

Black & Gold

Tuscola wins Meridian Regional, advances to Tuscola Sectional

By Daniel L. Chamness

At least one more time. The Tuscola Lady Warriors had senior night a few weeks ago; after winning the Illinois High School Association Class 1A Regional at Macon Meridian, they have advanced to the Class 1A Sectional held at Tuscola High School. They enter the sectional with a record of 24-7. Their first round opponent: a very game Neoga, who won the Altamont Regional, beating Altamont 48-32. Neoga also owns a victory over the Tuscola Warriors in the title game of the Monticello Holiday Hoopla.

"We scouted them playing Salt Fork and we have a healthy respect for them and what they have accomplished," said Tim Kohlbecker, Tuscola's head coach. "Neoga will be a challenge for us. We count on Neoga to crash the boards really hard and move around really well, even when they do not have the ball. They are extremely tall."

The Lady Warriors earned their 24th victory of the year and the regional title with a 43-

33 triumph over the Central A&M Lady Raiders. The Lady Warriors were extremely adept at using the free throw line, while the clock was stopped, to put points on the board. While that did not give the Warriors the lead, it allowed the Warriors to creep away and put the game out of reach.

The Warriors took the lead for good midway through the third quarter when Sophia Kremitzki nailed a trey. Her three-pointer started a 9-0 Lady Warrior run, which saw four different players score points. In addition to the trey by Kremitzki, sophomore Sydney Moss stole the ball and raced down the middle of the court to bucket a layup. That was followed by an eight-footer by Ella Boyer and another by Taylor Musgrave. Boyer assisted Musgrave's bucket at 1:47. At the close of the third quarter, the Warriors, who were only leading by one point at halftime, had a 29-24 lead.

"I noticed their main guard did not have the ball, bringing it up the court," said Moss re-



THE TUSCOLA LADY WARRIORS proudly display their newly one IHS Class 1A Regional Plaque they won on Saturday afternoon at Macon Meridian. From left to right in the front row are: Ava Boyer, Sophia Kremitzki, Taylor Musgrave, Maddie Stahler and Ella Boyer. in the back row from left to right are: Lia Patterson, Sydney Moss, Harley Woodard, Izzy Wilcox and Molly Macauley. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.



DURING THE REGIONAL title game with Central A&M, Sydney Moss eyes the basket and prepares to make a free throw. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.

calling the steal and layup. "The Raiders improved so much. On Tuesday, I want to play really hard on Tuesday night. I played well on defense tonight."

The fourth quarter opened with Musgrave and Boyer scoring in the opening minute. Musgrave scored at the 7:39 mark. Boyer followed 16 ticks of the clock later with a pair of free throws. While they were flirting with extending the lead to double digits, but that did not happen until the bitter end. With 1:06 to play, the Lady Raiders Makenzie Sloan drained three from the charity stripe after being fouled on a three-point attempt. It cut the Lady Warrior lead to 38-32. But the Warriors would nail 5-of-6 free throw opportunities to seal the victory. Kremitzki was responsible for four of those free throws as the senior

was nothing but perfection in the final minute from the free throw line. Izzy Wilcox ht one more with 10 seconds to play. Kremitzki was the only Lady Warrior in double figures, scoring 10 points. The senior had plenty of back up though. Harley Woodard and Boyer each had eight points, while Miusgrave had seven. The scoring was rounded out by Moss (four points), Wilcox (three points) and Maddie Stahler (three points).

"We worked really hard as a team this year and I think tonight we were motivated by

a chance to play at home," said Musgrave. "They played so hard. We played slow and methodical at the end. With each trip down the floor, we want to score, either from the field or from the free throw line. We are looking forward to Tuesday night."

Not only will the Tuscola team be featured at the Sectional, but so will two Lady Warrior seniors. Stahler and Kremitzki grabbed two of the four advancing slots from Meridian.

Stahler nailed 8-of-15 from beyond the arc. She advanced

immediately, while Kremitzki advanced after a tiebreaking round. Initially Kremitzki would nail seven shots in the first 15. In the tie breaking round, she nailed 5-of-10 to advance.

"Moving on was a huge accomplishment for me," said Stahler. "I am pleased I get to shoot to further advance in the Queen of the Hill contest."

Kremitzki hit 7-of-15 from beyond the arc. That forced a tiebreaker and the senior nailed half of her tiebreaking opportunities, hitting five treys to move on.



SOPHIA KREMITZKI (32) holds the ball up in the air and protects it from the defensive efforts of Central A&M. The Tuscola senior scored 10 points, which was exactly the margin of victory. With a 43-33 win over the Lady Raiders, Tuscola advances to the Tuscola Class 1A Sectional. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.

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