

TITLE

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Even when CC (26-3) didn't score, it proved to be the difference.

"We were able to go four lines deep to their three, and I think that wore them down a bit," St. John said. "I thought they played hard."

The Wolves could have been a bit tired, having played the late game against East Kentwood in the semifinals Friday.

But even with the Shamrocks hitting a couple of posts and some big saves by Clarkston goalie Aaron Catanesi, the Wolves held their own in a scoreless first period.

"We did good at first but after a while we started getting tired," said Catanesi, who wound up stopping 26 shots on the night to 16 for Blanchard. "They were strong, but I think they also got a couple of lucky bounces here and a weak goal there."

The second period might have been the most complete 15 minutes put together by any team this season.

CC, which outshot Clarkston 9-0 in the first half of the second period, finally solved Catanesi on the 10th shot.

Tommy Mullen, who had missed the semifinal because of

an automatic disqualification in the quarterfinal game, knocked in the puck to Catanesi's left before he could slide over. Jason Lewarne got the assist.

The Shamrocks made it 2-0 with 4:30 left in the period as Brandon Naurato took the puck in the slot and slid it past Catanesi on the stick side with Eric Giosa and Travis Hanway getting the assists.

"They moved the puck well," said Clarkston goalie Aaron Catanesi. "It's the first time we've seen that fast of a pace. We can go four lines deep if we need to, so we didn't get winded, but that took the wind out of our sails."

The backbreaker came with 20 seconds left in the period as Giosa jammed the puck past Catanesi during a pileup in front of the net, with Naurato and Hanway getting the assists.

"We knew our shots would go in eventually," said Giosa. "We just had to keep working hard. We didn't play our best in the first period, but the second period was one of our best of the year."

Clarkston kept struggling on offense. The Wolves mustered just four shots on goal in the period and were outshot, 23-10, through two periods.

They had their chances. Clarkston was on the power play for a decent chunk of the game

- and had a 5-on-3 advantage in the first period, but could not convert. CC started the third period a man down with Harrison Niemann going off at the end of the second period for elbowing. Then Naurato went off for interference at 4:03, then Drew Kahle went off at 7:48.

Each time CC beat back the opportunity - and for good measure added one more goal with 2:16 left - as Nathan Perkovitch banged the puck in the goal to Catanesi's stick side, with Lewarne and Billy Burns getting the assists.

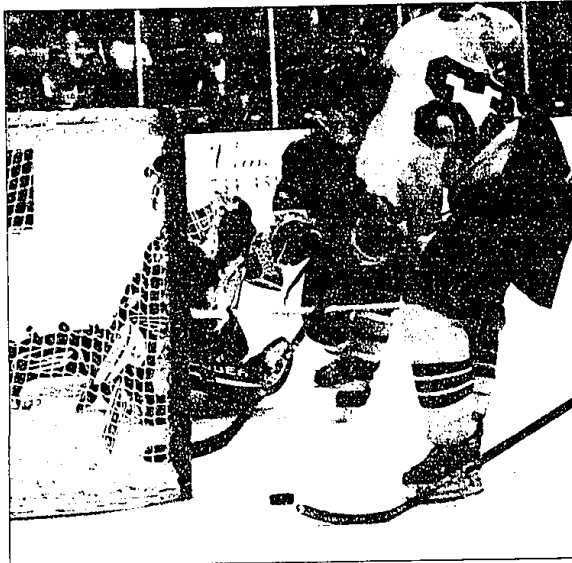
"Our main goal in June was to win this game," said Giosa. "We were going for the state record and three of us have never lost in the finals in the four years we've been here."

For Clarkston, the loss didn't spoil a record-setting season.

"We had never gone to the quarters or the semifinals before so this was new for us," said Kygier. "We wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for (Catanesi). He won six of seven games in the playoffs so that gave us the opportunity to be here."

"Just being here is a tribute to our team. We're not a Unified team, we're not a private school. So I guess that makes us the public school champs."

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PHOTOS BY JIM JACOVELLO | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

CC's third goal of game is about to go in as Eric Giosa starts to slip the puck past Clarkston goalie Aaron Catanesi.

SHAMROCKS

FROM PAGE D1

Not only did the hockey team win its fifth-straight title, but the band took top honors at a competition Friday, the academic team won its competition on Saturday, two wrestlers won state titles and a third was second, swimmers placed in two events at the state Division I meet and the basketball team advanced to the district final before falling to Detroit Redford.

In other words, it was a good weekend for CC. "After this season, there's been talk of a new bumper sticker," said master of ceremonies Gene Grewe. "CC Hockey: State Champs. Pick a year."

And while the teams did well on the court, the mat, the pool and the ice, players and coaches and administrators were quick to give credit to the fans.

"I want to thank all the fans who attended," Burns said. "It's a big part of our success, having you all there cheering behind us. It makes a difference. And we want to thank our parents who made the sacrifice to be able to send us here and play hockey."

The fan support was something that didn't go unnoticed by the principal, the Rev. Richard Ranalletti.

"I noticed that all our fans were cheering, and it was all loud and all positive," he said. "The supervisors at Computware were afraid that our students would get out of hand. I told them they didn't need to worry; our students know what to do. We came through and I am very proud of you."

And as usual, the students received an extra day off school in celebration of the title. Appropriately enough for the Shamrocks, it will be Monday, St. Patrick's Day.

But even as CC still relishes its fifth-straight hockey title, with a second-straight senior class that has known nothing but success on the ice, coach Gordie St. John reminded the assembly there is still more to look forward, too.

"With the players we have returning, if we pursue with dedication and commitment and senior leadership, who knows what can happen?" St. John said.

"All I know is there's a number after five."

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Catholic Central's Billy Burns (25) digs along the boards with Clarkston's Trevor Johns (11) and Eric Hall (9) in the state championship game Saturday night.

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Thur., Mar. 20  
Quarter Finals @ 4:00 & 7:30 PM

Fri., Mar. 21  
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Sat., Mar. 22  
Third Place Game @ 4:00 PM  
Championship Game @ 7:30 PM

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Observer & Eccentric MICHIGAN HOCKEY

Individual registration is underway for the Suburban Spring Hockey League. West League games will be played out of Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills and East League games will be played at the Oxyx Rochester Ice Arena. Call (248) 478-1600 or visit [www.suburbanhockey.com](http://www.suburbanhockey.com).