

# Black & Gold

## Lady Warriors win CIC tourney

**By Daniel L. Chamness**  
 The Champ is Here! Or in this case, the Champs are here! The Tuscola Lady Warriors could easily be chanting that at this point. Not only did they win their Central Illinois Conference Tournament quarterfinal game, with relative ease, they then advanced to the semi-final and vanquished Shelbyville, in the tournament final, they quite simply avenged an earlier loss, beating the top seed, Clinton 50-38. Tuscola, who not only hosted, but entered the tournament as the number two seed. Tuscola is 18-7 on the year. They are 4-1 in the Central Illinois Conference, "We wanted to finish this and win this one," said Maddie

Stahler, a Tuscola senior. "When they beat us here, that put some fire in our gut for sure. We got embarrassed last time and we wanted to prevent that from happening. Defensively, we wanted to step up and not foul. When we were leading by 15 points after one half, it set them back on their heels a bit." The Warriors, who led only by three points, 15-12, at the end of the first stanza, had opened up a 14-point lead by halftime. The Maroons did not score one bucket in the second quarter and instead they were limited to just four free throws. Izzy Wilcox started the scoring in the second quarter with a pair of charity tosses. That was

followed by a turn-around-jumper by Sydney Moss with 5:37 to play in the first half. The sophomore post player grabbed a rebound and set it skyward to score on a one-footer. With a three pointer from the left wing by Taylor Musgrave at the 4:55 mark, the Warriors had a 10-point, 22-12 lead. The Maroons had been held scoreless in the quarter up to that point. Midway through the quarter, Clinton got a free throw from Candyce Evans and another from Heidi Humble. The other two were scored later in the period by Kaitlyn Rauch. By halftime, the Lady Warriors held a 31-16 lead. Harley Woodard scored twice early in the third quarter, both were regulation buckets. A third bucket was scored early by senior Sophie Kremitzki and the Tuscola scoring was completed at the 1:08 mark when junior guard Ella Boyer, who drained a three-pointer from the left corner.

The Maroons won the third and fourth quarter battles, but it was not enough to win the war. They would close the lead to within single digits twice, once when Rauch nailed a pair of free throws and once when Humble had a steal and layup. The cutting the lead to eight points on two occasions was as close as the Maroons would get. When the lead was cut to single digits, eight points in both cases, the Lady Warriors immediately responded and put it back in double figures. A mere 20 seconds after the lead was cut to 42-34, Ella Boyer nailed both of her free throws to increase the lead back to 10 points. Kremitzki hit a pair of free throws at the 2:50 mark to put the Warriors ahead by double digits for good. "Defense was responsible for the win tonight," said Michael Rosenbaum, who was filling in as head coach. "This was a huge win for us tonight. We lost to Clinton earlier in the year. When we lost to them it was a bit of a wake up call. We

had "A Come To Jesus Meeting" and knew we could not get beat like that by them again. We knew it was inevitable that we would play them again, weather it be in the CIC Tournament or the Holiday Hoopla. Harley played the absolute best game of her career tonight. A big shout out and thank you to her." Woodard led the Warriors with 14 points. She drained six field goals and hit both free throw opportunities. The junior was joined in double figures by fellow junior Ella Boyer (12 points) and Kremitzki (11 points). Boyer drained a pair of treys and hit one regulation bucket. Boyer was perfect from the free throw line, nailing all four opportunities. Kremitzki was even better from the charity stripe as she hit 7-of-7. She also had two field goals. The scoring for the Warriors was rounded out by Wilcox, who scored all six of her points from the charity stripe. Musgrave finished with three points, while Maddie Stahler

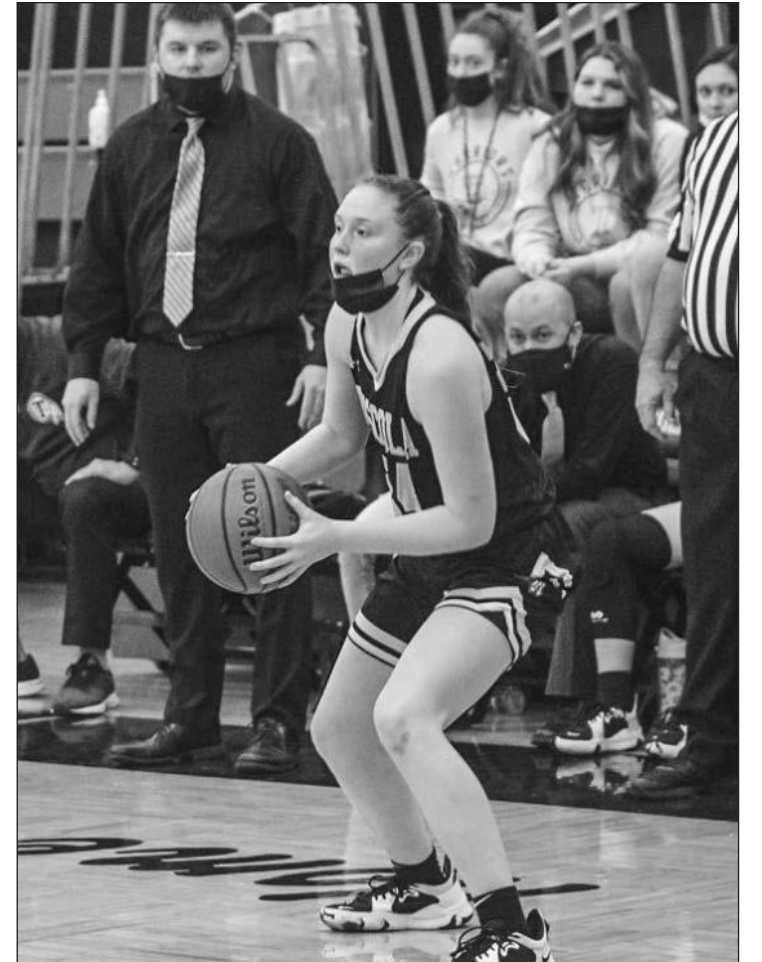
and Moss had two each. For the record, the Warriors netted 21-of-22 free throw opportunities. "We hit the charity stripe exceptionally hard this week," said Rosenbaum. "The girls really bought in to it. We talked about clearing your mind and focusing when you are at the free throw line. It certainly paid off in a big way." Rauch scored 11 points to lead Clinton. Mallory Cyrulik was also in double figures for the Maroons, scoring 10 points. "We beat them pretty handily six weeks ago," said Clinton mentor Josh Williams, "It is tough to beat them two times in a year and in addition, they have that "championship experience". They have been in five of the six title games. They were fired up a little bit and really wanted to win this very badly. Worse than we did. They got us in foul trouble and it forced us not only to make some adjustments, but we played more conservatively and more timid."



MADDIE STAHLER and Taylor Musgrave celebrate while raising the Central Illinois Conference Championship Trophy over their heads. The two helped Tuscola top Clinton to win the title. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.



HARLEY WOODARD WORKS her way around a Clinton defender on Thursday night. The Warriors, under the guidance of Michael Rosenbaum, the assistant coach, defeated Meridian, Shelbyville and finally, Clinton to win the CIC Tournament. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.



TUSCOLA SENIOR MADDIE STAHLER decides what to do with the ball in Thursday night's game against the Clinton Maroons. Looking on are one of the three referees and Tuscola assistant coach Michael Rosenbaum. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.

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