



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Wynot's Cortney Arkfeld, left, and Danielle Wieseler, center, pressure a Bancroft-Rosalie player during a Class D2 first round action game Thursday morning at Lincoln Southwest High School.

Business As Usual For Blue Devils

Wynot Advances To D2 Semis For Fifth Straight Year

BY JEREMY HOECK

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LINCOLN, Neb. — Even with starters new to the state tournament atmosphere, the Wynot Blue Devils were still all business Thursday.

And that meant another win on the state's biggest stage.

Though it was far from easy, Wynot surged past Bancroft-Rosalie 56-39 in a Nebraska State Tournament Class D2 first round game Thursday morning at Lincoln Southwest High School.

Another year, another tournament win for the Blue Devils (22-6).

"When we get here, coach always says, 'We're here to play basketball. We're here to enjoy it, but we're here to win,'" said senior Maggie Schulte, who scored 19 points.

To do so Thursday, Wynot used a lineup that had little experience at the state tournament — the program graduated eight seniors from last season's third consecutive title.

Yet, those younger players continued Wynot's full-court pressure defense and helped the Blue Devils build a 26-8 lead midway through the second quarter.

"Nothing comes easy this year, but these kids have come a long way," head coach Steve Wieseler said. "I'm really proud of the way they've grown."

Although Bancroft-Rosalie missed more than a handful of easy looks under the basket, the Panthers (15-10) were frustrated early by Wynot's pressure. Eventually though, they got things figured out.

"It seems like when we back off, typically the whole game backs off for us," Wieseler said. "We try to bring the pressure and full-court all game long."

Bancroft-Rosalie got within 37-30 on a Suzanne Ras basket to start the fourth quarter, but that's when Wynot tightened up the screws and forced turnovers.

"You can just feel when the other team's getting momentum, that means we're not playing our best," Schulte said. "That's when we need to step it up."

With the Panthers forced to foul midway through the fourth quarter, Wynot scored its final 13 points at the free throw line. And for the game, the Blue Devils were 27-of-39 at the stripe.

"We just had to keep our defense going," said junior Jenna Heine, who scored 10 points. "Defense is what won it for us."

Bancroft-Rosalie, consequently, found it tough to get much of anything behind senior post Allie Vogt. She scored 19 points, but nobody else had more than six.

Wynot will need a similar effort in the semifinals against top-seeded Falls City Sacred Heart (26-2). The Irish rolled past Wauneta-Palisade 45-25 earlier Thursday, thanks to three players in double figures.

The Blue Devils and Irish will meet in tonight's (Friday) 7 p.m. semifinals at Bob Devaney Sports Center.

For now, though, the Blue Devils were happy just to have gotten past the first round with so many newcomers to that stage. One of those, sophomore guard Danielle Wieseler, finished with 13 points.

"It means a lot; it's really awesome," Heine said. "We've worked really hard to get here."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

Yankton Boys Set For State JV Hockey

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK

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Prior to this season, Yankton JV boys' hockey coach Mike Stoll felt his young program was a year away from being an 'above .500' squad.

The Bucks are ahead of schedule.

Yankton takes a 14-6-1 record and the second seed into the South Dakota Amateur Hockey Association's JV State Tournament, which begins today (Friday) at Odde Ice Arena in Aberdeen.

The Bucks started off 1-2, then went on a 13-2-1 tear before dropping their final two regular season games to Brookings, the top seed in the field.

"At some point I figured we'd be above .500," Stoll said. "There were some expectations

down the road, probably even next year.

"This year surprised us."

Several of the members of this year's squad were at the Pee Wee level four years ago, when Yankton won the 'C' division title. And while there are still several underclassmen on the squad, it is their maturity that has helped the program climb the rankings.

"The maturity level of this group has been very good," Stoll said.

The team has also had plenty of offensive firepower, led by Austin Barger (24 goals, 9 assists) and Jacob Hubbs (14 goals, 10 assists). Mitchell Vavra (12 goals, 7 assists) and Colby Benson (11 goals, 7 assists) are also in double-digit scoring. Logan Megard (4 goals) has a team-high 12 assists.

"We've even gotten scoring out of our third line," Stoll said of the Bucks' offense. "Our defense has even gotten some scores."

Twelve of the 16 position players on the Bucks have recorded at least one goal. Fourteen of them have at least one assist.

Defensively, Tyler Wenande (8-2) has averaged 1.78 goals against per game, and has recorded four shutouts in goal. Cristian Slate has also been solid, going 6-4-1 with a .857 save percentage and a 3.61 goals against average.

The Bucks open against a Sioux Falls squad that they swept in the regular season, winning three matchups by a combined score of 19-9.

For Yankton to earn its way

to Sunday afternoon's championship, it will need to continue to play the smart, aggressive hockey that it has played all season.

"If we play our best hockey and stay within ourselves, we'll do fine," Stoll said. "As in any tournament, we need to stay out of the penalty box and limit our mistakes. We need to make good choices with the puck and play as a team."

The Yankton-Sioux Falls matchup is set for noon today (Friday). The tournament runs through Sunday, with the championship set for 2:30 p.m. on Sunday.

You can follow James D. Cimburek on Twitter at twitter.com/JCimburek. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net

Uncharted Waters: Raiders Headed To State



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Gayville-Volin head coach Matt Malloy, in bowtie, and the Raider bench celebrates after the team won the Region 5B championship with a 44-40 overtime victory over Freeman on Thursday at the Summit Center in Yankton.

Gayville-Volin Wins Region 4B

BY NICK ROBINSON

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They call it "March Madness" for a reason. There is always a "Cinderella story" out there that catches the hearts of sports fans around the nation.

This season, that 'Cinderella' wears navy blue and vegas gold.

The Gayville-Volin Raiders put the glass slipper on Thursday night at the Summit Activities Center, as they defeated the Freeman Flyers 44-40 in overtime of the Region 5B Championship.

"I didn't know how I quite felt of you guys labeling us the Cinderella team," first year head coach Matt Malloy said. "We were still a pretty good team, with a winning record. I guess we might as well ride it now, since we are considered it. I don't know how much longer we are going to fly under the radar, but we might as well consider ourselves the Cinderella."

Coming off their first District and Region championships, Malloy was ecstatic for his squad.

"It is hard to describe it right now," he said. "I don't think out of any basketball I have been apart of have I been around such a great time and a great win."

The Raiders came roaring out of the gate, riding their "home crowd" atmosphere.

"I think for a Class B basketball game, you couldn't ask for a better atmosphere," Malloy said. "It is rare for us to see this type of atmosphere, and I thought the girls responded well. It was a

great test for us coming into the state tournament."

Sophomore Genny Clark cashed two three pointers in the opening few minutes to give Gayville-Volin (15-7) an early 8-1 lead with three minutes remaining.

Erika Sage of Freeman (15-8) responded with a three-pointer cutting the Raiders lead to 12-4.

Gayville-Volin went into the second period with a 14-6 lead over Freeman.

In the second quarter, Freeman rallied the troops and got back into the contest.

Halfway through the quarter, they cut the deficit down to four points thanks to two three-pointers in thirty seconds from Taylor Hermesen and Nicole Saarie. The score was trenched at 16-12.

After a few minutes of a cold spell for the Raiders, Clark found her stroke again, opening up the lead to 19-12 with a minute remaining.

Sage then responded for Freeman with a deep three pointer, cutting the lead down to 19-15.

The Raiders were able to hold the 19-15 lead over the Flyers at the half.

"Defensively, I thought we were stout," Malloy said. "In the first half, I don't think we could ask any more of our girls."

Clark led Gayville-Volin with 11 points and two rebounds. Kelia Barta added four points, two rebounds and a steal in the first half. The Raiders shot 46 percent from the field and 50 percent from

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Gayville-Volin's Rachel Haas shoots over the defense of Freeman's Shelby Jensen, 2, and Taylor Hermesen during the Region 5B championship on Thursday at the Summit Center in Yankton.

R.C. Schools To Join ESD For Football

The Eastern South Dakota Conference will have a western feel in 2015 ... at least for football. Rapid City Central and Rapid City Stevens have verbally accepted an offer from the ESD to become football-only members beginning in the 2015-16 school year, according to a release from the ESD.

The league will form one six-team division and one five-team division, with division lines based on the SDHSAA Class 11AAA and 11AA alignments.

"Football scheduling is a complicated endeavor, and it is the intent of the ESD conference to be hospitable to the other non-member teams in the state while still looking out for the interests of its member schools," Mitchell Athletic Director Geoffrey Gross said in the release.

Yankton will play an eight-game schedule in 2014, the final year of a two-year scheduling block by the SDHSAA. The Bucks, who are in Class 11AA, will face four 11AAA teams in consecutive weeks: Stevens, Brandon Valley, Aberdeen Central and Sioux Falls O'Gorman.

Top-Seeded Crofton Rolls In C2 Opener

BY JEREMY HOECK

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LINCOLN, Neb. — The quest for three straight state titles rolls on for the Crofton Lady Warriors.

And not much stood in their way in the first-round matchup.

Crofton, the top-seeded squad in Class C2, raced out to a 28-point halftime lead on the way to a 73-33 rout of Palmyra at Lincoln Southwest High School.

The win sends Crofton to the semifinals, where it will face Humphrey-Lindsay Holy Family (25-3) today (Friday) at 3:45 p.m. at Devaney Sports Center.

First, though, the Lady Warriors (25-1) had the matter of officially clinching a semifinal date.

Crofton frustrated the Panthers early and often, building a 26-8 lead after the first quarter and building that cushion to 46-18 at halftime.

Most of the usual suspects did the damage for the Lady Warriors, but the one surprise was four three-pointers in the first half from sophomore Allison Tramp — who came in averaging 5.3 points.

And even with a lopsided win already in hand, Crofton continued playing aggressively, particularly on defense. Its lead was 59-26 after three quarters.

The margin reached 40 with 3:44 to play, and with that, the clock continued to run.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Crofton defender Allison Arens, 10, defends Caitlin Peterson of Palmyra during their Class C2 first round game Thursday night at the Nebraska State Girls' Basketball Tournament at Lincoln Southwest High School.

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