



AMBER WATERMAN
Hampden's Bailey Donovan (left) puts pressure on Lawrence's Camryn Caldwell during their Class A North semifinal game Wednesday at the Augusta Civic Center. Lawrence won 55-26 and will face Messalonskee in the regional final Friday afternoon.

Lawrence handles Hampden, advances to 'A' regional final

BY ERNIE CLARK
BDN STAFF

AUGUSTA — The defending state champion Lawrence of Fairfield **GIRLS BASKETBALL** team is known for the inside play of senior center Nia Irving and the perimeter work of classmate Dominique Lewis.

But the undefeated Bulldogs also can play tenacious defense, as they showed during their 55-26 victory over Hampden Academy in a Class A North semifinal Wednesday at the Augusta Civic Center.

Coach John Donato's club limited Hampden to a single field goal during the opening quarter en route to its 41st victory in its last 42 games over the last two seasons.

"We played very good defense," said Donato. "Every player on our floor was smaller than theirs, but we had a lot of heart."

"Offensively it wasn't a great day, but we just played better defense."

Top-ranked Lawrence (20-0) faces No. 2 Messalonskee of Oakland (17-3) for the regional title at 1:05 p.m. Friday. Messalonskee defeated No. 3 Gardiner 55-47 in Wednesday's first semifinal behind 24 points from Sophia Holmes.

No. 5 Hampden ends its season at 11-9.

Irving paced Lawrence with 21 points and 16 rebounds, while Lewis — who along with Irving was named a Miss Basketball semifinalist earlier in the day — scored 15 points.

Irving scored 13 points and grabbed 10 rebounds

during the first half alone as Lawrence built a 26-8 lead.

She staked the Bulldogs to a 5-0 lead with two free throws and a three-point play after grabbing her first two offensive rebounds of the contest.

The lead grew to 9-2 on a steal and drive by Morgan Boudreau and a long jumper by Hunter Mercier before Hampden got its lone points of the opening period on a 10-foot jumper by Braylee Wildman with 3:56 remaining.

The Lawrence cushion grew to 19-2 early in the second quarter on the second of Irving's three-point plays in the half.

"It's all about who comes out and plays defense the hardest and who crashes the boards and who makes their opening shots," said Irving.

Hampden then got back-to-back 3-pointers by Courtney Dunton and Peyton Smith, but the Broncos struggled offensively against Lawrence's perimeter quickness and committed 11 turnovers in the half while making just 3 of 18 shots.

Lewis, shadowed by HA sophomore Marissa Gilpin for much of the game, got untracked offensively after intermission with four 3-pointers in five attempts.

"Marissa (Gilpin) did a great job defending me," Lewis said, "but Nia had her inside game so they had to double down on her and that left us the outside game and we shot pretty well, I thought."



Irving

Finalists

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Irving, who will attend Boston University on a scholarship.

On the Mr. Maine Basketball side, Hampden Academy's Nick Gilpin and Brewer's Matt Pushard are joined by Caribou's Donovan Savage, Medomak Valley of Waldoboro's Nicholas DePatsy, Andrew Fleming of Oxford Hills in South Paris, Dirigo of Dixfield's Riley Robinson, Portland's Amir Moss, Mt. Ararat of Topsham's Shyheim Ulrickson and Lake Region of Bridgton's Jackson Lesure.

The fields will be whittled down to three finalists on each side after the basketball tournaments are over. The winners will be named at the Maine McDonald's High School Senior All-Star banquet on Friday, March 11, at the Anah Shrine Hall in Bangor.

Gilpin and Pushard were honored by their semifinalist status.

"It's definitely exciting," said Gilpin, whose brother,

Zach, was a finalist two years ago.

"To be named on that list is a great honor," said Pushard.

"It shows with all the hard work and dedication I put into basketball over the years," said point guard Gilpin, who has led the Broncos to a 19-0 season entering Wednesday's Class A North semifinal against Oceanside of Thomaston/Rockland.

"My brother was a finalist two years ago and it's obviously something I wanted to get. We'll see what happens," added Gilpin, who has averaged over 15 points and six assists per game.

"It's great to see that all the effort you've put in over four years has resulted in an honor like this," agreed Pushard, a 6-4 forward who has averaged 17 points and over 10 rebounds per game.

Pushard has led the Witches to a 15-4 season entering Wednesday's Class A North semifinal against Medomak Valley.



Pushard

Bucks

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which the Bucks outscored the Tigers 27-15 to assume command.

"He's led us in scoring several games this year," said Deans. "I think we've had six or seven different high scorers this year. Tonight it was his turn. Friday night it could be somebody else's."

Jackson would jumpstart Bucksport's second-half surge with a driving shot followed by a 3-pointer from the right side, and Riley Macleod and Tyler Pye contributed four points apiece during the Bucks' third-quarter charge.

The interior presence of 6-foot-5 center Macleod made things tough for the Tigers, forcing them to settle for perimeter shots.

Macleod would pull down 15 rebounds to go with his eight points.

"He's a force in the middle, at 6-5, he takes up a lot of space," said Deans.

Hayden Craig was Bucksport's other double-figures scorer with 10 points.

The Bucks' defense limited Dexter to four second-half field goals while forcing the Tigers into many hurried shots.

Deans also is hopeful that now the Bucks have the tourney monkey off their backs, they'll enter Friday's game relaxed.

"I was nervous," he said.

Brayden Miller's 10 points led Dexter.



JOE CYR | HOULTON PIONEER TIMES
Bucksport's Tyler Pye (right) plays tight defense as Dexter's Chandler Perkins looks for a passing lane during their Class C North quarterfinal game Wednesday at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor. Bucksport won 47-28 and will face Hodgdon on Friday night.

Hodgdon

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Buzzell scored eight of his points in the second quarter to help the Hawks forge a five-point lead at the break, and he added seven more in the third, with most of his

points coming from aggressive attacks in the paint.

Hodgdon led by as many as nine in the third, but the Tigers clawed back within three by the end of the period and went ahead 35-34 with just under three minutes to go on Landen Kinney's short jumper.

Yet again, Hodgdon would respond, with consecutive driving layups by Daden Palm-

er and Blake Woods giving the Hawks the lead for good.

Fort Fairfield was held to just one field goal after Kinney's bucket, and the Hawks salted the game away at the free-throw line.

Hodgdon's interior defense did a solid job of forcing the Tigers into hurried perimeter shots, and the bigger Hawks were the aggres-

sors on the backboards.

"The first half, we didn't rebound well," said Smith. "We talked about it even more that we've got to win on the boards. In the second half, we tightened up."

Palmer was Hodgdon's other double-figures scorer with 11 points.

Chris Giberson's 13 points paced the Tigers.



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN
Ellsworth's Bruce St. Peter (left) celebrates with teammates after sinking the game-winning shot in overtime against Caribou during their Class B North semifinal game at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Wednesday.

Two buzzer-beaters give Ellsworth the win

BY LARRY MAHONEY
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — The Ellsworth High School Eagles needed more than one buzzer-beater to edge upset-minded Caribou in their Class B **BOYS BASKETBALL** North semifinal at the Cross Insurance Center on Wednesday night.

They needed two, and that's what gave them a 42-40 triumph.

Junior guard Bryce Harmon's desperation 40-foot, 3-pointer forced overtime and senior center Bruce St. Peter's contested 10-foot jumper as time expired in the extra session decided it.

Second seed Ellsworth (16-4) beat Caribou (12-9) twice during the regular season.

Mr. Maine Basketball semifinalist Donovan Savage's two free throws with 3.8 seconds left in regulation gave the upstart Vikings a 40-37 lead.

But Nick Bagley made the inbounds pass to Harmon, who raced up the floor and banked in his 3-pointer from the left side just after he

crossed center court.

"We figured Savage would make his free throws, so I told Bagley that I thought I would have time to get a shot off," said Harmon. "I was hoping it would go in. It felt good coming out of my hands off the dribble."

"Things like that happen," said Savage. "All you can do is pat him on the back and say 'Good shot.'"

Both teams had chances in overtime but couldn't convert.

The Vikings had the ball with less than a minute remaining but St. Peter stole a pass, and the Eagles held the ball until calling a timeout with 7.2 seconds left.

Cooper Henderson inbounded the ball to St. Peter.

St. Peter explained that he was supposed to pass the ball to Kyle Golding, who was driving the lane.

"But that option wasn't open. I knew there wasn't much time and I couldn't make a play. So I took it to the hole," said St. Peter. "It worked out. It felt awesome when I shot it."

"We played good defense, but Bruce is a good player and he can make shots like that," said Savage.

Bagley finished with a game-high 14 points, including four 3-pointers. St. Peter had 10 points and seven rebounds along with a blocked shot and his all-important steal. Harmon and Golding had eight points each.

The dynamic Savage finished with a game-high 18 points. He also dished out four assists. Nick Allen and Ricky Sheldon had six points each. Sheldon grabbed four rebounds as did Gabriel Massey.

Caribou dictated the tempo, parlaying a deliberate offense and waiting for the good shot against up-tempo Eagles.

Caribou scored the game's first six points as Savage hit a 12-foot jumper from the left and a foul line jumper before Sheldon fed Massey for an easy bucket underneath.

Ellsworth missed its first five shots but Bagley's driving layup gave them their first points with 2:50 left in the first quarter.

Ellsworth scored the next eight points to take a 10-6 lead.

The game see-sawed back and forth until Bagley's consecutive three-pointers and

Harmon's driving layup made it 27-19 late in the third quarter.

But Caribou rallied to within 29-28 behind Sheldon's four points and Savage's three-pointer.

Massey's driving layup gave Caribou a 36-34 lead with 2:10 left but a St. Peter free throw and two by Golding made it 37-36 with 1:18 left.

Savage fed Sheldon for a four-foot jumper with 17.1 seconds left and when Ellsworth missed a shot, Savage was fouled and made his free throws with 3.8 seconds left.

BLOGS ABOUND

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