

# Marian survives in two OTs

**BY JOE KYRIAKOZ**  
**STAFF WRITER**

You could see the tears through Jasmin MacAlpine's glasses as she hobbled out of the locker room.

But she was smiling. The senior point guard wasn't sobbing following a defeat; instead the tears were flowing because her team had won, and dedicated the victory to her.

MacAlpine, on crutches due to injury and inactive for the state playoffs, had watched intently from directly behind the Birmingham Marian bench, knowing that her teammates could use her ballhandling services. But without her, Mary Lillie-Cicerone's Mustangs managed to eke out a 55-48 double-overtime victory to claim a Class A district championship on Friday at Southfield-Lathrup High School over Oak Park (17-5).

"I told the girls I was so proud of them," Lillie-Cicerone said. "They stayed in it the whole way."

It marked the ninth straight district title for the Mustangs, who advanced to regional play at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Novi High School.

"This was probably one of the better games we've been in this

## BASKETBALL

season," Oak Park coach Alice McGriff said. "We just didn't execute down the stretch on offense. Our defense was good, but we just didn't execute offensively. We missed so many layups."

Marian won the battle on the boards for the evening, led by 6-3 senior center Nicole Anaejonu's 15. Anaejonu also had eight points and four blocks.

"We dominated the boards," Lillie-Cicerone said. "They didn't get any extra shots. We knew they had the ability to get second and third shots, but that didn't happen."

The Mustangs scored seven points in the second overtime to none for Oak Park to pull away for the triumph.

The second overtime was forced by a miraculous three-pointer off the glass at the buzzer by senior In'Fini Robinson, who scored eight of her 18 points in the fourth quarter and first overtime.

Marian trailed by as many as seven in the fourth quarter, but the Mustangs inched their way back behind a couple of pivotal shots by senior Danielle Janke and a pair of clutch free throws

by Crystal Andrews. Janke, who scored all seven of her points in the fourth quarter and first overtime, drilled a three-pointer to help pull her team within four points with 4:30 remaining, then penetrated to the basket for two more with 1:28 to go. Andrews tied it with a pair of free throws with 40 seconds left, the final points of regulation. Andrews led Marian with 15 points to go with seven rebounds and three steals.

Much of the first three quarters was a see-saw battle, with Marian leading by five after one, by four at the half and trailing by two after three.

But the turning point came when Oak Park took a 42-36 lead with 2:27 remaining. Lillie-Cicerone called a timeout and reorganized her defensive strategy by going to a full-court press for the first time in the game.

It worked well for the Mustangs since it resulted in a number of key steals down the stretch. Less than two minutes later, the game was tied.

Senior forward Angie Sheldon, who Lillie-Cicerone says "had one of her best games," chalked up 13 points, six boards and three steals.

Also scoring 18 for Oak Park was sophomore Cortne Ellis.

# Rocks shut door on Mustangs

## BASKETBALL

**BY C.J. RIBAK**  
**STAFF WRITER**

There would be no comeback this time.

Both Plymouth Salem and Northville weathered tight, down-to-the-wire battles in their Class A district semifinals at Plymouth Canton to advance to play each other in Friday's final. For Northville, it had taken a fantastic rally from an 11-point, fourth-quarter deficit to edge Canton in the semifinals.

Could such a thing happen again? When the Mustangs' Emily Carrott knocked down a three-pointer with 2:45 left in the game (she made three triples in the fourth quarter against Canton), and Janel Hasso followed with a free throw 27 seconds later, Salem's lead was just three.

But that was it for Northville. The Rocks (18-4) kept their composure and made their free throws, converting nine of 12 in the final 1:37 to win going away, 40-28.

The win gives Salem its first district crown since 1995. It advances to the Novi regional, to play West Bloomfield (18-4) at 7:30 p.m. Monday. The

## BASKETBALL

non advances to the regional championship game at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Novi.

"It feels awesome," said Salem senior forward Andrea Pruett. "I just told myself that, No. 1, I wouldn't lose to Canton again (she didn't); the Rocks beat the Chiefs (two)—I hate that feeling—and that I would take this team as far as I could. I don't care how well I do; I just love this team."

Pruett, who had struggled offensively in the last two weeks, didn't in this game. She boosted the Rocks with a game-high 17 points, including six in the third quarter when Salem took a 22-14 lead.

But this was not an offensive game of a game, for either team. The Rocks committed 23 turnovers; Northville had 21. The Mustangs also went scoreless in the first period, going 0-for-9 from the floor; but the Rocks didn't do a heckuva lot better, making five of 15 first-half shots to make their halftime lead just 12-9.

In the third quarter Northville struggled against Salem's quick-handed defense.

On four consecutive possessions the Mustangs didn't even get a shot, committing turnovers each time down the floor as the Rocks built their lead to 22-11. It took a desperation three-pointer at the buzzer by Kelly Anderson to revive Northville, making it an eight-point deficit after three.

Mary Tanski, a 6-foot sophomore, provided a spark for the Mustangs in the fourth quarter, coming off the bench to score their first six points. But free throws proved pivotal. For the game, Salem made 17 of 21, Northville two of nine.

"Our kids really played nice defense," said Salem coach Fred Thomann. "And I thought our guard play was better than their guard play tonight."


Janel Hasso's was tops for Northville. Carrott was next best with five. Tiffany Grubough added 10 points for the Rocks and Lindsay Klemmer, who nailed six of eight free throws in the final 1:37, scored eight.

"Our kids have been shooting really well at the free throw line all season," said Thomann. "Something they'll have to continue, if they want to extend their season."

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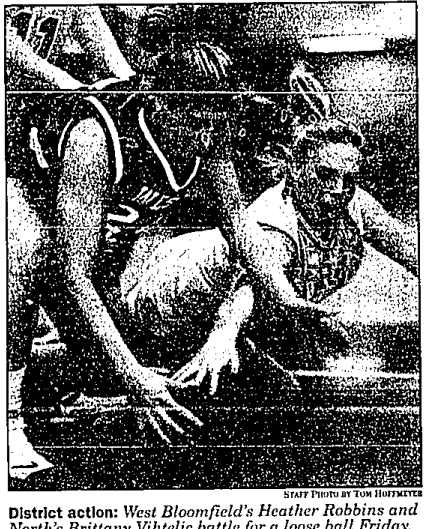
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District action: West Bloomfield's Heather Robbins and North's Brittany Vihetelic battle for a loose ball Friday.

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**District** from page D1

"We were trying to get back in our regular zone defense and play our regular middle person on the post player," she said.

"We decided we were going to try to take away Kilpola, which I thought we did a pretty job of in the first half. When she wasn't in the game, the other girls were shooting and scoring. They have a lot of talented basketball players. Pederson did a great job."

"That was definitely a key," said Davis of the 10-0 run to end the half. "H.P. sensed the urgency of the moment and she stepped up. That was senior leadership taking charge at that point."

West Bloomfield led 40-25 after three quarters, but North got within 12 when McComb scored six of her team's first eight points in the fourth to make the score 45-33. The Lakers followed with an 11-1 run to lead by 21 with two minutes left.

"Size-wise, we had an advantage and we thought our depth was stronger, and we wanted to utilize those aspects in a game concept," Davis said.

"The pace was a little too slow so we pressed and picked it up. We made them play faster and then we tried to use our depth."

West Bloomfield made 22 of 62 shots for 42 percent, North 15 of 37 for just over 40 percent. The Lakers made 10 of 17 free throws and four of 11 threes; the Raiders made nine of 14 free throws and three of 10 threes.

Pederson said the Lakers proved themselves during the regular season by going from Division III in the Oakland Activities Association to win the Division I championship, but a regional title would be a nice addition.

"We've always been on a mission this year," Kilpola said, "to prove we can be Division I players, win the league and now the district. We showed a lot of people we're not fooling around; we mean business."

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