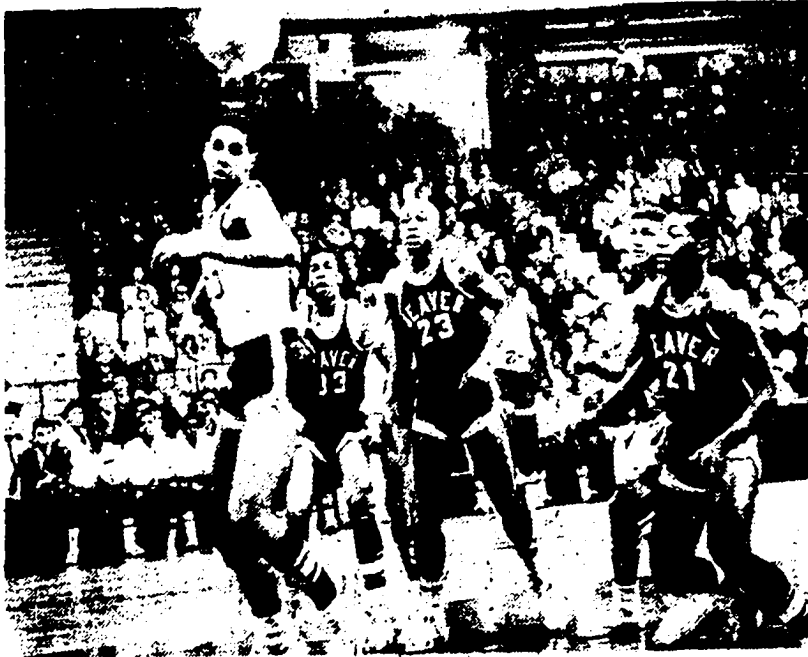


Owls Wallop Weaver by 65-51 Score



ARENA DEEP FREEZE: Generally it's the football that takes a crazy bounce, but it happened Monday night at the New Haven Arena in the HPHS game when the ball hit the rim and bounded away from the players. The ball was caught in mid air, suspended like the moon, while the players assume motionless poses. Identifiable players are Stan Poole, Hartford (30); Ricks of Weaver, (33); Lee of Weaver, (23); Woods of Hartford (24), and Manderville of Weaver (21). (Courant Photo by Art Warmisley).

Reach State Final For First Time In History of School

BY PAT BOLDUC
 Courant Sports Writer
 NEW HAVEN — Favored Hartford High advanced to the championship game in the 39th annual Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Class A basketball Tournament Monday night, with a brilliant 65-51 semifinal triumph over arch-rival Weaver. A disappointing crowd of 2,264 was on hand for this third meeting of the Hartford schools. The victorious Owls now will engage defending champion Wilbur Cross for the prized A title at the Arena Thursday. Tapoff is scheduled at 7:45.

Impressive Ed Griffin, the Owls' sparkling all-around junior, teamed with steady Len Kostek and dependable Otis Woods to spark the third rated Hartford quintet to its most important victory to date. Griffin led all scorers with 22 points, garnered rebound honors with 12 and time and again fed the fast-breaking Kostek for additional hoops. Kostek chipped in with 17 points and Woods, who treated the crowd to some deadly long range bombing, wound up with 14 markers.

Glittering Display
 Surprisingly enough, the sixth ranked Beavers broke even with the sharpshooting Owls in the rebounding department despite the combined efforts of Griffin, Captain Stan Poole and hard-working Pat Burke who collected 13 rebounds.

But the well-balanced Owls, who thrilled their partisan fans with a glittering display of teamwork throughout, led in all other departments. Coach Joe Kubachka's club shot at a brilliant 61 per cent average from the floor and converted 19 of 28 foul shots.

Weaver hit on 22 of 55 free throws. Both clubs hit on 38 per cent of their shots in the opening half. Captain John Lee scored 14 points for the Beavers who were unable to penetrate Hartford's stubborn 3-2 zone defense with any degree of consistency. Tall Cliff Demers had 11 tallies and his fine shooting late in the fourth quarter brought the losers to within eight points of their two-time conquerors. Tireless Bob Ricks contributed nine points and 11 solo rebounds for Coach Frank Scelza's squad.

Deliberate Attacks
 The rivals opened the crucial contest with identical 3-2 zones. Both clubs were deliberate in their attacks, content with moving the ball and waiting only for the good shots. But with Woods finding the range with two corner shots and Griffin and Kostek turning two steals into key baskets, the Owls were out in front, 17-7 at the first turn.

Weaver discarded its zone in favor of a man-to-man defense in the second period. Although outscored 6-4 in baskets, the Owls converted eight of 11 charity tosses enroute to a 33-21 advantage at half-time.

Offensive mistakes by the Beavers paved the way for Hartford leads of 19-7, 25-12 and 31-14 before closing hoops by Lee left the Beavers trailing by eight points at intermission.

The Beavers led only once in the first half, 4-2, on consecutive hoops by Lee and southpaw Mel Newton.

Uncanny long range shooting by Woods and Kostek triggered the speedy Owls to a 51-37 bulge at the third turn. Actually Hartford led by 21 points, 47-26, midway in the third quarter mainly through the excellent playmaking of Griffin.

Weaver made a belated bid for victory in the final quarter as Demers and Lee suddenly dented Hartford's defense with timely baskets. The game Beavers fought back to within eight points of the lead, 59-51, with still three minutes to play.

Suddenly Weaver's rally cooled off. The Beavers missed the first try of a one-and-one foul shot situation and failed to hit on three shots from the floor. And on each miss either Griffin or Poole came down with the rebound which spelled defeat for the Weaver club.

Griffin then gave the victors their final margin after a Hartford timeout with only 55 seconds left to play. The talented backcourt veteran converted both attempts of a one-and-one charity toss, fired a long pass to Kostek all alone under the basket for what turned out to be a three-point play and added another foul shot before the final buzzer.

Third Clash
 Thursday's anticipated finale will be the third meeting between Hartford and Cross. The Owls scored an easy win in the first encounter at Trinity but the classy Governors, shooting for their fourth straight Class A crown, more than squared matters the second time around at the Arena. Cross has a 22-game winning streak working on the spacious Arena court.

Both finalists will represent Connecticut in the New England tournament at Boston March 16-17-18. It's the first such venture for the popular Kubachka and his deserving players.

Some sort of a record was established by the Owls who beat their Hartford rivals, Weaver and Bulkeley, three times each this winter. The unusual mark was made possible by tournament pairings which sent the Capitol City champions against Bulkeley and later Weaver, sandwiched around a romp against Hamden in the quarter-finals.

Other Teams Bound For Hub
 The other known New England-bound clubs are state champions Cbeverus High of Portland, Maine; Spaulding of Barre, Vt.; and Portsmouth, N.H. Smith Academy of Hatfield qualifies as the winner of the Western Massachusetts tourney.

To gain their titles this four-some accomplished the following feats Saturday night:

Taller Cheverus defeated previously unbeaten Presque Isle 75-54.

Smaller Spaulding outhustled Bellows Falls 58-51.

Portsmouth upset heavily favored Nashua 64-54.

Smith Academy edged Worcester Commerce 50-48 to become the first team in the 24-year history of the competition to win two straight crowns.

Westerly, East Providence, Hope of Providence and Rogers of Newport remain in the running for the Rhode Island championship with the semi-finals set for Tuesday night and the final Friday.

Eastern Massachusetts began the quarterfinals Monday night with Fairhaven, Attleboro, New Bedford, Somerville, Beverly, Archbishop Williams of Braintree, Durfee of Fall River and Lawrence Central Catholic in the field.

HARTFORD		WEAVER	
Player	Points	Player	Points
Griffin	22	Lee	7
Poole	8	Newton	5
Woods	14	Ricks	4
Burke	2	Manderville	3
Kostek	17	Demers	11
Maddox	0	Blocker	0
Jenkins	0	Hillier	0
Smith	0	Martin	0
Torascio	0	Marks	0
Totals 65		Totals 51	
Score at Halftime, 33-21, Hartford.			