

Mater Dei, Pinckneyville favored at EA-WR

Knights derail Nashville to win regional; Panthers throttle Gibault to advance

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WOOD RIVER – The **Breese Mater Dei Knights** were victorious in perhaps the toughest 2A Regional in the state, which was held at Carlyle.

Coach Ron Schadegg's Clinton County warriors took on all comers this season with a brutal run of games, all of which paid off big in the postseason.

The Knights, led by 6-foot-8 senior Nolan Gerling cruised past state-ranked Nashville to advance to the sectional, 60-40, as Gerling topped all scorers with led the way with 21-points while 6-foot-4 classmate Ben Lampe added 11-points.

Both are over double-figures by average this season. Gerling is at 16.1 points a contest while Lampe checks in at 12.8.

Zach Haake, a 6-foot-7 senior forward, adds 10.7 p.p.g. to the totals.

As if the scoring numbers were impressive enough, each of them are averaging over four rebounds a night with Gerling leading with 6.9 r.p.g.

Another senior, 6-foot-5 Zach Dieters, is chipping in 7.7 points and his size, added to the others, makes the Knights one of the tallest frontcourt combos in the south.

Six-foot-one senior guard Sam Toennies adds 4.7 points to the mix.

With that sort of size and athletic ability, plus a tough as nails schedule, the Knights survived the regional and looking for their first trip to Peoria since the tournament shifted to Carver Arena in 1996.

Mater Dei's schedule is as tough as any you will find, littered with 3A and 4A powerhouse teams and 2A squads that are highly regarded.

The result is a 21-10 record and a trip to the sectional for the first time since 2001.

Breese Mater Dei lost to the Hornets twice during the season before jumping out the an 18-4 first quarter lead and holding that large margin for the remainder of the contest to get to the sectional.

The **Greenville Comets** are the next opponent for the Knights and head coach Todd Cantrill has his club playing at the highest level this program has ever reached.

This club sits at 28-3 after topping Hillsboro to win the Vandalia 2A Sectional on Friday night, 48-41.

Greenville, who went unbeaten in the South Central Conference, only have losses to Okawville, Nashville and Breese Central.

Having a pair of senior guards helps the leadership on the floor for Coach Cantrill. Five-foot-ten senior Will Schaufelberger and 5-foot-11 senior Craig Faulkner form this veteran backcourt for the Comets.

Up front the Comets have vets Austin Lawrence, a 6-foot-11 senior, and 6-foot-2 senior Jacob Hall and anchoring the middle is Tyler Hutchinson, a 6-foot-5 senior. Faulkner scored 14-points while Lawrence and 6-foot-4 junior Dillon Hallemann added

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nine-points each in the Hillsboro win.

The Comets won the Vandalia Holiday Tournament and they split the two games they played against Okawville; winning on the Rockets home floor after losing by 20-points at the Carlyle Kaskaskian Tournament early in the season.

Mater Dei and Greenville both lost to Okawville and Nashville this season.

The **Pinckneyville Panthers** are the champs of the Chester 2A Regional after trouncing Waterloo Gibault Catholic, 53-39, on Friday night.

Coach Bob Waggoner's Panthers are a defensive minded crew and are led by seniors Nolan Luke, Tristian Fisher and Brian Taylor.

Luke is a 6-foot-2 forward while Fisher and Taylor are 6-foot guards.

Six-foot-one sophomore Tyler Rulevish has stepped up for the Panthers this season, winners of the Benton Invitational while sporting a 24-6 record after topping the Hawks in the regional final in the rubber game between the two schools.

Luke tops the squad with 13.9 points a game while Fisher nets 11 p.p.g. Taylor adds 7.2 points a game. Six-foot-three senior Adam Banach averages 5.6 points and 3.6 rebounds. Coach Waggoner's club have been outstanding at the foul line as a team; connecting on 73 percent of their tries for the season.

The Panthers also have wins over Carterville, Marshall, 3A Olney East Richland and Jerseyville.

According to the IHSA website, Friday night's regional championship is the 50th of this program's history and two more wins this week will make it 20 sectional titles for the Panthers.

The **Roxana Shells** pulled another of the Black Friday upsets as they derailed Piasa Southwestern on the Birds home floor, 56-53, to advance to a gym that is very familiar to Coach Mark Briggs and his club.

The Shells are long time rivals of the Oilers and are just a few blocks from EA-WR.

This season Roxana is 16-14 with Friday night's win probably the biggest.

Six-foot-one junior Trace Gentry is leading the team so far with 16.2 points a game.

Zach Golenor, a 5-foot-11 sophomore, has added 10 a night for the Shells while Randy Skiff, a 5-foot-10 senior, adds 8.7. Chance Foss, a 5-foot-8 junior, tosses in 7.7 p.p.g. Skiff scored 16 and Foss 15 in the win over Piasa Southwestern on Friday night, and Gentry added 11-points, including a big 3-pointer in overtime.

This is Coach Briggs' second regional title and only the fifth boy's basketball regional in the program's history.

Jack Bullock is the Editor/Web Publisher of A Baseline View.com. For the past 18-seasons, ABV has covered boy's high school basketball in southern Illinois. Previews, Rankings, Scores, Standings, Tournament Brackets and Game Stories for over 100-teams.