

# CC rolls over Trenton, 4-2

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STAFF WRITER

There are three teams in the state that could have beaten Redford Catholic Central on Wednesday night.

One of them plays at Joe Louis Arena, another at the Munn Ice Arena and a third calls Compuware Arena home.

The Red Wings, Michigan State and Whalers are not high school teams, however, and Wednesday was the quarterfinal round of the Michigan High School Athletic Association hockey tournament and Trenton drew the chore of stopping the top-ranked team in Division 1.

The Trojans couldn't do it. Catholic Central spotted Trenton a 1-0 lead after one period, scored twice in the second to take the lead and withstood a Trojan flurry in the final minute to advance to the semifinals Friday night at Flint IMA Arena with a 4-2 win.

Jim Spiewak scored twice in the third period to pad the Shamrocks' (25-0-3) lead to 4-1. "That first period we laid an egg," CC coach Gordie St. John said. "We were terrible. It was the worst period of hockey we've played all year."

"But we sucked it up in the second period. We got our rhythm going and wore them

down. We banged their legs and they got tired."

The Shamrocks rolled four lines at the Trojans (23-4-1), who countered with three.

"They've got a lot of talent," said Coach Mike Turner, whose Trenton team lost three times to Catholic Central this season by a total of five goals (2-0, 6-5 and 4-2). "I wish I had all that talent."

"But I think we did pretty well for a little town, a small community."

Trenton came out banging the body and winning the battles in the neutral zone. It was very aggressive in taking turnovers into the CC half of the ice and had five of the first six shots on goal, ending with a 7-4 margin for the first period.

The Trojans' hustle paid off when Buddy Morsello poked a close-in shot into the left side of the net with 4:19 left in the period. Matt Holka and Justin Jabara assisted.

In the second period it appeared as though the teams just changed uniforms, not ends of the ice - because when the middle period started it was like trying to keep dry in a thunderstorm with a postage stamp.

The Shamrocks came out flying and 2:12 into the period they tied the score. Eric Giosa took two jabs at a puck lying loose on the doorstep and snuck it by goaltender Tony Dreyer of the Trojans. Ricky Buttery drew the loose assist.

Catholic Central barely allowed Trenton to get a sniff of the puck the entire period, earning a 9-1 edge in shots on goal as Shamrock goaltender Andrew McCoy got to watch most of the action.

Jared Ross, assisted by Giosa, wristed in a turnaround goal from the slot, the conclusion of a 4-on-2 break by the Shamrocks. Giosa had gotten the puck behind the net and centered it from the side.

"That was as pretty a goal as you'll ever see," St. John said of the tie-breaker. "The way we played in the first period, if we'd been down 2-3 goals, it would have been an impossible task to come back."

"They just got started skating," Turner said. "We just started standing and chasing. We weren't as aggressive as we were in the first period. But you can't get in a skating game with Catholic Central."

The third period was just 14 seconds old when the Shamrocks struck again. Spiewak flipped in the rebound of an Andrew Eggert shot from the left point to

make it 3-1. He scored on another rebound with 7:45 left.

"That early goal really hurt," Turner said. "We were hoping to get a shot at tying the game."

Dreyer was sensational in keeping Trenton in the game as CC made it look like target practice. The Shamrocks ended with a 25-14 edge in shots for the game.

But with 1:38 to play, the Trojans set the stage for what could have been a shocker.

Mark DeSana ripped a short-side shot past McCoy from the right faceoff circle, allowing Turner to pull Dreyer and get an extra forward into the CC zone.

DeSana was stopped with a minute to play on a point-blank shot and Trenton had a couple of other good opportunities to make it 4-3 before Catholic Central was able to run out the clock.

"After that terrible first period," St. John said, "We were just outstanding in the second and third."

"This is a very dedicated, single-minded team. They're ready to go play two more games. We've had some big games this year and you'd think they'd come out flat - but they haven't."

"This is the most special group of guys I've ever played with," Spiewak said. "To three-peat in the state's highest division of hockey has never been done."

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into the second period.

"When you're spending so much energy on your end, it's tough," Grandville coach Dave Hutton said. "But that's the type of hockey team we are. When it was 1-0, 2-0, all we needed was a couple of bounces."

"But, hey, we weren't even supposed to be on the ice with them. I'm proud to say that we were."

The Shamrocks toiled around Bulldog goalie Aaron Vitali so much he should have had whiplash. They buzzed in one side, then around behind the net to the other.

He made sensational save after sensational save. And when he didn't, the pipes did.

"That," Vitali said, "was probably the funnest game I've played in my career. And I've played travel hockey."

Twice in the last minute of the second period Vitali stoned Jared Ross and Ricky Buttery. Right after the first goal, he denied Ryan Lasacki twice in less than 30 seconds.

But ever been out in the January deep freeze with a just a light jacket? The cold doesn't seem so bad at first, but it relentlessly comes at you and finally chills you to the bone.

CC's hockey team is like that. Finally, it broke through - three seconds after Grandville called a timeout to regroup for a final charge.

The faceoff took place to Vitali's left, and John Perkovich



Trenton-tamer: Eric Giosa of Farmington celebrates his second goal in CC's quarterfinal victory Wednesday.

## Boardwork:

Catholic Central's Brett John checks Brandon Ellinger of Trenton into the boards during a state quarterfinal hockey game Wednesday night. The Shamrocks were 4-2 winners.



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL

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