

**CRUSHERS ARE CHAMPS:** The scene was Richland High School and the stage was set for high drama as Jim Spisak led the way for the Crushers with 17 points but the two points scored by Jack Schrey with just 2.8 seconds were the dagger that Bishop McCort used to defeat Cambria Heights 53-51 to hoist their first LHAC banner since 2005 and sixth in school history.

Schrey finished with just eight points, but none bigger than his clutch shot at the end of the game. Joining Spisak in double figures was Mason del Rosario with 12.

Crushers' coach Pat Hollern commented on the win: "It is a tremendous accomplishment to win the LHAC because of the variety of teams that our league offers. You have to be able to win your share of road games and win your home games. Over the past five seasons our conference has won 10 District Championships in Class A, AA, and AAA and our section has won 9 of them. We were able to execute well both offensively and defensively. Jack Schrey did a good job on John Link--Mason del Rosario did a good job on Steve Sharbaugh and Zach Freeman was the unsung player guarding Ian Vescovi. Offensively we shared the ball and took good shots for the most part. The Highlanders were led by John Link's 17, he was the only Cambria Heights player in double figures."

It was a sweep for Bishop McCort as the Lady Crushers defeated Bishop Guilfoyle 33-24, giving the Lady Marauders, the number one ranked team in the state in Class A, their first loss of the season. That makes it back-to-back LHAC titles for Bishop McCort.

**ROUNDING OUT THE REGULAR SEASON:** Before the postseason is preview, let's recap what went down in the final week of the regular season:

- **MONDAY:** Joe Dziabo had a double-double with 15 points and 17 rebounds as Penn Cambria defeated Central Cambria 54-48.....Carlton Wyatt had 12 while teammate Richard Agurs had 10 points and 10 rebounds in Johnstown 50-33 victory over non-conference Punxsutawney.....Luke Gallaher had 24 and Brett Oswalt had 19 as Forest Hills defeated Bishop Carroll 59-54.....Bedford's Mark Scott had a team-high 18 points as the Bisons defeated Everett 61-51.
- **TUESDAY:** Bishop Guilfoyle defeated Westmont 47-41 in an inter-sectional match-up.
- **WEDNESDAY:** Cody Hemminger's 22 points were good enough to help Somerset edge Central Cambria 79-76.....Bill Dill had 15 and Josh Penrose had 14 as Bishop McCort defeated Forest Hills 63-51.....Chad Panick's 15 points were a team-high for Bishop Carroll as the Huskies got past Penn Cambria 52-47.
- **THURSDAY:** Although well below his season average, Jordan Miller's 27 points were good enough to help the Red Devils sneak past Richland 66-65.....Chris Kessler had 15 while Justin Crisafulli added 12 in a Westmont 52-43 win over Bedford in what was the season finale for both squads.
- **FRIDAY:** State College defeated Johnstown 56-45 in a non-conference game. Paul Weatherly's 17 led the Trojans in the losing effort.

**PLAYOFF PREVIEW:** As mentioned last blog, eight of the twelve LHAC member schools will be participating in the postseason: 2 at Class AAA, 4 at Class AA and 2 at Class A. Let's take a look at each of these match-ups:

Class AAA:

Somerset is the fifth seed and they are taking on fourth seed Indian Valley in what is really a play-in game as the winner will take on #1 seed Central. These two teams will play Tuesday at 7:30 at the Altoona Fieldhouse.

Johnstown is the second seed and they will be playing third seeded Tyrone. This contest is site/date/time TBA currently, but it will be no earlier than Thursday.

Trojans' head coach Dave Roman, Jr. is concerned with what he's seen on tape from the Golden Eagles: "I have seen Tyrone and we have a few tapes of them. They are really impressive. What stands out the most is how aggressive they are on both offense and defense. They put tremendous pressure on the ball and in the passing lanes. They play outstanding team defense. Offensively they like to attack the rim. We shot charted the games we have on them and the shot chart is real crowded near the rim. To be successful, we will have to handle their pressure defense. Secondly, we will have to contain their attacking style on offense. Lastly, we know it will be a close game so we have to learn from our previous mistakes and finish with better game management."

Class AA:

Cambria Heights (top seed) and Bishop McCort (second seed) have byes and will await the winners of the contests underneath them in that place of the bracket. For the Highlanders, they will play the winner of West Branch (eighth seed) and Mount Union (ninth seed) while McCort is guaranteed a playoff contest against a fellow LHAC school in Richland (seventh seed) or Central Cambria (tenth seed).

The game between Richland and Central Cambria will take place on Monday at Johnstown High School.

Rams' coach Tim Koshute had some words on the way D6 does seedings, as well as his first round opponent Central Cambria: "My opinion is that you shouldn't have to play a team from your conference in the first round of the play-offs regardless of the seedings. There needs to be something done about how the selection for the seedings. Some conferences are alot stronger than others and that is not being considered by the committee. I really believe that the Laurel Highlands Conference was slighted by the match-ups in Boys A and AA. The purpose of the playoffs are to get the best representative teams in the state tourney. About CC we must do a better job on defense against Jordan Miller."

Heights' and McCort's games will be later in the week, site/date/time TBA but as above with Johnstown, it will be no earlier than Thursday.

Hollern knows that whatever squad his Crushers will face, they will be in for a challenge: "We have actually played Central Cambria and Richland twice this season because of the UPJ tournament. And no we will not be complacent because both teams are very well coached and will be ready to play."

Class A

Bishop Carroll is the top seed here and they will await the winner between Bishop Guilfoyle (eighth) and Glendale (ninth). The contest between BG and Glendale is scheduled for Monday at 7:30 at Central Cambria High School.

Josh Baker briefly commented on BG's game with Glendale: "Glendale presents many unique challenges for our ball club. They use a variety of defenses and are very active in each one. We have to stop their transition game and force them to play at our tempo. Also, limiting penetration on defense and being patient on offense will be keys to the game for us."

The Huskies won't play their first game until Thursday at the earliest.

BC coach Cosie Aliquo commented on his potential first game opponents: "The match-ups against those two teams will be tough for us. First against Glendale we played them twice and won but we had Steve Greene both times. People don't understand how important he is to this team. But, they also don't give enough credit to the rest of the players because to be 16-6 with the injuries that we've had, has been awesome. Glendale has nice size and gives us a few match-up problems. Bishop Guilfoyle is so well coached. They're are a lot like us because they get everything they can out of each player."

**RANKINGS:** Again, just Bishop Carroll as an honorable mention in Class A for the LHAC as far as teams in the statewide rankings released by the Harrisburg Patriot-News.

