

South's defense doesn't show, Billies lose in first round

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

A lack of total team defense led the Williamsville South boys basketball team to an early exit from the Section VI playoffs.

The fifth-seeded Billies allowed 76 points to 12th-seed Hutch-Tech in a 76-71 Class A-1 prequarterfinal loss last Wednesday at South.

"We played with no emotion and no defensive intensity at all," said Billies coach Al Monaco.

The loss was an upset but South wasn't playing great heading into the playoffs. After starting 11-6, the Billies had lost four out of their last five and in its four losses, allowed more than 70 points.

Hutch-Tech was 5-15 and on a six-game losing streak coming into the game but looked good early on, building an 8-0 advantage in the first 1:30.

South settled down and courtesy of a 40-foot three-pointer by Mark Coppola, went into the second quarter tied at 17-17.

The Billies carried the momentum into the second quarter as with 2:45 remaining in the first half, South was ahead, 30-21. But Hutch-Tech outscored South, 15-2, over the remainder of the quarter to go into halftime up, 36-32.

"We had the game in control and let it get away," said Monaco. "At halftime, I was literally begging them to play defense and with some emotion (in the second half). It's almost a helpless feeling."

Hutch-Tech increased its lead to 42-34 but again, the Billies' offense came to the rescue. A three by Joe Licata put South down only by three, 53-50, at the end of the third.

In the fourth quarter, a layup by Phil Stasiak gave South a 68-67 lead with two minutes remaining but three seconds later, Hutch-Tech beat the Billies down the court and scored on an uncontested layup.

South had chances late to either win the game or force overtime. With 50 seconds left, Licata nailed

a three to cut South's deficit to 72-71 but on Hutch-Tech's next possession, forward Justin Hawkins (game-high and career-high 28 points) drove past South's Zach Murray uncontested to push Hutch-Tech's lead to 74-71.

South's Tom LiSacchi missed a three with 7.6 seconds left and Hawkins grabbed the rebound and was fouled. Hawkins missed the one-and-one attempt but Hutch-Tech's Wayne Williams, who played for South's JV program last year, outhustled Billie players for the rebound. A Hutch-Tech player hit two free throws to seal the win.

"We had plenty of time to get off a last shot and send it to overtime if we had boxed out on defense," said Monaco.

Tihry Ward scored a career-high 24 for Hutch-Tech, who went on to upset fourth-seed Lake Shore, 52-51, on Friday in the A-1 quarterfinals.

South's offense was good. They made 18 of 34 two-point baskets, seven of 20 threes and 14 of 19 free throws.

"It wasn't our offense that was faltering, but a total breakdown on defense," said Monaco. "We tried a man-to-man defense. We packed all five guys in. We even went to a zone for the first time in five years and it didn't matter. We put up no resistance at all. It was layup after layup."

Hutch-Tech did not score a three-point basket.

South finished the game with 21 rebounds. Monaco said Hutch-Tech probably had at least double the amount of rebounds as his team.

"They had to have scored at least a dozen points on offensive rebounds," said Monaco.

South also committed 18 turnovers.

Stasiak scored 22 points to give him 314 for the season, a new freshman school record. Murray added 16. Licata and Coppola each tallied 12.

Licata made three threes and finished with 74, second all-time in a season and seventh all-time career

at South. He hit a three in every game and leads Western New York in the category this season.

South made a school record 175 threes for the season. The old record was 149 set in 1997-98.

Coppola dished out 13 assists, giving him 178 for the season (second all-time at South) and 321 for his career (fourth all-time at South).

South finishes 12-9.

"If you had told me we would win 12 games at the beginning of the season, I would have thought we greatly overachieved," said Monaco. "But there was a span in January where we beat Sweet Home, Hamburg and Williamsville East when they all were ranked in the top 10. I don't know what happened in February

and why we didn't have the same enthusiasm and attitude we were playing with but it was gone by the end of the year. So in a way, we badly underachieved."

The good news is South only loses two seniors, Brian Webb and Tin Krempa, and returns most of the nucleus back for next year.

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Lewandowski finally beats Stella, could earn wild card for states

by PATRICK J. NAGY
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Sweet Home's Nic Stella had beaten Lancaster's Mark Lewandowski three times this season but that all changed last week.

Lewandowski defeated Stella, 4-3, to win the 135-pound weight class at the Division I Section VI New York State qualifier held last Saturday at Kenmore West High School.

Scoreless after the first period, Stella got an escape in the second period and Lewandowski took him down to go up, 2-1.

In the third period, Lewandowski chose down and got an escape and Stella took him down to tie the match at 3-3.

Lewandowski escaped with 30 seconds remaining and held off Stella for the remainder of the match, including a stalling call warning, to go to the New York State Championships March 8-9 at Rochester's Blue Cross Arena.

Although he lost, Stella should secure one of four wild card entries to states.

"It's disappointing but when you wrestle that many times with each other, inevitably one will not go your way," said Sweet Home coach Jeff Hess. "His ultimate goal is to win the state championship."

Stella (40-5) pinned



Sweet Home's Nic Stella holds down Williamsville North's Stephen Liebler during a first round match at the Division I Section VI New York State qualifier last Saturday at Kenmore West. Stella pinned Liebler in the second period. Stella, wrestling at 135 pounds, lost to Lancaster's Mark Lewandowski, 4-3, in the finals but could be a wild card entry for the New York State Championships March 8-9 at Rochester's Blue Cross Arena.

Photo by Joe Eberle
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Williamsville North's Stephen Liebler in the second period and defeated West Seneca West's Tyler Kostryzicki, 8-4, in the semi-finals.

The only other Sweet Home wrestler to appear at sectionals was sophomore Daiquann Burney, who took fourth at 103.

Burney beat Lewiston-Porter's Dan Reagan, 6-3, and gave eventual champion, Joey Malvestuto of Niagara-Wheatfield, his best

match of the night, losing 4-3.

In wrestlebacks, Burney beat Lockport's Ivan Cruz, 6-2, and lost to Olean's Zach Marra, 5-3.

"I had a lot of hopes for him at the beginning of the season and he came through," said Hess. "For never wrestling a lot prior to this year and to lose to the kid who is going to states by a point is amazing."

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Revolution slays Dragons

The Amherst Revolution U-13 girls indoor soccer club defeated the U-14 Clarence Dragons, 2-0, at the Epic Center this past Saturday.

Breaking out its passing game, the Revolution won 2-0. Kaitlin Walsh netted the first goal on a direct kick from 18 yards.

Carissima Cutrona made it 2-0 after receiving a perfect pass from Nikka

Berrafato.

Goalkeepers Christine Murphy and Francesca Carra shared the shutout.

The Revolution were led by the efforts of Alyssa Cartwright, Alicia Girard, Colleen Stelling, Cathryn Mahon, Meghan Keating, Liza Convertini, Kaitlyn Neese, Angela Sobatka and Dana Esposito, who also helped in goal for a few minutes.

UBAM swimmers strike gold

The UB Amherst Swim Club (UBAM) recently competed at the Niagara District's Silver Championship Meet.

Achieving Niagara District Gold time standards at this meet were: Matt Berus (500 free); Daniel Cho (50, 100 and 500 free, 200 fly); Eugene Cho (50 fly); Caroline Desiderio (50, 100 and 200 breast, 50 back, 50 fly); Alex Doody (50 breast); Huiibo Guan (200 IM, 500 free); Alyssa Helak (100 free); James Jiang (200 IM, 100 back, 100 IM, 50 back, 100 free); Kevin Kim (100, 200 breast); Rachel Kuechle (50 fly); Sara Lagree (200 IM, 50, 100 breast); Sara Mastrandrea (50 breast); Therese Mastrandrea (50 breast); Angelo Rego (50 fly); Sara Rogers (50, 100 back); Jamie Ruh (1650 free, 100, 200 back, 200 fly); Marc Ruzsaj (50, 100 breast, 50 free); Maggie Schmidt (200, 1650 free, 50 fly); AJ Spoth (50 breast); Caroline Terhaar (50, 100 back); Nan Wang (50 free); Rebecca Winnert (500 free); Bailey Woodling (1650 free); and Brenna Woodling (100 breast, 50 fly, 100 free).

The Niagara District Gold Championship Meet will be held at ECC's Flickinger Center March 13-16.

In their quest for gold, many lifetime best times were also turned in by Josh Blumberg, Samantha Bowers, Zoe Bowman, Kelsey Bradbury, Erin Cavanaugh, Shoshana Chazen, Sarah Constantino, Emil Dinardo, Ally Dziama, Heather Falk, Tori Frustaci, Julie Hsieh, Amanda Kadish, Brooke Pettis, Piava Rioli, Emma Scumaci, Lauren Shine, Greg Staebell, and Abby Wilkes.

The UB Amherst Swim Club (UBAM) is a national goal oriented, US age-group Swim Club that practices at the University of Buffalo, as well as the Williamsville School Pools. UBAM also offers a year-round Learn-to-Swim Program for new and less experienced swimmers. For more information, visit www.UBAMswimming.com.

Wolff again earns weekly league honors

For the sixth time this season, senior guard and co-captain Jamie Wolff received Liberty League Guard of the Week honors on Monday after leading the St. Lawrence women's basketball team to two victories over the nationally-ranked William Smith College Herons and the Hamilton College Continentals this past weekend.

Wolff, a Williamsville resident and Nardin Academy graduate, tallied 45 points in the two games, with a game-high 22 points against William Smith, shooting

50 percent from the field and 4 for 6 from three-point range, while also earning two assists and grabbing two steals in the 71-55 win. Against the Continentals, Wolff added a game-high 23 points to the Saints' effort, She shot 7 for 10 from the floor and 50 percent from behind the arc. She also was 6 for 7 from the line to help the Saints to a 59-36 victory on Saturday.

With the wins, the Saints secured a spot in the Liberty League Tournament for the fourth consecutive season.



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