

Defenders to face Ironmen

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By Chris Nagy (Sports Editor)

The Warrior Run girls already have one of the best records in school history and a top-three seed in the upcoming District 4 Class playoffs.

One would think the Defenders (18-4) would be happy with just that. But they aren't.

"The girls have worked hard all season," said head coach Jon Weaver. And that hard work paid off with a spot in the Heartland Conference playoffs that start tonight at Shamokin.

Warrior Run, the wildcard selection, will take on HAC-I champion Danville, which won the title last season in overtime over Millville, at 7:30p.m. tonight at Shamokin Area High School.

The first game will pit HAC-II champions Mount Carmel against Muncy, which finished second in HAC-III but earned the spot due to Millville opting out of the playoffs.

Weaver believes two teams making it out of HAC-II speaks to how tough the Defenders' road to the semifinals was.

"To finish 10-4 in the division we play in, and 18-4 overall we will take it," he said. "The girls have come a long way. They deserve to be in it."

Danville comes into the game 20-2 and is led by super sophomore Amber Renz, who is averaging a double-double with points and rebounds this season.

The Ironmen also have a solid tandem of guards in junior Sara Naessing and sophomore Paige Harris.

The Defenders come into the game with possible one of the best inside-outside attacks in the district.

Leading the way on the inside is senior Steph Shamburg, the school's all-time leading girls basketball scorer. Shamburg is averaging a double-double herself this season. Shamburg has gotten a lot of help inside from Madi Welliver. The freshman is averaging about eight points and eight rebounds a contest and has given the Defenders a solid one-two punch inside.

But it doesn't end there for Warrior Run.

Junior guard Abby Fisher has gotten hot as of late and leads the team in 3-pointers. She is joined on the back-court by freshman point guard Emily Webb who is starting to grow into the position and has shown signs of greatness-yet-to-come down the stretch.

Sometimes in a game like this it comes down to the little things that don't show up in the score sheet and if that is the case, Warrior Run might have the edge.



Warrior Run's Madi Welliver drives to the basket against Central Columbia earlier this season. Welliver has become a solid one-two punch inside the paint with Steph Shamburg, background.

Seniors Chloe Eisenhuth and Laura Bastian are two of the best defenders in the area and Eisenhuth is known to throw her body around to get loose balls and rebounds.

The Defenders know they go into the game as an underdog, but Weaver and his team are fine with that.

"We are looking forward to it," said Weaver. "It is a fun opportunity and we are just going to go down there and see what we can do against the upper division.

"We are going to give it our best shot."