

Sports

Still alive

Flyers beat Sabres 5-2 to stay in playoff hunt

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LNP ALSO INSIDE: CLASSIFIEDS



BOB SHANK | ESU ATHLETICS

Lampeter-Strasburg graduate Ryan Smith plays in a game for East Stroudsburg earlier in the 2018-19 season.

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Smith striving for excellence

Work ethic serves L-S grad well in transition to college game

JOHN WALK
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Like any college team, the East Stroudsburg University men's basketball squad is no different when it comes to watching game film.

"We'll watch film as a team," veteran Warriors coach Jeff Wilson said during a phone interview phone last week. "Today we'll watch our defense, tomorrow we'll watch all offense."

Where freshman forward Ryan Smith sets himself apart in this area, though, is taking the extra step to watch additional film one-on-one with his college coach, oftentimes stopping by the coach's office when Smith finds time between classes at ESU, where he's studying exercise science.

"To have someone else tell me how to improve on my game and point out mistakes I've made is really helpful," Smith said.

"He wants to see what every one of his touches look like," Wilson said of Smith. "And that's unique. And that's one of the reasons why, as the year has gone on, he's shown improvement."

A year ago, Smith was dominating the Lancaster-Lebanon League, leading Lampeter-Strasburg to the program's first L-L tournament title. He's made a smooth transition to the college game. Well, smooth might be under-

IF YOU GO

- **When:** Saturday, 3 p.m.
- **Where:** Millersville University's Pucillo Gymnasium.
- **What:** East Stroudsburg at Millersville men's basketball.

selling it.

Taking over the starting forward position left vacant by graduated All-PSAC player Steve Harris, Smith has started in all but one game, sitting at second on the team in points per game (15.2), rebounds per game (7.9) and total blocks (25). He's posted 21 games with double-digit points, six games with 20 or more points, eight games with double-digit rebounds, and seven times recorded a double-double.

The output has helped the NCAA Division II Warriors to an 18-6 overall record and 15-3 mark in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference. ESU entered the week sitting in second place in the PSAC East standings.

However, Smith's success at the college level hasn't happened overnight. Nor has it happened just because the 6-foot-10, 240-pound freshman is simply taller than most everyone on the floor.

"He's enjoyable to work with in that he wants to be coached and

SMITH, page C10

DISTRICT 3 GIRLS BASKETBALL

CLASS 2A FINAL: LINDEN HALL 56, YORK CATHOLIC 27

LONG WAIT OVER

Saatman scores 14 to lead Linden Hall to championship

JOEL SCHREINER
LNP CORRESPONDENT

HERSHEY — A year ago, on this same floor, Linden Hall came up short and watched as Lebanon Catholic hoisted a gold championship trophy.

The Lions learned a lot that day and put it all to good use Tuesday afternoon at Giant Center when they got another crack at a district crown.

They exploded out of the gate and never looked back in the process of smothering York Catholic 56-27 to claim the District Three Class 2A girls basketball championship.

For Linden Hall, which opened its doors in 1745, it was a long time coming.

"It's exciting," coach Bob Kauffman said. "We've been waiting almost 300 years for a district title. It's very satisfying."

Senior Hetta Saatman, who will play next winter at NCAA Division I Drexel, has been waiting for the chance at redemption.

"It was a feeling we've never had before," said Saatman, who scored a game-high 14 points. "I'm so happy that we got it done today."

The Lions (18-3), who came in as the No. 3 seed, wasted little time getting it done, scoring the game's first seven points and eventually building a 23-7 advantage after the first quarter.

"I think that first quarter was very, very important," Saatman said.



CHRIS KNIGHT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Linden Hall's Hetta Saatman goes up for a shot against York Catholic during the District Three Class 2A girls basketball championship on Tuesday at Giant Center in Hershey. Linden Hall won its first district title.

"We're generally a second-half team. Today we came out with that first quarter and that gave us the confidence, and the drive and energy we needed to get through the game."

Favour Mbeledeogu got a hot-hand in the opening quarter as she

came off the bench to drain three 3-pointers, including a prayer at the buzzer that banked in.

"I just had a hunch that, in this environment, Favour was going to have a great game," Kauffman said. "She was just feeling it this week."

The top-seeded Irish

(18-7) closed the gap, a bit, to 28-16 at the half. That's when the Lions caught fire again and opened the second half with 12 unanswered points and stretched the lead to 40-16 with 2:56 left in the third.

York Catholic got its

LIONS, page C3

CLASS 5A SEMIFINAL: PALMYRA 54, SOLANCO 51 (OT)

Cougars rally to earn final bid

Knocked into consolation bracket, Golden Mules get Twin Valley Thursday

JOHN WALK
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The Palmyra girls basketball team did it again. After knocking off No. 5 Lampeter-Strasburg and No. 4 Spring Grove in the first two rounds of the District Three Class 5A playoffs, the No. 12-seeded Cougars went to top-seeded Solanco on Tuesday night and beat the Golden Mules 54-51 in overtime in the semifinal round.

"We've always had this

It's allowed to sting until you walk out the door. And then once you walk out the door we have another game to get ready for. We still have more to play for.

— Chad McDowell,
Solanco girls basketball coach

as possible," Palmyra third-year coach Mary Manlove said afterward. "We thought this was possible when I first

met this senior class. I was like, 'Do you want to cut some nets down?' ... Seeds don't really matter when you're battle-

tested like we are and playing present in the moment."

Palmyra advanced to Friday's championship game, where it'll face No. 3 Gettysburg at the Santander Arena in Reading.

Meanwhile, Solanco is back on its home floor Thursday night to host No. 2 Twin Valley in the third/fourth-place game to determine seeding for the

MULES, page C3

ATLANTIC LEAGUE

MLB to experiment with rules

Barnstormers' league signs 3-year agreement to be baseball's testing ground

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball will use the independent Atlantic League to experiment with rules changes and equipment.

MLB and the minor league announced a three-year agreement Tuesday that gives MLB the right to change the Atlantic League's rules.

Modifications for 2019 will be announced before openers on April 25.

The Atlantic League in December said extra innings this year will start with a runner on second base — the player in the batting order prior to the inning's leadoff hitter. The

same rule was instituted across affiliated minor league baseball last season.

MLB plans to install radar tracking technology in the eight Atlantic League ballparks and provide statistical services. It also will enhance its scouting of the league, which has

allowed players such as Rich Hill, Scott Kazmir and Stephen Drew to earn returns to the big leagues.

In recent years, MLB has used the Arizona Fall League to experiment with rules, including pace-of-play initiatives like pitch clocks.



FILE PHOTO

Nate Reed fires a pitch for the Lancaster Barnstormers during an Atlantic League game at Clipper Magazine Stadium on July 4. The Atlantic League signed a three-year agreement to let Major League Baseball experiment with rules changes in league games.

LANCASTER CATHOLIC 45, ELCO 24

Crusaders clinch district final bid

Lancaster Catholic girls bull past Raiders for the 4th time this season, lock up spot in Thursday's Class 4A title game

JEFF REINHART
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Make that Lancaster Catholic 4, Elco 0.

The Crusaders and the Raiders squared off for the fourth time this season on Tuesday night, this time in a District Three Class 4A girls basketball semifinal-round game at Lancaster Catholic.

And for the fourth time, it was all Crusaders.

Catholic held Elco scoreless in the first quarter, opening the game on an 11-0 run, Peyton Jaquis dropped five 3-pointers and scored 18 points, Kiki Jeffer-

son chipped in with 17 points, and the host Crusaders rocked the Raiders 45-24.

Catholic, the No. 1 seed, improved to 27-0, won its 59th game in a row, and advanced to Thursday's district title game opposite second-seeded Bishop McDevitt, which topped Kennard-Dale 56-44 in Tuesday's other semifinal.

The Crusaders will take on McDevitt (21-3) at 6:15 p.m. Thursday in Hershey's Giant Center, where Catholic will try and defend its crown, while angling for its 17th district title.

"Awesome," Catholic's

Cassie Peris said. "This means so much to us. It's rare when you get to go out and defend your league and district titles. This has been a wonderful experience for all of us."

Elco (21-6) will play in the third-place game on Thursday at 7 p.m. at Kennard-Dale.

Tuesday, Catholic — which topped Elco in the L-L championship game — feasted on 10 first-quarter turnovers and kept the Raiders off the scoreboard until Kailey Eckhart's layup with 6:45 to go in the first half. By then the Crusaders had opened up an 11-0 lead, and after weather-

ing the Raiders' 6-0 clip, Catholic roared back with a 14-0 blitz to end the first half.

During the spree, Peris had a post bucket, Jefferson had a conventional three-point play, and Jaquis splashed a pair of treys, the latter giving Catholic a healthy 24-6 lead with 1:11 left in the half.

"We wanted to jump them early and get the game in our tempo," Catholic coach Charlie Detz said. "They're a great team and we respect them, and we knew they were going to do good things. But we knew that if we could get

off to a good start and get the game in our tempo, good things were going to happen."

That turned out to be the case.

"I thought we played very timid in the first half," Elco coach Ashli Shay said. "I thought we did a nice job on the boards, but offensively, we just didn't show up; we didn't execute what we had planned."

Catholic led 25-6 at the break, and when Jaquis drilled a 3-pointer on the Crusaders' first trip of the third quarter, it stretched Catholic's run to 17-0 and the Crusaders were in charge, up

28-6.

Later, Peris had a coast-to-coast layup and Jefferson had two more buckets, stretching Catholic's cushion to 34-11. The Crusaders iced it early in the fourth, when Jaquis buried another 3-pointer — giving her 93 treys this season — and Jefferson had a pair of hoops in the lane and that was that.

"We were able to get a working lead and then we switched up some things defensively and it bothered them," Detz said. "I thought defensively we played super. To hold them to 24 points is outstanding."



CHRIS KNIGHT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

Above, the Linden Hall basketball team poses with the District Three Class 2A championship trophy after beating York Catholic 56-27 on Tuesday at Giant Center in Hershey. Below, Linden Hall's Marta Celebic shoots the ball.

Lions: Linden Hall wins 2A title

Continued from C1

first points of the half at the 2:43 mark, but the Lions took a 19-point lead into the final quarter.

"They've been working their tails off since sixth grade trying to get better," Kauffman said. "We came up short the last two years, just needed a little more aging, a little more seasoning. This year, they were ready."

If there was any lingering doubt coming out of the gate in the fourth, the Lions quickly erased it. Like they did in the first and third quarters, they started fast, going on

an 8-0 run to take a 50-23 lead.

"Four years this has been the goal," said Linden Hall senior Anya Miller, who scored six points. "To finally do it is great. I remember the pain we felt last year. I didn't want to feel that again."

With the win, the Lions will face the District Four runner-up in the first round of the PIAA Tournament on March 8.

"We've been saying all season it's not about who we play, it's about us," Kauffman said. "If we're playing our game the way we're supposed to, we'll do all right."



LANCASTER COUNTRY DAY 50, COVENANT CHRISTIAN 27

Cougars book spot in title game

LCD girls to play Greenwood for District 3 Class 1A crown on Thursday

STEVE NAVAROLI
LNP CORRESPONDENT

When a basketball team has talent the likes of Annabelle Copeland and Ashanti Duncan, along with a bevy of role players, it can typically go places.

In the case of Lancaster Country Day, it means going to Hershey for the 2019 District Three Class 1A girls championship game.

The two juniors were at it again during Tuesday evening's semifinal against Covenant Christian. Duncan scored a game-high 20 points, with 10 rebounds and three blocks, while Copeland dropped 17 with nine boards and four assists.

Because of it, the Cougars players were showered with Hershey Kiss-

es as they left the home floor following their 50-27 victory.

"It's so exciting," said Duncan, who was a part of the team that fell in the district semis last season.

Lancaster Country Day (18-5) will face Greenwood in Thursday's 4:30 p.m. district title tilt at the Giant Center.

Greenwood (20-4) is the top seed and a familiar foe from the Tri-Valley league, in which the Cougars played before joining the L-L prior to the 2018 school year.

"We are going to be prepared as much as we can for Greenwood in the short turnaround," LCD coach Hilary Waltman said. "It's an opponent that we are accustomed to playing. We

are going to rely on our fantastic leadership that we have.

"We have kids that put in the work in the offseason. It's not just the vocal leaders, but it's going out and working hard and doing things the right way."

Country Day scored the first nine points of the game on Tuesday, five of which came from Copeland. After the Falcons got on the board, Duncan converted a layup, then put back an offensive rebound for a 13-2 lead.

The second-seeded Cougars then finished the second quarter on an 11-2 run and opened the third with six straight to go up 32-10.

"We had to make sure we stuck to our game plan and make sure we

stayed disciplined and that we ran the plays the way we knew we had to run them," Duncan said.

Another eight-point run put the game out of reach as Country Day took a 40-15 lead into the final quarter, earning what Waltman said will be her first trip to the Giant Center as a coach.

"I've been there so many times to watch games. Once you step on that floor it's a whole different arena," she said. "The depth perception is different, the court is longer."

"We are not going to focus on those things. We are going to focus that it is hardwood, the baskets are 10 feet and we are going to go play our game plan and try to get the job done."

DISTRICT 3 GIRLS BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

Elizabethtown falls to Lower Dauphin

STAFF REPORT

Marena Lonardi picked up a game-high 20 points Tuesday night, but the Elizabethtown girls basketball team dropped a 44-39 decision to Lower Dauphin in a District Three Class 5A consolation semifinal.

The Falcons (18-7), led by a 16-point night from Grace Day, held the rest of the Elizabethtown girls basketball team in check, however. Sydney Pierson and Carly Sedun chipped in with six points apiece for the Bears (17-9).

Lower Dauphin, which also got 11 points from Lauren Kirsch on Tuesday, moved into the Class 5A fifth-place game Thursday against

Mechanicsburg, a 52-50 winner in double overtime against Spring Grove. Meanwhile, the Rockets (19-9) will host Elizabethtown. Game time will be announced.

Class 1A

Greenwood 55, Veritas Academy 19: With the win, top-seeded Greenwood (20-4) punched its ticket for Thursday's 4:30 p.m. district title game against Lancaster Country Day at Hershey's Giant Center.

Fifth-seeded Veritas (16-8), meanwhile, will travel to meet No. 3 Covenant Christian (17-6) on Thursday, with game time to be announced.

Mules: OT loss

Continued from C1

PIAA Class 5A tournament.

"We've already talked about moving on," Solanco fifth-year coach Chad McDowell said. "It's allowed to sting until you walk out the door. And then once you walk out the door we have another game to get ready for. We still have more to play for."

First half: A back-and-forth first quarter saw three lead changes and five combined 3-pointers, with Solanco (20-6) up 15-12. The Mules gained some breathing room in the second quarter and went to halftime up 25-17 after a trey from Grace Kreider (20 points).

"We were confident where we were," McDowell said. "We were playing at the pace we wanted to play. (Palmyra) made some corrections and played more their style in the second half."

Second half: Palmyra (15-10) forced Solanco into three turnovers and a missed shot in the final three minutes of the third quarter, which allowed the Cougars to close the frame on a 9-0 run and trim the deficit to 35-33.

Palmyra tried to slow the game to a grind with long defensive stretches and a ball-control offense. But Solanco continued to counter by trying to speed things up through a mix of man-to-man, zone, half-court trap and three-quarter-court trap

"We needed a 3-point shot. We were trying to set something up for penetration and kick to any of our shooters. We had four shooters in the game. We didn't get what we wanted."

— Chad McDowell,
Solanco girls basketball coach

defenses that led to 12 Palmyra giveaways in the first three quarters. The Cougars did a nice job of finally cracking those traps in the fourth quarter.

Palmyra's 6-foot senior forward, Olivia Richardson (16 points, 11 rebounds), twice tied it in the final minute of regulation with a clutch 3-pointer and a similarly clutch pair of free throws.

Solanco had 23 seconds left and possession in the fourth quarter but the Mules couldn't get a good look.

The same thing happened with five seconds left at the end of the overtime period.

"We needed a 3-point shot," McDowell said. "We were trying to set something up for penetration and kick to any of our shooters. We had four shooters in the game. We didn't get what we wanted."