversy.

While he was at the free-throw line to shoot a two-shot foul, Stevenson's Matt Vrooman into the game. The horn sounded at the same time the official was giving Elliott the ball.

In a matter of seconds, Elliott, thinking play was stopped, tossed the ball back to the on-court official, who ignored the horn and, in so doing, ruled the ball was in play. The same thing happened earlier, with Stevenson leading 69-66 and 1:41 to play, when Baran was shooting a 1-and-1.

As a result, Elliott lost the opportunity for the first free throw. He missed the second one that would have forced overtime, and Steve Szeman rebounded for the Spartans.

The officials, Bill Rubin and Dave Dean, refused to answer questions about the call after the game. Bob Blohm, athletic manager at Canton, spoke to the officials and relayed their comments.

"Their explanation is once the ball has been administered, the shooter should shoot," Blohm said. "Both times the player threw the ball to the official."

"THE OFFICIALS said if they were in the process of handing the ball, they would have taken it back. But they had administered the ball and stepped back."

Bob Richardson, the scorekeeper at Canton, said he was certain the officials were still in the process of giving the ball to the players when timekeeper Sandy Downs sounded the horn.

He said Rubin and Dean told him after the game they should not buzz a player into the game while the officials are routine practice, according to Richardson.

"That didn't lose the game," Brodie said. "We tried to caution the kids in the huddle. We told them we had to keep playing, but we stopped attacking the basket (in the final quarter)."

It looked as if Salem would avoid the harried finish that occurred the last time it played the Spartans — who won 71-69 on Feb. 9 — when Salem streaked to an 11-point halftime lead.

The slow-starting Rocks trailed 22-18 when they rallied against a suddenly turnover-prone Stevenson. Salem outscored the Spartans 18-3 to

lead 36-24 with 2:40 left in the half.

The Rocks continued to roll in the third quarter, scoring the first nine points. In a wide-open quarter, Baker had 10 points as his teammates continued to find him at the end of the fast break.

BUT BARAN'S triple cut the deficit to 64-50 at the end of the third period, and the Spartans kept coming in the finale. Stevenson scored the first 10 points and outscored the Rocks 18-1 to take a 68-63 lead on a Nazelli layup.

"In the first half, it was all outside," Nazelli said. "We were hitting well from there, so they had to come out and guard that. Our guards started getting it inside, and I have to give them all the credit."

As was the case in Wednesday's win over Novi in which Nazelli had 17 second-half points, he was much more active around the basket, taking the entry pass and ducking around the defender to the hoop. He had 10 points in the finale.

"He went over and set the screen and popped back to the dotted line and was wide open," McIntyre said. "He's so tough coming back, by the time they realized we weren't going to the kid on the block, Nazelli probably already had spun back and had the ball."

Elliott gave Salem a 70-69 lead when he hit a short baseline jumper with one minute to play. But that was Salem's only field goal of the fourth period, and the Rocks were 1-of-13 in the quarter.

"Sometimes when you have a big lead, there's a tendency to say all we have to do is hold the ball," Brodie said. "But that's not our style."


"We broke their pressure, but then it was like 'Now what do we do with it?' We couldn't get into the offense."

SCIWEDT REPLIED by driving to the opposite basket for the winning layup 13 seconds after Elliott's bucket.

"He's also an all-state soccer kid," McIntyre said. "He knows how to win in the clutch. He probably won a couple (soccer) playoff games doing the same thing."


"Once a kid is a winner, put him in a different uniform, and he's going to come up to the same level."

After a Stevenson turnover, a pass slipped through Baker's fingers on the baseline, but he missed with a mid-court steal that kept alive Salem's hopes. He fed Elliott, who was fouled driving on the basket with :02 to play.



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## Borgess eliminates Hawks in cage final

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"In the two games I charted shots, he took one shot," Teachman said. "So we left him open, and he had to take the shots. And he certainly did come through."

Shawn Respect also scored 18 points for the Spartans, and Charles North had 13 on four triples and a free throw. Artie Brown added nine points and Carl Woods eight.

Chad Burgess, the all-time leading scorer at Harrison, had 16 in his final game and finished his career with 999 points, according to Teachman. Jason Lichtman tossed in 11 points, Mill Coleman and Rob Karbowiak nine apiece for the Hawks, who end the season 18-4.

Harrison wanted to limit Respect to 18, Teachman said, and hold down North's scoring. The Spartans were content to play the half-court game. North wanted, and Borgess made up for a lack of transition points by shooting 17-of-30 in the first half and 54 percent through three periods.

"We didn't want Respect getting into the coast-to-coast stuff," Teachman said. "That was the idea of not pressing."

"THEY DON'T use him to bring the ball up, so he's in the middle going against forwards and centers — people he's quicker than."

Respect had 14 points in the first half and Hayes, hitting open jumpers from the top of the circle, 10 as Borgess opened up a 10-point lead at halftime.

The teams began the game racking up numbers faster than a cash register with the Hawks leading 15-13, but Borgess scored the last 10 points — including two of North's triples — and was never behind after that.

"Artie is the third man we look to score, but his shots weren't falling tonight, and Dwayne came through," Borgess coach Mike Fusco said.

"I never tell a kid not to shoot. If it's falling for you like that, I'm not going to tell him no."

Harrison rallied twice to cut the Borgess lead to four points but got no closer.

THE HAWKS went on a 12-5 run in the second quarter to make it 35-31, but the Spartans scored the last six with Respect sinking a layup at the buzzer.

Coleman's layup narrowed the score to 49-45 with 1:37 left in the third period at a time when the Spartans were in a cold-shooting phase. Borgess came out of the brief split with Brown's last-second shot and played steady ball in the finale.

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