

# Shamrocks fall short in upset bid with Det. Redford

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That's why it's called March Madness.  
Redford-Detroit Catholic Central's boys basketball team came a hair's breadth away from upsetting the No. 2-ranked team in the state, but fell just short, losing 61-48 to Detroit Redford in Monday's Class A district opener at CC High School. The Shamrocks end the season with a 13-7 record, while the Huskies improved to 18-2 overall.

CC had Redford on the ropes most of the game thanks to accurate 3-point shooting and smart play at both ends of the court. But in the last 12 minutes of the game, the proverbial lid covered the basket CC was shooting at, and the Huskies were able to pull off the comeback victory.

"We missed some open shots towards the end of the game," said CC coach Rick Coratti. "We played hard the whole game and certainly had a chance to win it in the end. But they really turned up their defensive intensity on us in the second half."

A 3-pointer by CC senior Jeff Niemiec — his fifth of the game — gave the Shamrocks a 41-31 lead with 4:50 left in the third quarter. The student section was jumping, the players on the bench shouting, and a big upset appeared in the making.

Then, the CC shooters turned as cold as the outside weather. The team missed shots in just about every way, including a few agonizing roll-off-the-rim shot attempts. The team wouldn't record another field goal until senior center Ryan Clark converted an uncontested offensive rebound for a layup with 24.3 seconds left in the game.

By the time the drought ended, Redford had gone on a 20-5 run to pull ahead 61-46 with less than a minute left in the game. Clark's score made it a three-point game, and after a pair of missed free throws by Redford's Dion Harris, the Shamrocks had no possession to tie the game.

Senior guard Ryan Wroblecki threw up a wild 3-point attempt, and although he appeared to get hit on his shooting arm by a Redford defender, no call was made, and the Huskies sprinted down the court with the rebound, letting the clock, and CC's season, expire.

CC started the game on fire from 3-point land, leading throughout the first half and building a lead as large as 10 points in the second half. Niemiec scored nine of his team-high 16 points in the first half, and helped the offense execute very well in the first half.

In addition to the crisp offense, CC's 2-3 zone defense gave the athletic Huskies fits through most of the game. The team played help-and-recover defense extremely well, limiting Red-

ford's shot attempts from inside 15 feet. Coratti said he thought the zone defense would give his team its best chance to succeed.

"We knew they would be a tough matchup for us in a man-to-man, and that's how they wanted to play us," he said. "We know Harris will get his points, but we wanted to keep the others down if we could."

Harris was a one-man show in the first half for Redford, scoring 16 of his team's 26 points, including a pair of NBA-range 3-

point baskets. He finished the game with 25 points, 10 rebounds and two steals, despite scoring just four points in the pivotal fourth quarter.

Redford's Chris Beay and Kendrick Moten combined for 10 points in the fourth quarter that saw the Huskies outscore the Shamrocks 16-4. Moten finished the game with nine points, eight rebounds, three steals and three assists.

CC's entire starting five played their final games Monday, and Coratti saluted them for their hard work over their careers.

"These guys have nothing to be ashamed of," he said. "They played very hard tonight and all through their time here."

Clark played a tough game under the boards, getting nine points and nine rebounds. Senior guard Tom Jakacki, an All-CHSL selection, collected seven points and six rebounds, and Wroblecki scored eight for the Shamrocks.

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