

Marian, DCD reach finals

The girls basketball teams from Birmingham Marian and Detroit Country Day were one win away from state championships in their respective classes after winning state semifinal games Thursday and Friday.

Detroit Country Day, the 1995 Class B state champion, defeated Flint Powers Catholic, the defending Class B champ, in a semifinal game, 69-42, at Central Michigan University's Rose Arena Friday.

The Yellow Jackets (26-1) advanced to play Saginaw Swan Valley (25-2) in the Class B championship game Saturday in Mount Pleasant.

The Class B semifinal was close throughout the first half with the Yellow Jackets holding a 29-26 halftime lead. The teams traded baskets through the first three minutes of the third quarter before DCD went on a 13-0

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run to break the game open.

Powers did not score until the 6:28 mark of the fourth quarter and by that time Country Day had a 12-point lead, 46-36.

"The desire and attitude they had all year showed in the third quarter," DCD coach Frank Orlando said. "They weren't going to be denied. I felt all along we were going to win."

Jennifer Thomas played another strong game for Country Day. The junior center scored a game-high 23 points and cleared 11 rebounds. She netted 12 of those points in the fourth quarter while playing with four fouls.

Junior forward Katharine Hanks finished with 18 points and seven rebounds. Freshman forward Suzanne Morrison grabbed nine rebounds and

sophomore guard Lindsey Smith had eight assists.

Birmingham Marian, the defending Class A state champion, qualified for this year's title game with a 56-52, overtime victory over Detroit Martin Luther King at Rose Arena Thursday.

The Mustangs (22-4) played undefeated Grand Rapids Christian (27-0) Saturday in the Class A championship game.

King and Marian were tied 50-40 after regulation time. The Crusaders missed a couple of good opportunities to win the game at the end of regulation time, however.

The Mustangs took control in the extra period as Jasmin MacAlpine hit a three-pointer and Breeann Walas followed with two free throws for a 55-50 lead.

Walas paced Marian with a 19-point, six-rebound effort. Kellie Byers had nine points.

Spartans romp in Class C semi

BY STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

Kalamazoo Christian girls basketball coach Bill Hoffman could stand watching the film of Redford Bishop Borgess' Class C state quarterfinal game against Sandusky.

He probably won't ask to see reruns of the semifinal between his team and Borgess, played Friday at Central Michigan University's Rose Arena.

The Spartans sprinted to a 31-9 halftime lead and cruised in the second half to a 77-38 victory before 1,310 fans.

The win put Borgess (28-1) in the final for the fourth time in five years. They played the winner of the other semifinal between Hancock and Shelby for the championship Saturday.

This wasn't the same Borgess team Hoffman saw on film methodically beat Sandusky, 41-

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28, three days earlier.

"I thought coming in we had a shot based on what we saw on film," Hoffman said. "They didn't shoot a lick against Sandusky and tonight they shot the way they're capable of every night. We also saw tenacious half-court defense."

Borgess made 30 of 47 shots (64 percent) and limited the Comets to 10 of 44 (23 percent), including two of 14 in the first half.

Borgess enjoyed a 34-25 rebounding edge and had 14 steals that led to fast-break points. Junior forward Tiffany Simon had a game-high 19 points, and senior forward Koren Merchant had 18 points on 8-of-9 shooting.

Senior guard Christina Anderson had 12 points and six assists, and junior forward Shermaine Drake had nine points and six steals.

The Borgess attack was so strong it needed only six points and five rebounds from Miss Basketball Alysha Smith.

Borgess has now beat its six playoff opponents by an average margin of 35.7 points. A 19-point win over Riverview Gabriel Richard in the regional semifinal was the closest margin.

"I think we're the best team in the state, so we should beat everybody by 35.7 points, I guess," said Merchant. "In practice, coach (Dave) Mann told us our motto was 'In defense, we trust.' If we don't make our shots it's alright; we just make sure they don't make ours."

Candace Koel scored 11 points for the Comets (23-4).

Defending champs have to rebuild

BY C.J. RISAK
STAFF WRITER

Time's up, Dan Young.

The Plymouth Canton basketball coach is entering his fourth season as head coach, and for the first time he's doing so without a proven, dangerous lineup.

"We're kind of redoing the whole thing," said Young, who has taken Canton to one Western Lakes Activities Association championship, three-straight WLAA Tournament titles (they've won four in a row) and a pair of state district tournament championships.

In his three previous years, six players have gone on to play college-level basketball.

What the Chiefs lack this year is that stand-out kind of talent. Only one player returns from last year's top seven: Joe Cortellini, a 5-foot-11 junior guard who averaged about seven points a game, with a high of 21 vs. Farmington Harrison.

"He's a good shooter and a smart player," said Young.

Six seniors have graduated. One who's back is Eric Larsen, a 6-4 post player who saw limited playing time last season. "He's a

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good rebounder and a good athlete," said Young.

Replacing those six graduated players, from a 16-7 team, will not be easy. Young admits it will take time to develop his team and determine roles.

"It's a new group, but they're working hard," he said. "I have a lot of young kids. They're good players, they just haven't been through it yet."

"I think we'll see a real lot of improvement as the year goes on. We'll build as the season goes and hopefully, we'll be able to compete by season's end."

Three juniors Young will be looking to for some help are Scott Samulski, a 6-5 forward who's "a good perimeter player, but he must improve his defense and rebound for us," Nate Rau, a 6-2 swingman who's "strong around the basket," and Jason Darow, a 6-4 forward who Young wants "defense and rebounding" from.

There are some sophomores who will get a long look, too: Jason Waldman, a 6-4 forward

with size and shooting ability; Dan McLean, a 6-2 swingman who has displayed a good feel for the game; and Justin Romer, a 6-foot guard.

A pair of freshmen — Nick Cabauaton, a 5-10 guard with good quickness and shooting, and Oliver Wolcott, a 5-11 guard with strong shooting and decision-making skills — could get some playing time as well.

Young isn't exactly bubbling over with expectations for his team. He knows this could be a learning year, one in which every victory is earned.

"We honestly don't have an abundance of size or athletic ability," the Canton coach said. "We're just going to have to make up for it with teamwork and heart."

"I really don't know if we can compete with many teams right now, but hopefully by the end of the year we will."

When appraising the rest of the WLAA, Young reiterated what most coaches have said: Plymouth Salem will be awesome; Walled Lake Central, Farmington Harrison and John Glenn will be tough, too.



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