

Vikes advance to quarterfinals

By CHRIS MAYER STAFF WRITER

Forget the retirement parties and cancel the farewell speeches. Ken Butler's coaching reign at Walled Lake Central isn't over yet.

Behind the defensive play of junior guard Jessica Alsup and the scoring and rebounding of sophomore center Becky Cummings, the Vikings not only fought off elimination from the Class A (B) basketball tournament Wednesday but kept Butler's final season alive for at least one more game with a dramatic 54-53 regional final win over second-ranked Rochester Adams at Lanesboro East.

The 63-year-old Butler, in his 18th year at Central, said he decided last fall this season would be his last and Tuesday night informed his players. Perhaps it's only fitting this is the year the Vikings (23-2) are making their first state quarterfinal appearance.

Plymouth Canton (18-6), by virtue of Wednesday's 61-46 regional final win over Birmingham Marian, will be the opponent with tip-off scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Walled Lake Western. Central pulled away in the second half to defeat the Chiefs, 63-49, in a Western Lakes Activities Association game on Oct. 25.

"It feels great to be going to the quarterfinals," said Cummings, who scored a game-high 21 points and cleared 14 rebounds. "We were really surprised to find out this is his (Butler's) last season. We were in shock and we were pretty sad because he's such a great coach and he's really carried us through this year."

"It would be nice to win (the championship) for him, sure. But we're not sure how far we're going to get. We just have to play one game at a time at this point."

Adams, which made its earliest tournament exit under fourth-year coach Fran Scielowicz, had its 19-game winning streak snapped and ended the 1994 season 21-3.

Despite being shadowed by Alsup in Central's box-and-one defense for the better part of three quarters, Dayton-bound senior guard Courtney Ruffing scored 17 points and nearly brought the Highlanders back from a 51-40 deficit with 5:08 remaining.

Ruffing started an 8-0 run with a 3-pointer that closed the Adams deficit to 61-48. She later stole a pass near midcourt and drilled a pull-up trey with 55.3 seconds left and one opportunity, and then cut Central's lead to 63-52.

Key to a quick start against Marian in Wednesday's Class A regional final?

"Rebounding and getting some easy scores inside," said Blohm. And the key to accomplishing those feats was junior center Sarah Warnke.

Warnke dominated the glass at both ends of the court in Wednesday's first half, leading the Chiefs to a 61-46 victory.

Canton, 18-6, meets Walled Lake Central in quarterfinal action at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Walled Lake Western.

Marian finished 16-8.

Warnke and Canton's first-half dominance was the difference. The Chiefs led 28-17 at halftime, thanks mainly to Warnke's 12 points and strong rebounding.

"Sarah killed us inside," said Marian Coach Mary Lillie-Cicerone. "We tried a lot of different people on her."

Marian senior center Atiya Bussey guarded Warnke at the start, but Bussey was benched after receiving two quick personal fouls. Lillie-Cicerone later second-guessed herself for pulling Bussey. Bussey held Warnke to four second-half points, despite playing with four personals for most of the fourth quarter.

Another key for Canton was successfully navigating the Mustangs' full-court press.

"We were able to handle the pressure," Blohm said. He praised his players for using simple fundamentals — such as catching the ball with two hands and keeping well-balanced — to beat the Marian press.

"They picked apart our press," agreed Lillie-Cicerone. "They were composed."

Canton never trailed Wednesday, taking a 6-0 lead before Marian finally cracked the scoreboard with 2:50 remaining in the period. Warnke's basket

Chiefs down Mustangs in final

By MIKE ROSENBAUM STAFF WRITER

After watching Birmingham Marian jump on top of Farmington Hills Mercy early in a regional semifinal game, Plymouth Canton Coach Bob Blohm was determined not to let the Mustangs roll over his Chiefs the same way.

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BASKETBALL

at the buzzer gave the Chiefs an 11-8 lead after one quarter.

The Mustang quickly trimmed the lead to 11-10 on baskets by senior forward Julie Storen and Bussey, but like all of Marian's runs, this one fell short. Sophomore forward Kristi Florenzi answered with a basket, then Warnke completed a three-point play to give Canton a 16-10 cushion. Led by Warnke's seven second-quarter points, the Chiefs went into halftime with an 11-point lead.

The Mustangs played more aggressively in the second half, switching from a 2-3 zone to a man-to-man defense and pressing at every opportunity. But Canton handled the pressure well and never lost its lead.

The Mustangs' first run of the half began immediately, with three-point plays by junior forward Sabrina Krasa and senior guard Megan Roebig trimming the lead to 28-23, 1:08 into the half. Despite several chances, however, Marian couldn't pull closer than five points during the quarter. A 7-0 Canton spurt, featuring five points from senior forward Amicie Crayton, helped

the Chiefs take a 41-31 lead into the final period.

Leading 45-35 with 5:42 left, Canton ran some time off the clock. With the help of an offensive rebound, the Chiefs took 1:17 off the clock before turning the ball over. But when Marian's junior guard Grand Bentley scored off of that turnover, it started the Mustangs' final run.

Storen and Bentley scored in the next 1:14 to pull the Mustangs within 45-41. Marian then missed three opportunities to cut the lead to two points.

"If we could've just secured that basket, we wouldn't have had to get into fouling," said Lillie-Cicerone.

Unfortunately for the Mustangs, they did have to foul. And it was Warnke, who was quiet for most of the half, who sank two free throws with 1:26 left to give Canton some breathing room, 47-41. Canton then sank four of six free throws in the final 1:07 to secure the victory.

Warnke led all scorers with 16 points. Crayton added 15. For Marian, Bentley scored 12 and Storen nine.

Oakland defeats Madonna cagers

The Madonna University men's basketball team fell to 1-3 on the season following a 107-65 loss Tuesday to host Oakland University.

They couldn't overcome a 49-23 halftime deficit.

IN SAGINAW VALLEY ST. MADONNA WOMEN

St. on Tuesday, host Saginaw Valley State led by Melanie Moura's 17 points, cruised to an easy non-conference women's triumph.

The Lady Crusaders (2-2 overall) couldn't overcome a 49-19 halftime deficit.

Angela Birchmeier and Angie Suggs added 12 and 10 points, respectively, for the host Cardinals. Plymouth Canton's Julie Nicusari had six points and eight rebounds.

Stephanie Criley was the Lady Crusaders' only scorer in double figures with 15 points. Francine Williams added nine.

Madonna shot only 27.4 percent from the floor (17 of 62) and committed 25 turnovers.

The Crusaders were out-rebounded 71-44, but committed only 13 turnovers.

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THE WEEK AHEAD

GIRLS BASKETBALL STATE QUARTERFINALS

CLASS A
at WALLED LAKE WESTERN

Tuesday, Nov. 28: Plymouth Canton vs. Walled Lake Central, 7:30 p.m. (Plymouth advances to the state semifinals, 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1 at Battle Creek; Walled Lake vs. Escanaba; East Detroit quarterfinal winner.)

CLASS B
at SAGINAW

Tuesday, Nov. 28: Redford Bishop Duggan vs. Goodrich, 7:30 p.m. (Winner advances to the state semifinals, 7:50 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2 at Battle Creek; Westland vs. Gaylor quarterfinal winner.)

PREP HOCKEY

Wednesday, Nov. 30

Liv. Franklin at Wyandotte (7:30, 6 p.m.)
Liv. Stevenson vs. Southfield-Livonia at Drom's Edge arena, 8 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 2

Liv. Franklin vs. Liv. Chardon
Liv. Stevenson vs. Liv. Chardon
Liv. Stevenson vs. Liv. Chardon
Liv. Stevenson vs. Liv. Chardon

NEW'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Monday, Nov. 28

Schoolcraft at Adrian IV, 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 29

Schoolcraft at Kalamazoo CC, 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 30

Schoolcraft at Adrian IV, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 3

Madonna at Hamtramck (6:30), 7:30 p.m.

Brother Rice routs Stevenson; coach's debut ends in 9-3 loss

By BRAD EMONS STAFF WRITER

Birmingham Brother Rice spoiled Mike Harris' debut as Livonia Stevenson hockey coach with a season-opening 9-3 victory Wednesday at Livonia's Edgar arena.

The Warriors, who won the 1992 state Class A title, scored seven unanswered goals after a 1-1 tie in the first period.

Senior center Mike Jalaba and senior winger Scott Walsford each notched a hat trick and three assists.

Jeff Wojcik, Owen Townsend and Mike Abella added goals for the Warriors, who led 6-1 after two periods.

"We have 16 guys back from last year and a couple of them were drafted by juniors, and then came back," Rice coach Mike Brown said. "We're really trying to pick up where we left off from

HOCKEY

last year.

"Tonight we started off slow, but then we picked it up."

"Defensively, we moved the puck and we had our power play clicking. We were four out of five. We've been working on it."

Kyle McNeilness scored Stevenson's first-period goal from Kevin Berger.

The Spartans added a pair of third-period goals with Nick McCormack and Brian Calka each tallying a goal and one assist.

Stevenson starting goalie Jordan McCormack, a junior, was lifted in the second period when Rice built a 5-1 lead. Scott Griggs finished up.

Rice countered in the net with junior Casey Osting.

"It was a tough game," said Harris, who succeeded Matt Mulcaby as Stevenson's head coach. "Our goals (McCormack) never played a high school game and obviously he was nervous. But it's not a big deal. It's only one game."

"We lost, but overall I'm pleased with the performance because the guys never stopped trying."

The Spartans were outshot 27-18.

"We made some mental mistakes, but we'll regroup and get ready for the next one," Harris said. "I'm glad we played a Michigan Metro (league) team right off the bat because it shows us where we stand."

Brown said it will take awhile for Stevenson to gel.

"They hung in there and they have some nice players," said the Rice coach, now in his 10th season.

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