

BOYS BASKETBALL D4 REGIONAL SEMIFINAL: MINERAL POINT 58 CASHTON 52

Cashton suffers loss at Mineral Point

Eagles hit the road to take on Mineral Point in second round of tournament

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

One of the most successful teams in the history of the Cashton boys' basketball program saw their first-ever 20-win campaign end one victory shy of the regional finals.

No. 3 seed Mineral Point (19-5) survived a comeback bid by No. 6 seed Cashton (20-6) to win their WIAA Division 4 regional semifinal matchup by a final score of 58-52 Friday, March 3 in Mineral Point.

After being tied throughout the initial portion of the game, the Pointers finished the first

half on a 19-5 run to take a 31-17 advantage into the locker room at the break.

"We were in need of halftime," said Cashton head coach Scot Wall. "There's been some games where it's not like that and you don't want halftime, but we were definitely the beneficiary of this halftime."

After the two teams traded buckets for a while into the second half and Mineral Point led by nearly 20, the Eagles made their move to eventually cut the deficit down to two. Despite getting a couple chances to tie or take the

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Cashton's Noah Hemmersbach takes off around Mineral Point's Termaine Kennicker during the second half of Friday's regional semifinal contest. Herald photo by Jenny Schendel.

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D4 REGIONAL SEMIFINAL: BANGOR 54 AQUINAS 52



The Bangor boys basketball team floods the court around Aquinas' Andrew Sutton after a Dustin McDonald layup put the Cardinals up 54-52 in Friday's Division 4 regional semifinal. All parties had to return to play as the officials put 1.2 seconds back on the clock, but Bangor managed to hold on for a 54-52 win. Herald photo by Logan Everson.

TOURNAMENT of TURBULENCE

McDonald, Bangor push ahead late for regional win against Aquinas

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

When you're a basketball player honing your craft at a hoop out in the yard or in an empty gym, one of the fantasies you play out is hitting a game winner in the dying seconds of a high-stakes game to the roaring approval of your teammates and fans.

That's the exact dream Bangor senior Dustin McDonald got to experience in the final postseason run of his high school career.

McDonald's go-ahead layup in the final moments of game allowed No. 2 seed Bangor (21-3) to escape with a 54-52 victory over No. 7 seed La Crosse Aquinas (17-9) in their WIAA Division 4 regional semifinal showdown Friday, March 3 in Bangor.

A layup by Aquinas senior guard Andrew Sutton knotted the score at 52-52 in the last minute, but the Cardinals had the ball and were able to hold for the final shot of regulation. With time winding down, Bangor senior guard Tanner Jones lifted for a deep jumper with five seconds left, only for Sutton to block it.

McDonald was in the perfect spot as the ball came down, and he scooped it up. After shaking Aquinas junior guard Jonathan Skemp, McDonald split between Skemp sophomore forward/guard Treyton Bahr to drive toward the basket. Though Skemp and freshman guard Logan Becker both tried in vain to close in for a block from different angles, McDonald created enough space for a layup from the right side to put the Cardinals ahead and whip the home crowd into a frenzy.

"I tried to space it out for Tanner to get a shot," McDonald said. "He put it up, got it blocked and I just saw a loose ball. I went for it and tried to make a play."

Every Bangor player mobbed McDonald near the student section after the buzzer sounded, with some of the students joining in the fray on the court. However, the celebration was short-lived as the officials indicated that time was still left on the clock when McDonald's shot went through.

With 1.2 seconds remaining, the Blugolds were left with (AQUINAS) cont. pg 10



Bangor's Chase Horstman draws contact from the Aquinas defense while pulling up for a shot in the second half. Herald photo by Logan Everson.



Bangor's Tysen Herken shares a final embrace with teammate Lucas Reed following Saturday's 65-51 regional final loss to Mineral Point. Herald photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.

Hot-shooting Mineral Point upends Bangor for regional title

By ZACH RASTALL
Sports Writer

Coming off an emotional win the night prior, the Bangor boys' basketball team ran out of steam one win short of reaching sectionals for the seventh time in the last eight years.

No. 3 Mineral Point (20-5) came into town and knocked off No. 2 seed Bangor (21-4) 65-51 when the two sides clashed in a WIAA Division 4 regional final Saturday, March 4 in Bangor. The Cardinals were coming off a last-second 54-52 victory

over La Crosse Aquinas in the previous day's regional semifinals.

The Pointers held a narrow 27-26 halftime advantage but were able to pull away and win by double digits by outscoring Bangor 38-25 over the final 18 minutes. The Cardinals attempted 25 3-pointers in each of their playoff games over the weekend. But after hitting eight against the Blugolds on Friday, they only made three against Mineral Point.

"We put forth a lot of effort

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BOYS BASKETBALL

D3 REGIONAL FINAL: **WEST SALEM 77 WISCONSIN DELLS 55**
D3 REGIONAL SEMIFINAL: **WEST SALEM 80 ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP 37**

Panthers cruise through regional

By **ZACH RASTALL**
Sports Writer

The West Salem boy basketball team made quick work out of its two regional opponents last week as the team took its first steps to returning to the WIAA state tournament after taking second in Division 3 last year.

WEST SALEM 80 ADAMS-FRIENDSHIP 37
West Salem (25-1) jumped all over visiting Adams-Friendship (11-15) on Friday, March 3 to the tune of an 80-37 victory.

Carson Koepnick was 4-5 in three-pointers, finishing with a team-high 14 points. Joe Sullivan added 13 and Tamarrein Henderson 10.

Henderson led the team with 8 rebounds while Luke Baginski added 7.

WEST SALEM 77 WISCONSIN DELLS 55

Wisconsin Dells (22-5) reserved a rematch with West Salem after turning back South Central Conference foe, Wautoma 80-67 on Friday, March 3.

The rematch with West Salem, however, was quite the opposite.

The visiting Chiefs traded blows with the Panthers in a slow-to-score opening to Saturday's regional final. The Dells put its fans on their feet as they overcame an early deficit to take a 9-8 lead, but the home team took off shortly after and never relinquished its lead again.



West Salem's **Brett McConkey** pulls up for a jumper before the Wisconsin Dells defense can make for a stop during Saturday's regional championship. **Herald photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.**

West Salem won 77-55 on the strength of a 23-point effort by Carson Koepnick.

The senior went 7-17 from the floor with three threes and was 6-8 in free throws. Koepnick also added four rebounds, three steals and an assist in the win.

Peter Lattos chimed in for 15 points and tied Brett

McConkey for a team-high collection of rebounds with 13 on the night.

McConkey also led the team with 7 assists.

Tamarrein Henderson scored 13 and Joe Sullivan 10. Wisconsin Dells' Jared Nevar finished with 17.



Bangor's **Dustin McDonald** dribbles inside the arc during the second half of play in Friday's regional game with Aquinas. **Herald photo by Logan Everson.**

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no option but a long pass to set up a desperation heave. On the first attempt, the clock was accidentally started on the inbound pass before any player touched the ball, so both teams had to reset and try again. On the second attempt, Sutton caught the inbound pass and hoisted up a shot from just beyond midcourt. The heave fell well short, and the Bangor faithful could finally celebrate the team's 10th straight regional final berth for real.

It was an exhilarating end to an excellent game filled with twists and turns between a pair of teams who were more even than one might think at first glance with the difference in seeding.

Early on, the two teams

traded the lead a couple times and remained close until the Blugolds broke a tie with an 8-0 run late in the first half. However, junior guard Samuel Cropp buried a 3-pointer to slice Bangor's deficit to 27-22 at halftime.

Aquinas briefly was ahead 30-24 in the early stages of the second half, only for the Cardinals to put together a 12-0 run to seize a 36-30 advantage and elicit an Aquinas timeout with 10:42 remaining. The Blugolds used a 19-8 run to leap ahead 49-44 before the game settled into a razor-thin battle for the final minutes.

A McDonald trey allowed Bangor to go back in front 50-49 with about two minutes to go, and a Jones layup with 1:04 left broke a 50-50 tie and set the stage for the Sutton tying layup and the McDonald game winner.

Bangor first-year head coach Nick Meacham is no stranger to postseason thrillers after spending over a decade as an assistant with the program, but his first playoff game in the big chair isn't one he's likely to ever forget.

"Being there, being present and being able to enjoy it — it's like I blackout and don't see anything else besides what's going on on the court," Meacham said. "It's an amazing feeling. It's just awesome to be part of."

Jones posted a double-double with 20 points and 12 rebounds, McDonald recorded 17 points, five rebounds and five assists and junior guard Nolan Michek added eight pivotal points in the victory. The Blugolds were led by Sutton and Skemp with 13 and 10 points, respectively.

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the night before and our legs were not quite where they needed to be," said Bangor head coach Nick Meacham. "We started settling a little too much for threes and the outside shots just weren't falling for us."

The Pointers were led by junior guard Alex Ross with 17 points, sophomore guard Eli Lindsey with 13 points and seven rebounds, junior guard Bryce Vamstad with 11 points, senior forward Luke Kisgen with nine points and junior guard Landon Thousand with eight points, 11 rebounds and eight assists.

Bangor junior forward Chase Horstman led the way for his team with 17 points on 8-of-9 shooting and six rebounds, senior forward/guard Dustin McDonald posted 12 points and 10 rebounds for a double-double and senior guard Tanner Jones added 10 points and six rebounds.



Bangor's **Nolan Michek** tries to jump start the offense with a baseline drive to the hoop in the second half of Saturday's regional final game with Mineral Point. **Herald photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.**

GYMNASTICS INDIVIDUAL STATE



Viroqua's **Isabell Korn** earned her second and third career state medals after taking fifth on beam and sixth in the all-around. Korn scored better than a nine in two of the four events. **Herald photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.**

Cashton pair make good on return trip to state meet

By **NATE BEIER**
Sports Writer

The dream was to make a repeat appearance on the WIAA state podium for Viroqua's Isabell Korn and Morgan Siekert.

The dream became a reality for the pair, which are from Cashton and compete as part of the Viroqua co-op, at the individual portion of Saturday's WIAA state gymnastics meet in Wisconsin Rapids.

The pair started off on the vault in the opening round of Saturday's meet and that's where one would notch her second career state medal.

Morgan Siekert launched herself into the top six with a score of 9.367 after her two vaults. Siekert tied Prairie du Chien's Madilyn Fisher for fourth place.

Two events later, Isabell Korn put together a run on the beam that garnered her a fifth place finish. Korn's three judges' score combined for a final tall of 9.017.

Though Korn wouldn't medal in any other event, her scores did combine to grant her a place on the podium for the all-around competition. The sophomore finished with a combined score of 36.083.

Cashton's medalist finished 11th on vault (9.217) and was 13th on bars with an 8.6. Korn's run on the floor that scored a 9.25 only contributed to her all-around score.

Siekert just missed making the podium on both the bars and beam with matching seventh place finishes. Siekert scored an 8.85 on bars and an 8.833 on beam. Siekert was 25th on the floor (8.417) and compiled a score of 35.467 for 13th place in the all-around.

AREA ROUNDUP

G-E-T's Abby Miller finished tied as the runner-up in the floor exercise with a score of 9.383 in Saturday's meet.

Prairie du Chien's Madilyn Fisher tied for fourth on vault, tied for ninth on floor and was 10th on beam and ended seventh in the all-around competition.

Onalaska's Emma Rudie was 15th on D2 bars and Holmen's Katie Lange was 16th in the D1 bars competition.



Viroqua's **Morgan Siekert (Cashton)** takes her first vault attempt during Saturday's WIAA state meet. Siekert finished in a fourth place tie for fourth place in the event. **Herald photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.**



West Salem's **Camdyn Lyga (Bangor)** leaps and performs the side splits during her floor routine Friday at the WIAA state meet. Lyga helped the West Salem team to a second place finish. **Herald photo by Nate Beier/GX3 Media.**

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available state hardware.

The athletes were just as surprised. O'Hearn says she tells parents not to share scores during meets and tries to keep her team from watching the scoreboard around the gym in order to maintain clear focus for their own routines.

The coaches had been keeping track, but even then, they weren't completely confident in their math.

Regardless, the tactic made for a rousing awards ceremony

as each team's scores were announced in descending order. Once the third place team was called, the secret was out and the celebrating could begin for the West Salem squad.

"They (the team) were guessing we were in fourth or fifth because of our first two rotations," said coach Carrie O'Hearn after Friday's meet.

"It was the best feeling to have their excitement when our name wasn't called for third and they knew they got to go up and receive a medal."

The keys to Friday's team

success were on the bars and beam, however.

On bars, West Salem finished with a second-best score of 34.633. Only state champion Nicolet was better with a 34.817.

Nicolet tallied a 34.75 on beam which topped West Salem's 33.75.

The Panthers earned a fourth-best score of 35.35 on floor and were seventh on vault (34.267).

The second place finish was the best for the West Salem program since finishing as the D2 runner-up in 1981.