

The Living Room Times

EXTRA

285th overall edition — Nineteenth special edition of 1995-1996 season

Friday, March 1, 1996

Indians escape in 2 OT's

Survive colossal scare from Fairfield; advance to quarterfinal against Masuk



Hey, Indians fans, can you say “March Madness”?

On Leap Year Day, February 29, the #6-seeded Newington girls basketball team survived the scare of a lifetime, and earned the right to play into the month of March, as they won their second-round CIAC state tournament game against #11-seeded Fairfield, escaping with a 62-61 win in double overtime.

Coach Sandy Pilz described it as a “one in a million” game.

“Anybody in the world who’s associated with this team would be extremely proud of them tonight,” said Pilz, whose Indians came from behind in regulation and again in both overtimes. “Coming back from five-point deficits in both the first overtime and the

(Continued on page 2)



Indians reach quarterfinals; Lapciuk scores 1000th point

(Continued from page 1)

second overtime to win. They really played—” he seemed at a loss for words for a few moments, then continued, “I think, on two occasions, when everybody in the gym thought they were going to lose, they pulled it out. I couldn’t be prouder of this team.”

Newington took the lead for good, 60-58, in the second overtime on a layup by Ela Lapciuk with 1:15 to go (shown in the picture at right.) Lapciuk made it 62-58 when she hit two free throws a few seconds later.

But Fairfield battled back. With 22 seconds remaining, Kelly Nash put back a teammate’s missed shot to bring the Mustangs within 62-60. Seconds later, Melissa Stanhewicz stole a pass from Newington’s Tina Lessard. Stanhewicz drove to the hoop, was fouled by Lessard, and went to the line for two free throws.

She hit the first, cutting the Indians’ lead to 62-61 with twelve seconds left. But when she had the chance to tie the game, her second free throw bounced off the back of the rim. Lapciuk came down with the rebound.

The Indians passed the ball around to avoid being fouled until time expired. Kim Milardo was holding the ball when the buzzer sounded.

This is the seventh consecutive year that Newington has advanced to the quarterfinals. They will play #2 Masuk of Monroe on Saturday at a neutral site. Masuk advanced by defeating Bristol Eastern 68-43 Thursday night. It was Masuk’s 50th consecutive win.

“I give them credit,” Pilz said of the Fairfield Mustangs. “They played excellent, and got us to really think about when we were doing.”

“You hate to have to go through a game like that, but a game like that makes you better the next round, because how could they feel anymore pressure than [tonight’s game]?”

In addition to the importance of the game itself, a major milestone was passed for one Newington player. Junior forward Ela Lapciuk, the Indians’ leading scorer, passed the 1,000-point plateau on a basket with 4:30 left in the third quarter. She was honored after the game.

“I didn’t know it was coming,” Lapciuk said of her milestone. “It’s not the first thing on my mind. It’s good, but it’s over, so now we can just deal with the next game.”

Toward the end of the game, Lapciuk said the team was very nervous. “I thought they were going to give up, and I’m like, ‘You guys can’t give up....It’s not our seniors’ last game, we’re not going down hard. Play with heart.’ And we did.”



Left: This Ela Lapciuk layup in the second overtime put the Indians ahead for good, 60-58 with 1:05 left in the game. Right: Earlier in the game, she scored her 1000th career point, making her the third Newington player ever to accomplish that.



Celebrating Newington’s come-from-behind overtime win on Thursday night are players (above) and fans (below).

