Westlake's Harrison Adams Shoots the Ball Under Pressure in Friday's Game vs. Briarcliff
A Late Steal Seals a Win for the Foxes Against Woodlands

By Monica D’Ippolito

With 1:45 left in the first round of the Dapper McDonald Classic, Woodlands led host Fox Lane by two points, but the Foxes’ Alex Olsen and Sean New were about to deliver three huge plays in the last 60 seconds that snatched away the win and salvaged the game for them.

“I think we’re pretty athletic and we’re pretty physical, so we just played our game,” Fox Lane coach Mike Tomassi said after Thursday evening’s thrilling 49-48 victory. “We didn’t make any adjustments today. I challenged the boys and they were up to the challenge. We played pretty much up to our Fox lane style and in the end it worked. We didn’t really veer too much from what we usually do.”

After making a steal, Olsen set up New’s basket in transition that cut the Falcons’ lead to two points. The next time down the floor, New drove through the paint and burned his man for a layup while getting fouled. He added the free throw, giving the Foxes a one-point lead with 27 seconds remaining.

A reach-in foul on Fox Lane gave the Falcons the ball on the sideline, with one last chance to pull out a victory. But Woodlands never got the opportunity to take a shot.

The ball eventually wound up in the hands of the Falcons’ leading scorer, Jamil Gambari. With Olsen guarding him, Gambari drove to his right. But before he could finish rising and release a game-winning floater, Olsen slyly swiped the ball from behind. The Falcons, in their shock, did not foul in time and the Foxes ran out the clock.

“This is arguably one of our toughest victories in 18 games this season.”

Tomassi said after Thursday evening’s thrilling game, “Fox Lane coach Mike Tomassi

“It comes down to them working hard, and this team is a great team. To put ourselves in position to win at the end of the game, we played great defense all game. I had faith in our boys and they pulled it out. It was a great feeling.”

The first quarter ended on a Fox Lane 7-0 run, which gave the Foxes a 15-10 lead entering the second. Fox Lane allowed only seven points in the second quarter and extended its lead to 26-17 at halftime.

In the second half, Woodlands stepped up its pressure and forced the Foxes into some turnovers that turned into points. Olsen ended the night with 12 points, New finished with a team-high 14 points and five rebounds, while New finished with a five rebounds, two assists and three big-time steals, including one last chance to pull out a victory.

But the Falcons’ work on the glass may have salvaged the game for them. They outrebounded Woodlands 31-21, led by junior captain Matt Redhead, who finished the night with 13 points, seven rebounds, six assists and two blocks.

“Every shot is a pass, Coach has been telling the bigs that all year,” Redhead said about the team’s avid rebounding. “When the shot goes up, it’s your ball to get. But if it goes in or not, you should be working all the time to get the rebound because it creates extra possessions for us and with high school basketball the biggest thing is creating extra possessions. If you can create more possessions than the other team and get more shots up, I feel like at the end, more often than not, you’re going to win the game.”

Woodlands ended the third quarter on a 9-0 run and opened up a 40-33 advantage. But the Falcons climbed back in the fourth quarter. With four minutes left, Olsen came up with a steal and took the ball coast to coast, earning two shots at the charity stripe. Connecting on both, he cut the Woodlands lead to 44-41.

Two minutes later, the Foxes closed to within two points as Redhead provided a conventional 3-point play. The next Falcon possession sent Pierre Lys to the foul line. He missed both attempts, but Gambari hit the offensive glass for a put-back that gave Woodlands a 48-44 edge.

“I just told them, the will to win needs to be a little greater,” Tomassi recalled telling his players when they trailed in the second half. “It comes down to them working hard, and this team is a great group. They just work hard and I think today just shows how they play. You know we got up, we got down and we just never quit and we just kept working.”

Olsen and New stepped up and got the stops and baskets they needed and in the end the Foxes came away with their 13th victory in 18 games this season.

“It’s huge,” Redhead said about the win. “This is arguably one of our toughest opponents all year, and for us to come out like we did, when they had us up against the ropes, took the lead on us, we could have crumbled easily. But to come out and win the way we did was huge.”

Olsen ended the night with 12 points, five rebounds, five assists and three big-time steals, while New finished with a team-high 14 points and five rebounds.

A lot of people don’t give us the credit I think that our boys deserve,” said Tomassi, whose team wound up losing the Classic’s title game to Harrison 65-59 On Saturday night. “We just keep working hard and that’s all I can ask of them. Just work hard every game and hard work always pays off… We don’t overlook anybody and we just come in ready to play and I couldn’t ask for a better team and better bunch of kids.”
Fox Lane Withstands a Second-Half Comeback by the Falcons

By Monica D'Ippolito

Late in the fourth quarter on Thursday afternoon, with his team’s earlier 26-point lead suddenly down to just two, Fox Lane girls’ basketball coach Kris Matts called a timeout. Just before his players headed back on the floor, he had them chant, “heart.”

Over the last three minutes of the game against surging Woodlands, the host Foxes showed just how much heart they had, overcoming a raucous Falcon cheering section and some physical play and never surrendered the lead.

“The second half showed the heart and the determination,” Matts said after a 77-71 win in the first round of the Dapper McDonald Classic. “The grittiness, the determination and the refusal to lose, despite a really hard situation, that’s Fox Lane basketball. I’m really proud of them, but I’m sorry it had to be this tough on them.”

Although the walls inside the gym were quite familiar, if the Foxes didn’t know better they would have thought they were playing on Woodlands’ home floor with the huge turnout of Falcon fans.

“I said to someone at one point, ‘We’re in our own gym and their crowd is much crazier than ours,’” Fox Lane’s Emily O’Mahoney said. “I don’t think that’s how home-court advantage is supposed to work. But we realized we just had to tune them out and focus in on the game and we came out with the right result.”

The Foxes started the game with an offensive onslaught and may have had one of their best performances of the season in the first half. The ball moved fluidly and it seemed like everyone was on a threat on the perimeter and in the paint.

Fox Lane outscored Woodlands 27-14 in the first quarter and increased the lead to 53-30 after the first half. Tara Lombardi ignited the Foxes’ offense as she started the first quarter and increased the lead to 53-30 after the first half. Tara Lombardi

The second half began with a Falcons 11-1 run, led by a pair of athletic eighth graders, Teisha Hyman and Kelina Menard. Menard sank five 3s in the game, finishing with 23 points, while Hyman recorded 21 points, 10 rebounds, five assists and two blocks.

With 50 seconds remaining in the game, Menard intercepted a pass near midcourt and took the ball down the floor for a bucket and the foul. Her free throw cut the Fox Lane lead to 72-71. But that would be the last basket Woodlands would score, while the Foxes continued executing down the stretch. Great ball movement and then vision by Maria Violante, who had 24 points and 11 rebounds, led to a Kate Muller basket, extending the Foxes’ cushion to 74-71.

The Falcons were then forced to foul, but clutch free throws by O’Mahoney sealed the well-deserved win and earned the Foxes their 12th victory of the season.

“At one point, I was on the court, I was with my teammates, and I was just thinking if we want to make it to the County Center we’re going to have to be able to play with crowds like this,” O’Mahoney said. “Because teams in our section have really nice crowds, and knowing that we won and we played through this crowd, it really gives me hope that we can make it to the County Center.”

Unfortunately in the victory, Fox Lane lost one of its best players when Lombardi rolled her ankle with two minutes left. The sophomore guard was battling for a loose ball when she tumbled to the court.

“I’ve seen her get really knocked around and she smiles,” said Matts. “I’ve never seen her in this much pain. It’s an ankle, but when the girl ripped her down, her foot was caught underneath her so it could be anything at this point. I hope she’s OK, but we don’t know for a while.”

The Foxes played in the championship game of the Dapper McDonald Classic Saturday against Harrison, defeating the host Huskies 53-36.

By Monica D’Ippolito

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February 10 - February 16, 2015

S-3
Wildcats Cap a Memorable Regular Season by Beating Briarcliff

By Andy Jacobs

Coach Sean Mayer admits his Westlake girls’ basketball team is heading into uncharted territory with the sectional playoffs about to begin.

The Wildcats ended a nearly three-decade drought for the school by earning a share of their league championship last season and just recently clinched a second straight title with a victory over Croton on Senior Night that has transformed them from hunters to the hunted.

“To be able to come back and go undefeated in the league and win back-to-back league titles is really, really special for these kids and the school,” said Mayer, shortly after the Wildcats had put the finishing touches on a 15-3 regular season with a 63-45 win at Briarcliff on Friday. “It’s never been done before.”

Capping a busy week in which Westlake won three times in four days, guards Natalie Alfieri and Faith Lovett combined for 29 points as the Wildcats broke open a game against the Bears that was still tied midway through the third quarter. A 10-0 spurt that ended with a Lovett 3-pointer from the right corner with just under three minutes remaining put an end to the Bears and assured Westlake of finishing unbeaten in league play.

“Did I envision going undefeated in the league?” asked Mayer. “No, we’ve never done that before. We haven’t even come close to doing that before. I mean, to win on the road at Briarcliff and Pleasantville, I told ‘em (his players) you just want to stay in those games. And we stayed ‘em and won ‘em.”

For a while, though, it seemed Briarcliff just might be able to ruin the Wildcats’ quest to finish undefeated in league play. The Bears ran off eight straight points late in the opening quarter, getting a 3-pointer from Kelsey Simpson, a layup by Grace Orr and then another trey from eighth-grader Maddie Plank to grab a 12-11 lead.

But the quarter ended with Westlake regaining the advantage on a 3-pointer from Kelsey Simpson, a layup by Grace Orr and then another trey from eighth-grader Maddie Plank to grab a 12-11 lead.

The Bears surrendered a staggering 52 points in the second half against Ardsley and Hamlin knows they won’t make much of an impact in the playoffs without a big improvement.

“If we play poorly defensively, it doesn’t matter who we play,” he said. “We’ve just gotta find a way to put a whole game together.”

Meanwhile, the Wildcats’ Mayer will be looking for his players to continue their winning ways with the first round of the tournament set to begin on Thursday.

“The goal for this team is to win the sectional title,” he said. “We need four more wins and it’s not gonna be easy. But that’s our goal. We’re gonna give it a shot.”
Horace Greeley’s Nic Phillips applies some pressure in a 220-pound match.

Fox Lane’s Matt Witz battles Greeley’s Jacob Ferreira at 160 pounds.

ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

WRESTLING
Sectional Qualifying Division 2 at Greeley
Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015

Ryan Rudinger of Greeley is victorious in an early round match at 138 pounds.

Fox Lane’s Jonathan Clune reached the finals at 195 pounds.

Greeley’s Joe Sasso looks for an escape in his title match with Suffern’s Peter Oliveto at 126.

Greeley teammates Anthony Sasso (top) and Avery Glass compete in a match at 145 pounds.

Greeley senior Neil Stein has the advantage in a match at 132 pounds.
Hackett and Oskam Lead the Setters Past Georgian Court

By Andy Jacobs

It’s been a bit of a roller-coaster ride for the Pace University women’s basketball team this season, so head coach Carrie Seymour has to be hoping last Wednesday night’s nonconference victory over Georgian Court was a hint that her Setters were about to start rising again.

“We’ve been so up and down,” she admitted after the 83-63 home win, “that just trying to get in the habit of winning, putting together two good games in a row, was big for us.”

Seniors Margo Hackett and Jaclyn Oskam combined for 37 points, while sophomore center Kirsten Dodge grabbed 13 rebounds in just 15 minutes, as the Setters cruised past the Lions to even their record at 11-11 and gain some momentum for a late-season playoff push.

“I think we were a little flat in the first half, and that happens sometimes,” said Seymour. “We picked it up in the second half. The second half, we really stressed that we haven’t been moving the last couple of games. We just kind of stand around in a box and move the ball and don’t move any bodies. That’s a hard way to shoot the ball. The second half was much better movement. We were more inside-out, we were getting shots off of cuts, off of screens. It’s much easier, it’s in a better rhythm.”

The Setters wound up making seven of the 10 shots they took from beyond the 3-point arc in the second half as they gradually stretched a nine-point halftime lead to 25 with 5:45 left in the game. Georgian Court, winners of just two games so far, held its only lead of the evening on a Morgan Peacock jumper 30 seconds into the contest. But a 3-pointer by Geena Rosalbo 15 seconds later gave Pace a lead it never lost the rest of the way.

Despite making only 14 of their 39 shots from the field in the opening half, the Setters still led 38-29 at intermission. Hackett, who led Pace with 19 points, ANDY JACOBS PHOTOS

The Setters’ Yuri Sher shoots the ball in last Wednesday’s game.

Pace guard Margo Hackett dribbles the ball along the right baseline vs. Georgian Court.

Pace center Kirsten Dodge battles for a rebound with Tahira Matthews of Georgian Court.

Despite making only 14 of their 39 shots from the field in the opening half, the Setters still led 38-29 at intermission. Hackett, who led Pace with 19 points, continued on next page

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Hackett and Oskam Lead the Setters Past Georgian Court

connected on a pair of 3-pointers early in the second half to help build the Setters' lead to 48-34. A layup by the Lions' Tahira Matthews, who finished with 32 points and 17 rebounds, cut the Pace lead to 50-38 with 16:30 to go, but Georgian Court never got any closer.

After the basket by Matthews, Pace answered with a 3-pointer by Gabby Rubin, who wound up with 13 points and four steals. Yuni Sher followed with a fast-break layup and, after two free throws by the Lions' Justine Doran, Alexa Dietrich went coast to coast for a bucket and Rubin added a 3-pointer from the top of the key, increasing the Setters' lead to 20 points just over five minutes into the second half.

Any chance of a Georgian Court comeback disappeared when Oskam made a pair of 3-pointers during an 8-2 Setter run in 90 seconds that swelled their advantage to 77-52. For at least one evening, Seymour and her coaching staff could look on from the bench with little to worry about.

"I feel like, with this year's team, people sometimes try to overcomplicate what we're asking them to do," said Seymour. "There's been some games where we have to constantly correct them. I don't think anyone is trying to go off the page on their own, but we just overcomplicate things at times."

Of course, if the Setters don't wind up winning the majority of their six NE-10 Conference games remaining in the regular season, a berth in the playoffs would become complicated. They closed the week by falling 54-48 Saturday to host American International, the team they need to leapfrog in the standings.

"You can't do anything about how balanced our side of the conference is," said Seymour. "We're just gonna try to get as many (wins) as we can and see what happens. The goal this year was to finish better than .500 and that's still the goal."
Fox Lane Hockey Team Defeats the Gaels 4-3

A Big Halftime Lead Lifts Visiting Briarcliff to a Win Over Westlake