

George Stevens cruises by Schenck to title game

BY RYAN MCLAUGHLIN
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — The George Stevens Academy Eagles had too much offense, too much defense and a little too much of everything for Schenck on Friday night.

BOYS BASKETBALL

The Eagles from Blue Hill showed why they were favored coming into the Class C North tournament, blitzing the Wolverines from East Millinocket for a 68-39 victory at the Cross Insurance Center.

Tyler Schildroth powered GSA's balanced attack, pouring in a team-high 19 points, leading three George Stevens players in double figures.

Coach Dwayne Carter's club (19-1) will take on Hancock County rival Bucksport for the regional title here Saturday evening at 8:45. The No. 3 Bucks advanced with a 49-44 win over No. 7 Hodgdon.

Schenck concludes its season at 17-4.

The Eagles used stingy interior defense and balanced offense to build a 33-16 half-time advantage that Schenck would never threaten.

George Stevens never trailed after Chase converted on an 8-footer in the first two minutes of the contest. Schenck had taken an early 1-0 lead after Chris Kelly sank a free throw.



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George Stevens Academy's Jarrod Chase (right) shoots for three past Schenck's Travis Thompson (second from right) during their Class C North boys semifinal basketball game on Friday at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor. George Stevens Academy won 68-39.

The scrappy Wolverines battled hard behind the gritty play of Justin Thompson (22 points), who had 10 of his team's first-half points. But the bigger Eagles did

not let the Wolverines get any inside penetration, forcing Schenck to try to beat them from the perimeter. That philosophy worked, as Schenck was only 2-for-9

from behind the arc in the first 16 minutes.

George Stevens maintained control in the second half, leading by as many as 32 points while using its

depth to wear down Schenck.

Four Eagles wound up in double figures on the night, with Nick Szwez connecting for 16 points, Jarrod Chase 12 and Max Mattson 10.

Mattson, a 6-foot-6 sophomore, was a force in the interior on defense for George Stevens, and his presence prevented the Wolverines from getting any penetration.

Lawrence advances to state title game

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

AUGUSTA — The Lawrence Bulldogs already possessed the top low-post presence of recent vintage in girls schoolgirl basketball in senior center Nia Irving.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

But add in the 3-point shooting accuracy they displayed Friday afternoon, and it's no wonder coach John Donato's club will be playing for a second straight Class A state championship next weekend.

With Messalonskee of Oakland's zone defense sagging back to help defend against the Boston University-bound Irving, unbeaten Lawrence knocked down 10 3-point shots — nine during the first half — in pulling away from the Eagles 59-44 in their North regional final at the Augusta Civic Center.

Irving, the tournament MVP, led the way with 16 points and 16 rebounds, but it was the combination of sophomore Hunter Mercier and senior Dominique Lewis who combined for eight 3-pointers during the opening two periods to help give Lawrence a commanding lead.

"I was feeling it," said Mercier, who finished with 15 points, all on first-half 3-pointers. "My teammates talked to me before the game, and they were like, 'We need you this game.' I just wanted to help them win."

Lawrence of Fairfield (21-0) will play the winner of Saturday night's Class A South final between No. 1 York and No. 2 Greely of Cumberland Center in the state championship game at noon Feb. 27 at the Cross Insurance Arena in Portland.



AMBER WATERMAN

Lawrence's Kiana Letourneau cuts away the net after Lawrence defeated Messalonskee 59-44 during a Class A North girls final basketball game on Friday at the Augusta Civic Center.

Messalonskee, which dropped two regular-season games to Lawrence by 24 points each, concluded its season at 17-4. Sophie Holmes led the Eagles with 19 points and 11 rebounds, while McKenna Brodeur scored 10.

"Realistically after the first quarter I thought we played well. We mixed some things up a little bit, but they hit shots," said Messalonskee coach Keith Derosby. "We could say we didn't do this or we could have done that, but you've got to give [Lawrence] credit. That's just a great team, and kudos to all those players that when Nia takes a beating every night, [they] just step up."

Mercier, who missed nearly all her freshman season of basketball after suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament during a junior varsity game early last winter, came

off the bench to bury five of Lawrence's nine 3-pointers during the first half as the Bulldogs took a 39-23 lead.

Four of Mercier's long shots were from the left corner as Lawrence worked the ball around the perimeter of Messalonskee's 2-3 zone.

"That's one of my favorite spots to shoot at," said Mercier. "So I was pretty excited when I made a couple, and they were running zone, so I was open in the corner."

By the time Mercier hit her fifth 3-pointer — and Lawrence's ninth of the half in 16 attempts, good for 60 percent accuracy — from the right corner, Messalonskee had been forced to switch to a player-to-player defense.

Lawrence's perimeter shooters cooled off after the break, with Camryn Caldwell adding the Bulldogs' lone 3-pointer of the second half.

So Lawrence focused on working the ball inside to Irving, particularly with a high-lo set involving sophomore forward Molly Folsom.

Folsom, who finished with six assists and six rebounds, found Irving open three times with lob passes from near the free-throw line, helping the Lawrence center score 11 points in the second half.

Messalonskee crept within 54-42 on a 3-pointer by Holmes with 3:55 left in the game. But that was the Eagles' last field goal, and Lawrence made five of its next six free throws to cap off the victory.

"The energy we had at the beginning of the game really carried us until halftime," said Donato, "and then we kind of lost our intensity and was back on our heels and got in a little foul trouble."

"But when they had to pick it up, they did," he said.

UMaine

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goal. Then we got a fortuitous bounce (on Bahe's empty netter). These were two huge points for us."

Hampus Gustafsson's power-play goal opened the scoring for the Warriors at the 7:01 mark of the first period but Dan Renouf equalized just 1:21 later.

Justin Hussar's unassisted goal and Marc Biega's score 4:03 later supplied the Warriors with a well-deserved 3-1 lead.

Maine coach Red Gendron said the game was lost in the first period.

"Our battle level, puck management, goaltending... nothing was sharp at the start," said an irritated Gendron whose Black Bears were outshot 11-5 in the first period. "There's no excuse for that. That can't happen. We had some guys who weren't skating."

"But you also have to give credit to Merrimack. They played extremely well," he added.

"That has been the story of our season. We didn't come out hard," said alternate captain Merchant.

"You aren't going to win Hockey East games starting like that and falling behind," said junior defenseman Renouf.

Brett Seney and Michael Babcock expanded the lead to 5-1 in the middle period.

But Merchant scored his first power-play goal at the

17:33 mark and added his next one with 41 seconds left in the period.

Gustafsson's game-opening goal came on his open one-timer from the left circle off a Seney pass.

Renouf tied it by maneuvering into a shooting lane at the left point and beating Collin Delia with a screened wrister.

But Hussar broke the tie 4:28 later when he intercepted Danny Perez's ill-advised cross-ice pass in the high slot and snapped a wrister past Matt Morris' blocker.

Biega added another goal 4:03 later when he gathered in Mark Hamilton's clearing attempt off the boards, stick-handled neatly past Steven Swavely and wristed a bullet past Morris' blocker.

The speedy Seney expanded the lead with a rising wrister over Morris' glove from the top of the right circle.

Morris was then replaced by Rob McGovern.

Babcock made it 5-1 off a three-on-two rush as he one-timed a Chris LeBlanc rebound past the helpless McGovern.

Merchant began the comeback by sliding a Swavely rebound past Delia from just beyond the crease and he scored again when he jammed Swavely's pass out from behind the net past Delia's left skate.

Schurhamer sliced the lead to one with a screened wrister from the point off a Swavely pass.

Merrimack outshot Maine 31-30.

Knights

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Dexter, which had 20 fewer field-goal attempts, was led by junior Abby Weber (7 points) and senior Katie Batron (6 points, 7 rebounds).

Narraguagus took control in the third quarter, holding

the Tigers scoreless for the last 6 minutes, 20 seconds. That came after a basket and two free throws by Batron had cut the Knights' lead to 19-15.

Joyce's rebound basket and three Kennedy foul shots pushed the Narraguagus advantage to 27-15 with 4:55 left in the third and Dexter never got closer than 11 after that.

Oceanside

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Third-seeded Medomak Valley, which had won regional titles in 2013 and 2015, finished 17-4 after having its 13-game winning streak snapped.

Oceanside led 24-20 after a back-and-forth first half, then amped up its defense to take charge midway through the third quarter.

Key to that effort was the work of reserve forward Michael Norton Jr., a sophomore who contributed two key steals during a 12-0 Mariners' run that expanded their lead to 41-28 late in the third quarter.

"The kid's just instant energy," said Breen. "He's quick and he gets to plays where the offense doesn't think he's going to get there. He just finds a way, and his intensity and spark off the bench lifted everybody else."

Medomak Valley pulled within 29-28 on a jumper by Zach Starr with 4:31 left in



AMBER WATERMAN

Oceanside's Nick Mazurek (left) looks on as teammate Sam Atwood (center) looks for a way around Medomak Valley's Cameron Allaire during a Class A North boys final on Friday at the Augusta Civic Center. Oceanside won 59-45.

the third quarter but then went scoreless for more than three minutes as Oceanside

gained momentum.

Hendricks fed Mazurek for a hook shot from the lane

and Atwood followed with two 3-pointers within 33 seconds as the Mariners' lead grew to 37-28 and forced a Medomak Valley timeout with 2:25 left in the period.

Panthers' center Cam Allaire (eight points, four blocks) then drew his fourth foul and had to sit, opening the lane for Hendricks to work his crossover dribble and get to the rim for back-to-baskets to extend the margin to double digits at 41-28.

Medomak Valley got within 42-35 on a low-post move by Nicholas DePatsy (14 points) early in the fourth quarter, but another drive by Hendricks and back-to-back 3-pointers by Raye restored Oceanside to a 50-36 cushion with four minutes left.

"We've played against these guys ever since we were little, the same group of guys," said Hendricks, whose teams split two regular-season games with Medomak Valley. "We just had to go out there and have fun and not worry about whether it was a championship game, and that's what we did."

PVHS

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Fort Fairfield's Churchill would foul out early in the fourth quarter, allowing the Howlers to shift their defensive focus to Pelkey.

"When Churchill fouled out, we just worked our zone and played a box and one on Pelkey and shut her down," Hallett said.

Fort Fairfield would not get any closer than eight after the Howlers extended their lead to 42-31 with just under four minutes to play in regulation.

The Howlers never trailed in the second half.

"It feels amazing, it's like no other feeling," said Hallett. "I don't even really believe it. It was hard-earned, and we worked really hard for it."

The Howlers were also able to utilize their back-court quickness to counter Fort Fairfield's 2-2-1 zone press, and used Ireland's presence on the interior once the Tigers' foul trouble ballooned in the second half.

"Having a 6-foot-[1 center] definitely helps because she is really good and she is really athletic," Hallett said.

Kayla Giberson and Pelkey had nine points apiece for Fort Fairfield while Teresa Maynard added eight.

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