

Lahser's defense comes through

BY HARRY BUDNER
STAFF WRITER

In four years as head soccer coach at Bloomfield Hills Lahser, Andy Wagstaff owns an impressive 16-2 state playoff tournament record.

The Knights went a perfect 7-0 to capture the 1999 state championship in his first year as coach. Since then the Knights have gone 9-2 in the playoffs, including an exciting 6-0 run through this year's tournament which landed them in a state championship game for the second time in four years.

Lahser was scheduled to play East Lansing at Lowell High School for the Division II state championship Saturday afternoon.

The title game was a rematch of the 1999 clash in which Lahser defeated East Lansing in an overtime thriller, 1-0. "We're a little younger team and they have a little more experience," said Wagstaff, whose team took an 18-2-4 record into the state title clash. "But we're looking forward to the game and I think it can go either way."

Lahser's soccer team has been defensive throughout the tournament, and that style of play is what vaulted the Knights into the championship game.

Through its first five playoff games, Lahser did not allow a goal. Lahser defeated Pontiac Northern, Auburn Hills Avondale and Birmingham Groves to win a district cham-

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pionship, then blanked Warren Woods-Tower and Dearborn Heights Crestwood to claim the regional title.

Lahser surrendered its only goal of the tournament in Wednesday's state semifinal game played at Linden High School against Potosky. The Knights stayed alive in the tournament with a 2-1 victory.

After a scoreless first half, freshman Brandon Horvath scored seven minutes into the second half on an assist from freshman Mike Casalou.

Potosky tied the game with 10 minutes remaining when Trevor Vanderbrink hit the back of the net.

The game remained 1-1 and appeared headed into overtime when senior Glen Wicklund scored what proved to be the game-winning goal. On an assist from Horvath, Wicklund headed in the goal which sent Lahser into the state title game.

The victory avenged last year's state playoff loss to Potosky.

"They knocked us out of the tournament last year in the regional championship game with a 3-2 victory in overtime," said Wagstaff.

"We played really well in that game last year, so I was confident heading into our game with them this year."

"I was a little shocked at how good they were," said Wagstaff about Potosky. "They were physically bigger and stronger than us, but I think we played

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the better soccer on the night."

Wagstaff's team has outscored its six playoff opponents by a whopping 28-1 margin heading into the state championship game.

The defense has been led by senior goalkeeper Brandon Reed, sophomore sweeper Tristin Horvath, junior marking back Ryan Doyle and defenders Casalou, Brandon Horvath and Rob Ranney.

"We're a young team with three freshman starters, but we've made progress all season and into the playoffs," said Wagstaff. "We've been playing very good lately from a tactical standpoint."

"We gave up that goal with 10 minutes left in the game against Potosky and that could have turned the game around in their favor," said Wagstaff.

"But we stepped it up and were able to take the game back. I think that showed our character, especially with a young team."

Wagstaff was hoping for one more strong defensive stand by his young squad in yesterday's state title game.

HAWKS

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"Maggie has been sensing the urgency of the moment here at the end of her senior year," Mantyla said, adding Conden had one of the best individual performances by a Harrison player in several years. "She's ready to keep leading us into the final stretch of the season."

Junior post Charles Greer scored 20 points and had 16 rebounds for the Huskies (15-3).

Ashley Jackson contributed 16 points, and Shaniqua Walker scored all 10 of her points in the fourth quarter. Northern made 16 of 29 free throws.

Harrison (8-11) concludes the regular season Tuesday at Southfield.

"We've played such a tough schedule this year," Mantyla said. "We hope that is going to continue to give us a chance to get better."

BRANDON BEATS NORTH

Ortonville-Brandon is having a very good year in girls basketball and earned its 17th victory of the season Thursday at North Farmington, 42-29.

"They're a very solid team," Raiders coach Tim Carruthers said of the Blackhawks.

Brittany Stedman scored 14 points and Patrice Andre 11 to lead Ortonville, which was 14-0-17 shooting free throws.

North's Christy Stockton was the leading scorer again with 16 points. Becca Weiss added six points.

Kristin McErlan had eight rebounds to go with four points.

The Raiders, who are 4-15 overall, made nine of 14 free throws.

North led 10-9 after one quarter but fell behind at halftime, 20-17.

The Raiders were outscored in the third period, 12-3, and trailed going into the finale, 32-20.

Trojans TOP CRUSADERS

In a Metro Conference consolation playoff game Thursday, Livonia Clarenceville (5-13) came away with the victory at Rochester Hills Lutheran.

Northwest, 33-31. Sophomore forward Marissa Martin paced the winners with 12 points and 10 rebounds.

Freshman Ashley Myrie added 11 points for the Trojans. Ashleigh Fanning contributed 10 for Northwest (7-12). Clarenceville carried a 24-19 lead into the final quarter.

Northwest cut the deficit to four, 33-29, with less than 10 seconds left when Heather McDaniel scored and was fouled.

McDaniel, who led the Crusaders with 12 points, missed the free throw and the Trojans held on for the win.

"We played great defense and hustled all over the floor," Clarenceville coach Maurice Brantley said. "Some people may call it ugly, but it was effective and it worked."

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