

Sports Week

State Basketball Playoffs

O'Reilly girls' wild ride comes to an end

By VAN ROSE
For The Post

HAZLETON — A four-point halftime deficit to Pottsville Nativity quickly tripled, and Bishop O'Reilly never recovered in a state playoff quarterfinal game played Mar. 10.

"We couldn't seem to make a shot, but the game was close," said Bishop O'Reilly coach Paul Appel. "I figured if we just played our game in the second half, we'd be OK."

But the Golden Girls opened the second half with an 8-0 run and then cruised to a 48-35 victory at Hazleton Area High School.

"You have to give Nativity's defense a lot of credit," Appel said. "They overplayed our big girls, and we had difficulty shooting the ball from the outside. We were ice cold in the first half. We just couldn't get our shots to drop."

The Golden Girls avenged their two-point loss to Bishop O'Reilly in December in a game dominated by Queenswomen twin towers Janelle Zabresky and Erin Chesnavich.

Nativity made sure it didn't happen again. The Golden Girls employed a 2-3 zone defense, surrounding Zabresky and Chesnavich in the paint with three players.

Whenever Bishop O'Reilly tried to get the ball inside, it often resulted in a turnover or a missed shot.

Zabresky led O'Reilly with 14 points, but was held to four in the first half. Chesnavich scored seven points.

The teams battled on even terms through most of the first half. Nativity took an 18-

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Paul Appel
Bishop O'Reilly coach

14 halftime lead when Amanda Mohan converted a steal into a layup.

Mohan also came up with a big play to open the second half. She narrowly averted a steal by an O'Reilly defender and hit a three-point shot, giving Nativity a 21-14 lead.

"That was a crucial point of the game," Appel said. "We missed a steal by an inch, and (Mohan) nailed the three-pointer."

Nativity led 29-21 after three quarters and the Queenswomen were their own worst enemy in the final period. O'Reilly was very deliberate on offense, playing more like a team with the lead than one that was trailing.

The Golden Girls went into a semi-freeze in the closing minutes, forcing O'Reilly to resort to fouling. However, they chose to foul Kayla Felty, Nativity's best free throw shooter, who went 6-for-6.

Despite the loss, Appel said O'Reilly had a great season.

"We accomplished a lot. The girls are feeling really down, but tomorrow when they look back, they have to feel good about themselves."

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FOR THE POST/PETE G. WILCOX

Bishop O'Reilly's Janelle Zabresky drove past Pottsville Nativity's Samantha Snukis and went in for a layup in last week's PIAA Girls Basketball State Playoff game in Hazleton.

Queensmen live to play another day

By JOE PETRUCCI
For The Post

Mar. 9 — Bishop O'Reilly fought off a furious 22-1 rally by Girard College to win a second-round PIAA Class A playoff game 71-61.

The Queensmen (27-4) next played Northeast Bradford, the District 4 bronze medalist, which advanced to the quarters via a forfeit victory over favored Lebanon Catholic. That game took place too late for results to be included in this issue.

"It's a great bunch of kids who work hard," said Queensmen coach Mark Belenski of his team, which won its 11th in a row to advance to the state quarterfinals.

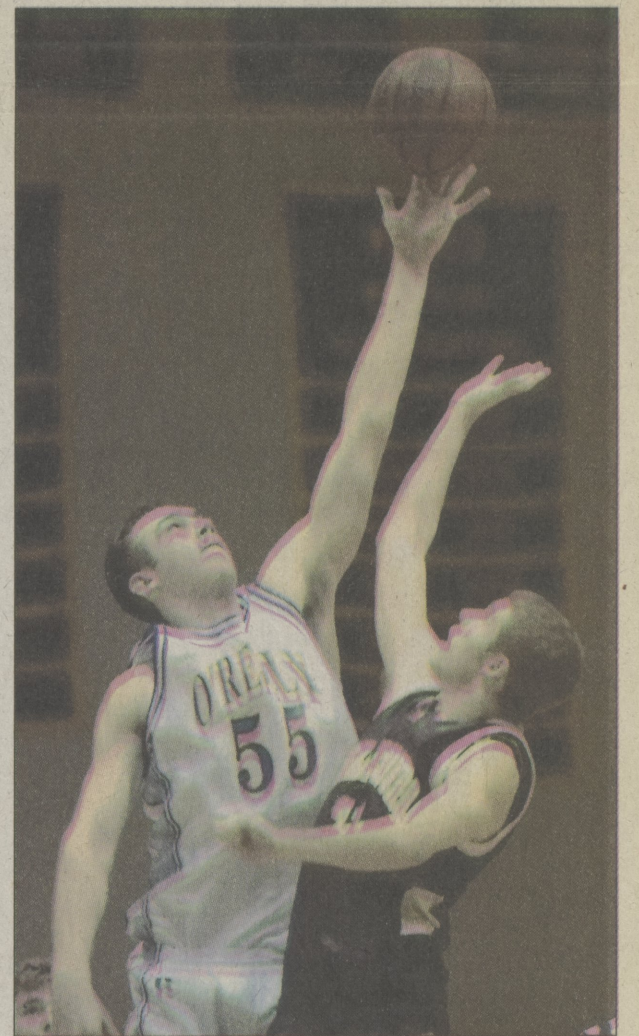
Perhaps the hardest-working Queensman was senior forward Matt Flanagan, particularly when the stakes were highest. Midway through the fourth quarter, Girard erased a 21-point deficit to tie the score at 49, holding O'Reilly without a field goal for five minutes. Cavalier Darius Sibley scored 15 of his game-high 31 points during that span.

"I took (Flanagan) out for 30 seconds and told him it's down to a four-minute season," said Belenski.

Flanagan clearly felt the urgency. "So many things were going through my head," he said. "It was time I showed leadership."

O'Reilly regained the lead on a Tim Crossin three-pointer at the 4:03 mark of the fourth. Then Flanagan took over. After knocking down a long jumper, Flana-

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FOR THE POST/PETE G. WILCOX

Josh Acikewicz of Bishop O'Reilly won the tip over Millersburg's Tony Corio in the Queensmen's opening-round game in the PIAA Boys Basketball Playoff game on March 5.

End of an era for Mountaineers' fab five

By JOHN ERZAR
For The Post

BETHLEHEM — Villa Maria Academy completely overwhelmed Dallas in the first half, building a 27-point lead and cruising to a 80-53 victory in a PIAA Class 3A girls basketball state playoff game Mar. 10 at Liberty High School.

Dallas, the District 2 third seed, ended its season at 25-5.

"It's been a good time. I don't know what I'll do without these girls," Dallas senior guard Shannon Thomas said. "They are my best friends and I can't imagine playing without them."

Thomas and fellow seniors Meredith Lacey, Jackie Hardwick, Rosalyn Wentko and Ashleigh King had won 83 times entering

Wednesday's game. All started as freshmen and led Dallas to the Wyoming Valley Conference Division II title this season.

"They are a great bunch of girls and played hard all game. They gave everything they had," Dallas coach Joe Noon said. "I'm going to miss them dearly."

Dallas appeared to start well as Thomas opened the game with a three-pointer and Hardwick added a pair of free throws for a 5-2 lead about two minutes into the game.

Noon, though, noticed his team was off a little bit.

"We came out flat," he said, "but even if we played our best game I don't think we could have beaten them."

Two big Villa Maria runs left

little doubt which team would advance.

Living up to their nickname, the Hurricanes blew away Dallas with a 10-0 first quarter run and a 15-0 run that started late in the first and ended in the second quarter. Juniors Jill Fiaski and Mandy Pennewell had 11 points each to spearhead Villa Maria to a 44-17 halftime lead.

There was little Dallas could do as Villa Maria was strong on the perimeter with Villanova recruit Siobhan O'Connor and inside with several players.

Dallas didn't help itself either, hitting just 5-of-24 shots in the first quarter.

The Mountaineers had a solid third quarter, playing Villa Maria evenly as junior reserve guard

Cory Patton found her touch from the outside and Wentko worked inside for six points.

Patton finished with a team-high 20 points, including six three-pointers. Thomas followed with 14, Wentko had 11 and Jackie Hardwick scored eight points.

This article appeared in original form in the Times Leader.

Dallas 70, Shamokin 53

Dallas easily advanced to Wednesday's game with a thrashing of Shamokin on March 6. Rosalyn Wentko led the Mountaineer scoring with 16 points and Jackie Hardwick added 13, with Meredith Lacey scoring 12 points and Cory Patton 10. Patton hit three 3-point shots and Lacey had two.

Lehman-Jackson wins PTA/PTO Elementary championship

The Lehman-Jackson Elementary School Team Blue recently finished the 2003-2004 basketball season undefeated in the 5th/6th grade boy's division of the Lehman-Jackson PTA League.

Lehman-Jackson Team Blue defeated Team Green 39-32 in the semifinals of the playoffs and upended Team Yellow in the finals 37-34.

Ross Elementary School Team Gray and Lake-Noxen Elementary School Team Black respectively won their 5th/6th grade championships and played to determine who would advance to the championship game. Ross defeated Lake-Noxen 22-18, advancing to the finals.

Lehman-Jackson then defeated Ross 35-14 to capture the overall Lake-Lehman PTA/PTO championship. The victory gave the Lehman-Jackson Team Blue a perfect 13-0 record for the season.



Members of Team Blue, from left, first row: T.J. LaBar, Adam Supey, Zack Yursha, Adam Weaver, Tommy Smith. Second row: Coach Mike Carey, Chad Carey, Coach Dan Yursha, Greg Josuweit, and Coach Jeff Weaver.

Wrestling

Dragon takes 3rd at states

Lake-Lehman junior Matt Dragon won third place in the 145-pound class at the 67th PIAA Wrestling Championships, held in Hershey Mar. 4-6. Dragon finished in fifth place at last year's tournament.

Dragon was kept from wrestling for the top spot when Aaron Jennings of Jefferson-Morgan won a tight 6-4 decision with a reversal late in the match. Dragon did not get two close takedown calls early in the match that would have given him the victory a chance at first place.

Dallas Junior Football signups

The Dallas Junior Football Association will hold football/cheerleading registrations on Saturday, March 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Dallas Township Municipal Building. Children ages 5-14 living in Dallas, Dallas Township and Franklin Township areas are welcome to join the Dallas Junior Mounts in the new Wyoming Valley West Youth Football Conference. Bring at time of registration a copy of birth certificate, copy of health insurance and a recent photograph of child.

Any questions, call the hotline at 674-5549.

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