

## WR girls headed to states

Monday, March 3, 2014

*Standard Journal*

By Barb Krohn

MILTON—After the Warrior Run girls basketball team's disappointing loss to Central Columbia coach Jon Weaver had been preaching it.

The message?

Big games require big performances.

Saturday in the District 4 Class AA consolation game with Montoursville Steph Shamburg responded to the challenge and as a result Warrior Run punched the last district ticket to the PIAA Class AA girls tournament.

Warrior Run, via its 43-37 win over the team it had beaten twice in the regular season, will play District 2 champion Dunmore at 6pm Friday at Lackawanna College.

"That's what we talked about for the last two days," said Weaver. "Somebody has to step up."

Message received to Shamburg who led all scorers with 24 points, 18 of which came in the second half when her team was clawing its way back from what was quite the first half deficit.

Out of synch at the beginning the Defenders suffered turnover after turnover and the spirited Warriors took advantage, leading 13-6 after the first quarter, 22-16 at the intermission.

"At halftime (coach said) that we needed to pick up on defense and get Steph the ball," said Abby Fisher who had taken over point guard duties for the injured Emily Webb.

That advice was heeded and indeed Shamburg scored the opening bucket in the second half. But then the Defenders turnover woes resumed and soon the Warriors were up by 10.

Faced with the game getting away from them, Weaver went to his beginning of the season senior starter, Laura Bastian.

"We were on the verge of bucking and she came in and scored right away," said the Defenders mentor. "It says a lot about Laura. (After being relegated to the bench) she has stayed positive and you can tell. Her defense was phenomenal."

Bleeding stopped, Warrior Run started the slow climb back. Down by five going into the final period Weaver didn't minx words at the mini-break.

"I just told them that you have eight minutes to do this nor not."

Helped by a revised defensive scheme that left a Warriors player open in favor of Madi Welliver permanently patrolling the paint, the Warrior Run D clamped down on Montoursville.

No matter that defensive standout Chloe Eisenhuth was mostly absent due to foul trouble, sophomore Rachel Grow stepped in admirably.

"I think that when Chloe (got in foul trouble) we knew we had to pick it up," said Fisher.

"It was do or die," said Shamburg who, in the fourth, got field goals when she could and took the freebies when they were offered.

Fisher, for her part, remembered another Weaver half-time mantra, "He said we had to take it to the basket stronger and that's what I did."

At times almost flinging herself into the paint, Fisher collected seven of her nine points at the foul line.

Shamburg went a perfect 6-6 at the charity stripe in the final period and finished 10-10 on the night.

"Our foul shooting was huge," said Weaver.

Finally with 2:30 left in regulation Shamburg hit a layup to give the Defenders their first lead of the game and the Warriors, who had not to that point scored a fourth-quarter field goal, could not respond.

“We knew that once we started to cut (their lead) down that it wasn’t over,” said Shamburg. “We had to keep playing our hearts out.”

When the buzzer sounded Weaver, who in his seven years at the Defenders helm has seen the team go from one or two wins to a state playoff berth, ran onto the court to celebrate with his team.

“It gives you goose bumps,” said the seventh-year Defenders coach. “To know where (the program was) and where we are now—this is a big win.”

“I’m really excited,” said Fisher. “This is huge.”

“For my senior year this is the best part,” said Shamburg. “No matter how we got (to the state tournament) we’re going.”

District 4 Class AA third place game

Saturday at Milton

Warrior Run 6 10 10 17—43

Montoursville 13 9 8 7—37

Warrior Run (21-6)

Abby Fisher 1 7-9 9, Chloe Eisenhuth 2 0-0 4, Steph Shamburg 7 101-24, Madi Welliver 2 0-2 4, Laura Bastian 1 0-0 2. Totals: 13 17-21 43.

3-pointers: None.

Fouled out: Eisenhuth.

Played but did not score: Maddie Beyer, Mackenzie Hays, Rachel Grow.

Montoursville (15-10)

Kirsten O’Malley 1 1-2 3, Alexis Marchioni 1 1-2 3; y 2-6-6 11, Marissa Hall 4 2-2 11, McKenzie Ruffing 1-2 3, Sylvyanne Raup 2 1-2 5, Kelsey Stine 3 1-4 7. Totals: 12 11-16 37.

3-pointers: O’Malley, Marchioni.

Fouled out: Marchioni.

Played but did not score: Marissa Folk, Alexis Weisner, Marlene Basseett.