

SKYLINE *from B1*



From left: The North Douglas team comes together to celebrate their overtime victory over Days Creek. North Douglas' Rilie-Jo Olds and Elkton's Alexis Halstead battle for position down low on Friday in the semifinals. Elkton's Samantha McCall hits a lay-up against Pacific on Saturday.

"They just play good defense. They plugged it up inside, they cover Aspyrn (Luzier) so we can't shoot. They blanket her like crazy. (North Douglas guard) Riley Black, she does a really good job," said Parker.

Elkton had 23 turnovers on the game to go along with shooting eight-of-29 from the field. The Warriors had 13 turnovers and shot 14-of-29.

"(Elkton) likes to shoot threes so you can get them out of their comfort zone and then if they start looking for calls sometimes then the frustration game sets in," said Davis on his team's defense. "Whether we foul or not, I don't think we do more than anybody else, but we are pretty much right there all the time. It's hard to shake and lose us. I'm just proud of how we defended."

The North Douglas victory guaranteed the Warriors a spot at state and a matchup against Days Creek to determine who gets a first-round playoff bye. For Elkton, it meant the team was in a must-win third place game on Saturday with their season on the line.

Saturday: Elkton vs. Pacific, third-place game (winner advances to state)

The Elks were out of sync early. Having defeated Pacific earlier this season 51-27, it was Elkton, aside from a 6-0 run over the course of 30 seconds, having a hard time finding their footing in the first half.

"I haven't figured it out. We've been starting off really poorly. That's just kind of the way we've been lately, we just don't get it all going," said Parker. Adding, "I think they put it in cruise control and then they get to the fourth quarter and they go, 'Oh my gosh! It's close. Maybe we need to start playing harder now.'"

But on Saturday, that feeling started a quarter early as the Elks came out of the half on a mission. The team put together a 25-5 run that stretched

into the final minutes of the game to secure their spot at state.

Helping guide the offense was sharp-shooter Luzier who hit three three-pointers in the second half to lead the team with 13 points. It was a balanced attack the rest of the way with Kiernyn Carnes, Samantha McCall and Alexis Halstead each recording six points.

"When we made that second run in the third quarter, I called a timeout and it was just to talk to them and say, 'Hey, we did this exact same thing in the first quarter and we let them come back.' I said, 'We can't let them come back,'" said Parker. "If you're a good team, you maintain that, we had a five-point lead at the time, or you extend it. You don't let them come back, you've got to play defense. And they did, they did good at that point."

The Elks locked down the Pirates on defense and no Pacific player had over eight points and just four players scored on the night. The Elkton victory secured the third and final league playoff spot.

"Third place is where, honestly, I thought, we would probably be. I was hoping for better. Make it to state is always a goal, sure. And for here, we've got to play better but who knows, it's all about matchups now," said Parker.

This Wednesday (Feb. 20) Elkton will travel to Alsea for the first round of the state playoffs. The two teams met twice this season in December and Elkton won 54-41 and 58-41. The winner will then play this weekend on the road against a team with a first-round bye.

Saturday: North Douglas vs. Days Creek, championship

No matter the deficit, North Douglas was never out of the game.

In a battle for Skyline League supremacy, it was the Warriors putting together a fourth-quarter

rally to defeat Days Creek 29-25 in overtime on Saturday night.

"What's nice is to be able to say to these kids – and we're down late in the game and in overtime, we're down in regulation and have to fight back – it's never over until it's over. And it's just exciting," said head coach Davis. Adding, "That's a heck of a district championship game. Their kids, defending district champions, played really, really well."

Before it was a heck of a game, it was a battle for any possible points as the first quarter finished in a 5-5 tie. While Riley Black's pair of first quarter jumpers gave the team a taste of offense, a two-point second quarter put North Douglas down 11-7 at the break.

Days Creek's defense just packed the lane inside and dared North Douglas to shoot jumpers to get back into the game. Throughout the first-half, the Warriors' offense passed the ball around looking for an opening in the defense that was never there.

"(Days Creek) was going to make us shoot from the perimeter. Well we decided at halftime we're going to have to get to the basket somehow," said Davis. Adding, "We really wanted to – because they had three fouls across the baseline – we wanted to attack the baseline as much as we could because they packed it in."

Trying to find any offense possible was North Douglas guard Sofia Alcantar who was relentless in her pursuit of the basket. Taking hits and fighting through contact, Alcantar scored five of the team's six points in the quarter. Alcantar finished the game with seven points along with 10 rebounds.

"She was getting some rebounds, loose balls. Some ferocity," Davis said of Alcantar. "Sometimes we force things a little bit but she heard let's make something happen, let's get to the rim, let's get them in foul trouble or foul somebody out, so we appreciate where she is right now."

Because of the low-scoring nature of the game,

each basket scored had the potential to flip the game on its head. An opening second-half basket to cut their deficit to two felt like the game-changer North Douglas needed before Days Creek was able to extend their league back to a seemingly insurmountable six points. Trailing by four entering the fourth quarter, the Warriors once again found themselves down six and, at this point, had scored just 13 points on the game.

The spark the Warriors had been desperately searching for finally arrived in the pair of defensive plays. On back-to-back plays the team got a steal and lay-up from Black followed by an Abby Whipple steal and a Natalie Thompson transition lay-up to cut the deficit to two.

"It is funny how it swings like that where you're just struggling along and you look like you're in quicksand and then suddenly a shot ignites you," said Davis. "And then we kind of look like ourselves and we're flying around again."

In the game-changing fourth quarter, five different North Douglas players scored. Days Creek's Moriah Michaels, tied the game with just over three minutes to play. Neither team scored for the rest of regulation and the game went to overtime.

In overtime, Days Creek regained the lead with their only basket of the extra session. Whipple followed it up by drilling a three-pointer in the corner to take the lead for good. Immediately after it was Alcantar with a steal and fast-break lay-up to seal the victory and give North Douglas the Skyline title.

"We kept battling, kept listening, made some changes on what we did defensively," said Davis. "Just proud of the fact that we could keep our wits about us enough that we could make some adjustments. That we could make some adjustments and some of them worked; enough worked for us."

With the win, North Douglas will now host a state playoff game at home this weekend.



Cottage Grove freshman Landon Colburn – and the team's bench – watches his three pointer fly through the air in the final minutes to give the Lions a fourth quarter lead.

CGHS *from B1*

of play until it was again Colburn, coming up big as he hit a pair of free throws to give the Lions the lead with 30 seconds left in the game.

"Not many kids are going to step up and with that atmosphere on senior night as a freshman to knock down a big three and knock down two huge

free throws to put us up one," said Hutchison of Colburn.

"He is a really good player, really high basketball IQ and that's rare in younger kids. When he should be playing a little bit of JV2 with his freshmen class, I'm forcing him to kind of mature at a quicker rate than those other freshmen. And he's stepping up,

he's becoming a leader on this team as a freshman."

On the ensuing Marist possession, it was junior Nick Stice driving the lane and fading away as he dropped in a jumper with 15 seconds to play to give the Spartans a one-point victory. Stice finished with 11 points.

"In the second half he got himself going a little bit. And we just were fortunate that he was able to hit that, like, eight-footer," said Pollard. "He's a tough player, really good player and he's had a really good season and he made a really good shot. So it was good to see from him."

Cottage Grove called timeout but failed to get a shot off on the possession.

While it is a wrap on the Cottage Grove season, for Hutchison, the third coach in as many years at Cottage Grove, he is hopeful for a future centered around continuity.

"I loved every single kid in that locker room. They were coachable, they played hard. They were together, it was a great first year. Besides the record. But it'll come," he said. "That's laying the foundation and changing the culture and it'll be great that – knock on wood – they're going to see the same face and hear the same voice next year and that's going to do leaps and bounds for these kids."

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