Local report

HPHS moves on to final

Undefeated Owls eliminate Xavier

By PAUL DOYLE
Courant Staff Writer

NEW BRITAIN — Its lead was eight, but the Hartford Public boys basketball team hit a momentary funk.

A few missed baskets, a few missed free throws, then a basket by Xavier-Middletown, the Falcons' first of the second half after 2 minutes had passed.

The start of a Xavier run?

The run sailed into the bleachers, blocked by 6-foot-11 Marcus Camby.

Xavier's Matt Civitello backed into the lane and tried to go up for a shot. He backed down when he faced nothing but Camby's palms. He tried again.

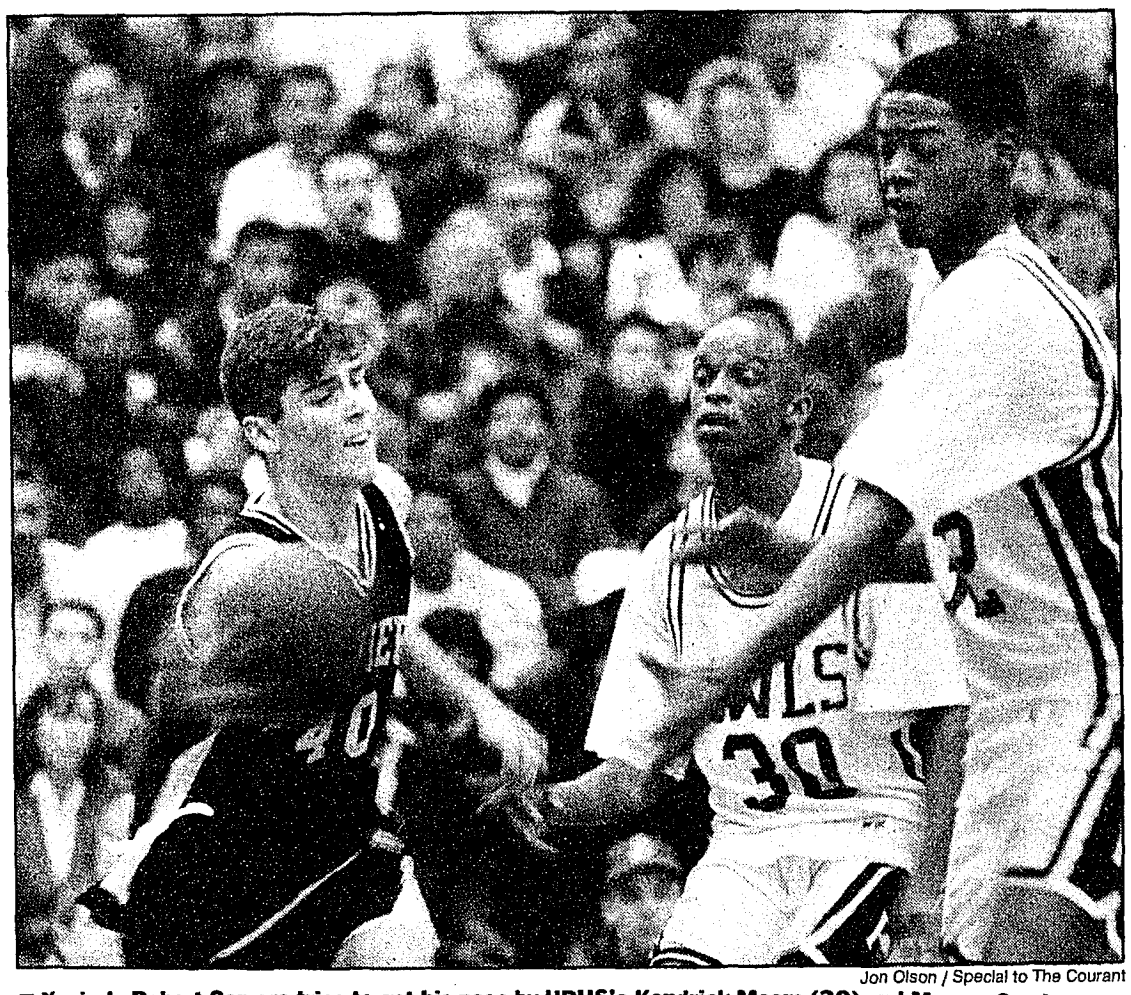
Camby seemed insulted. He batted the ball halfway up the bleachers, then ran up court waving his fist in the air. The echo of the block turned into a roar from the crowd and the game turned into a blowout.

Hartford Public, 26-0 and ranked No. 1 in The Courant's coaches poll, scored eight unanswered points and led by nine or more from then on, defeating Xavier 82-60 in a CIAC Class LL semifinal game Wednesday at New Britain High.

Camby's block wasn't a turning point — no more than any of his four backboard-shaking slams — but it was memorable.

"I don't need to score 50 points a game," Camby said. "But sometimes you need to make a big play and get the crowd into it. That gets everyone going."

Coach Rich Magner of Xavier (19-7) knew what Camby (20 points) would do — block shots, control the boards and score down low. But it was Hartford Public's four other starters that made a comeback nearly impossible.



Jon Olson / Special to The Courant

■ Xavier's Robert Corraro tries to get his pass by HPHS's Kendrick Moore (30) and Marcus Camby.

Tyrone White had 17 points, including five three-pointers. White made two three-pointers in a row at the end of the third, after Keith Bike's three-pointer cut the Owls' lead to 51-42.

And Kendrick Moore had 20 points, most on slashing drives through the lane. Courtney Dunston had 12 points, eight in the first half.

"They are more than the big guy," Magner said. "That's a great team."

Xavier tried a delay game early, trying to keep the ball away from Camby. It worked in the first quarter as Hartford Public led only 15-11. The Owls went up 21-13 in the second before Xavier closed to 23-19.

After taking a 27-19 lead, Hartford Public coach Stan Piorkowski took Camby out after the senior committed his second foul. Xavier, which just scored on a jumper by Marcus Bloom, seemed energized by the sight of Camby sitting.

Bloom (17 points, 14 in first half) scored on an acrobatic drive, then Civitello made a free throw. Bike (24 points) scored consecutive baskets, but Moore came back with two layups. Xavier sophomore Rob Corraro hit a three-pointer to make it 33-31 at halftime.

"After their run, we had to score early in the second half," Piorkowski said. "We knew Xavier could be dangerous, so we had to set the tempo."

Hartford Public dominated. In the first 1 minute, 12 seconds of the second half, the Owls scored three fastbreak baskets — including an alley-oop from White to Camby. Bloom committed his fourth foul with 5:08 left in the quarter, stalling any comeback possibility.

"We did a fair job against [Camby]," Magner said. "They just have too many other kids."

Danbury defeats Windsor, 67-62

Christie's 28 in losing cause

By BOHDAN KOLINSKY
Courant Assistant Sports Editor

WALLINGFORD — First, the bad news: Fourth-seeded Windsor lost to No. 8 Danbury 67-62 in a CIAC Class LL boys basketball semifinal Wednesday night at Sheehan High.

Now, the good news. Windsor's youth movement — namely sophomores Terrance Christie and Russell Scott and junior three-point specialist Rondell Richardson — served notice for next season.

"The main thing is to just play hard. We did that tonight — just came up short," said the 5-foot-8 Richardson, who had 15 points, including four three-pointers.

Christie, a 6-foot-7 sophomore, finished with 28 points. Senior forward Brandon Jubrey added 12.

Except for some poor free-throw shooting, Windsor coach Ken Smith could not find too much fault with his team's showing and 23-2 season.

"No doubt, these were two competitive teams," Smith said. "We turned it over a little more than I'd like, but when you play a fast-paced game that's going to happen. There's no reason to hold our heads down."

The loss was Windsor's first against a state team. Coming into the game, Windsor, the CCC West champion, had won 19 in a row after losing to Durfee of Fall River, Mass., in the Lowell (Mass.) Holiday Tournament in December.

The victory sends Danbury (22-4), the 1989 Class LL champion, to a 12:30 p.m. final Saturday against undefeated Hartford Public, which defeated Xavier-Middletown 82-60 in the other semifinal.

But at first, Danbury looked as if it was headed for elimination after a horrendous opening quarter when the Hatters scored only six points (3-of-15 shooting, seven turnovers).

Class LL final

Who: Hartford Public (26-0) vs. Danbury (22-4)
When: Saturday, 12:30 p.m.
Where: Detrick Gymnasium, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain.

Danbury fell behind 26-8 with 6½ minutes remaining in the second quarter.

Said Danbury coach Walt Richard: "The shots we were taking were good, but nothing was going down for us. The kids were pressing and a bit tight during that spell."

But the Hatters scored 24 of the next 25 points to take a 32-27 lead at halftime. D'Quill Osbey, a 6-4 senior forward, led Danbury with eight of his team-high 22 points.

Richardson showed his stuff to open the second half with four three-pointers in a row — from a variety of distances and spots. Along with Christie (11 points), he keyed a 25-point quarter that helped Windsor to a 52-42 lead with 1 minute, 10 seconds left in the third.

But the fourth quarter belonged to Danbury, which outscored Windsor 21-10 and overtook the Warriors with 3:20 left.

Danbury never trailed again as two free throws each by Travis Coates and Kareem Scott (12 points) in the final 1:04 — the Hatters made all 14 of their free throws — kept Windsor in check.

Windsor made only 12 of 20 free throws. "And we usually hit 'em pretty good," said Smith, whose teams have reached the semifinals twice in four years. "We've got to crack into the final sometime.

St. Joe's defeats Kennedy

Staff reports

For three quarters, the anticipated matchup between St. Joseph-Trumbull's 6-foot-9 center Keith Vail and his 6-9 counterpart Marcus Taylor from Kennedy-Waterbury was even.

Vail had not scored and had few rebounds; Taylor had scored eight points but also three fouls in their CIAC Class L semifinal game at Maloney High School in Meriden.

It was not until the fourth quarter that Vail stepped forward to secure a 62-41 victory for fifth-seeded St. Joseph and a berth in the Class L final Saturday in New Britain against Bullard-Havens Tech of Bridgeport, which beat Masuk-Monroe 71-59 in the other semifinal.

St. Joseph (20-5) took a 12-point lead into the fourth quarter, but Vail stopped a Kennedy comeback with six consecutive points, including a dunk off an inbounds pass to push the lead to 18.

After the dunk, Vail, a senior, scored a layup in transition, caused a turnover that led to another layup.

"I thought Vail would have a little better game than the other kid," St. Joe's coach Vito Montelli said.

Vail finished with six points and five rebounds and held Taylor to 10 points and seven rebounds.

Kennedy senior guard Garrett Petteway, who had 33 points in the quarterfinal against Wilby-Waterbury, scored 12 while being defended by St. Joseph's Mike Donnelly.

In the other semifinal:

Bullard-Havens 71, Masuk-Monroe 59: Curtis Williams scored 28 points and Ronald Jones 25 as Bullard-Havens (19-4) advanced to the final with a victory at Bunnell High School in Stratford.

Courtney Alexander scored 21 and Tim Davis 13 for Masuk (20-4).

Class L final

Who: St. Joseph-Trumbull (20-5) vs. Bullard-Havens Tech-Bridgeport (19-4)
When: Saturday, 3:30 p.m.
Where: Detrick Gymnasium, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain.

Aquinas handles Prince Tech, 76-46

By KEVIN F. HAYES
Courant Staff Writer

BRISTOL — St. Thomas Aquinas-New Britain forward Dave Cichy was only a freshman the last time he played in as important a game as the CIAC Class M semifinal matchup with top-ranked Prince Tech-Hartford Wednesday night.

The last time it was the state championship game. Aquinas lost and Cichy has been waiting for another chance since.

And after Aquinas' 76-46 victory over Prince Tech at Bristol Eastern High School, Cichy is about to get his second chance.

And after scoring a career-high 25 points and getting 12 rebounds, Cichy, a 6-foot-4 junior, has certainly earned it.

"We're going to the dance," Cichy said. "The last time we played in the state finals [against South Catholic-Hartford] it was great getting there, but it was tough losing. We want it to be different this year."

Aquinas, which came into the tournament as the No. 5 seed, will play No. 3 E.O. Smith-Storrs, a 70-60 winner over No. 2 Trinity Catholic-Stamford, for the state championship Friday at 7 p.m. at Central Connecticut State University.

Besides Cichy seemingly making every shot he took, Aquinas (23-4) had no surprises against Tech (21-3). Coach Bill Cardarelli's team has relied on a strong inside game and an aggressive and disrupting defense.

The Saints switched defenses often, keeping Tech's attack off-balance. Aquinas limited Tech to five points in the first quarter and six in the third.

The third quarter was decisive. Aquinas led 31-22 at halftime, but outscored Tech 22-6 in the third for a 53-28 advantage.

Leading the run was — of course — Cichy, who had eight points and four rebounds. Sophomore point guard Sam Smith (18 points) was also impressive, coming up with a handful of steals on the defensive end and dishing off for easy baskets.

"Our defense and inside game was really the key," Cardarelli said. "We wanted to limit [Tech] to one shot down the floor and we were able to do that for long stretches. The third quarter was big."

Play deteriorated considerably in the fourth quarter.

Prince Tech's players became frustrated with Aquinas' physical play underneath. Tech point guard Charles Hardy (nine points) was assessed two technical fouls and coach Mark Snyder received one.

Hardy shouted expletives toward the Aquinas bench as he left the floor. When the game ended, a brief scuffle ensued outside the Aquinas locker room as Tech players chased after the Aquinas team.

Police separated the players and both teams were escorted to their respective buses.

Class M final

Who: St. Thomas Aquinas-New Britain (23-4) vs. E.O. Smith-Storrs (23-3)
When: Friday, 7 p.m.
Where: Detrick Gymnasium, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain

All in the timing for Southington

By MARK PUKALO
Courant Staff Writer

Southington only beat Newington once in three tries this season, but the Blue Knights picked the right time to do it.

Girls basketball notebook

With a 59-47 victory over Newington Monday in the CIAC Class LL championship game, Southington not only won its seventh state title in 12 years, it earned the top spot in The Courant's final girls basketball coaches poll.

Newington (21-1) finished second with one first-place vote, followed by Class L champion Sacred Heart-Hamden (24-2), Shelton (24-1) and Bridgeport Central (21-3). Class M champion Seymour (21-5) finished sixth and Class S champion Thomaston ninth.

In the eight years The Courant has conducted the final poll, Southington has never been ranked lower than fourth. The Knights have finished at No. 1 in 1988, 1992 and 1993. In 1988 and 1992, the Knights were 24-0.

"These girls had a lot of pride in our tradition," Southington coach Joe Daddio said. "They wanted to keep it going and made a tremendous effort. They deserved this."

Southington (22-2) lost to Newington 51-44 on Feb. 2. On Feb. 24, Southington had a two-point lead, 38-36, over Newington before late substitute Joannalyn Bayot, a freshman, made a three-pointer with 10 seconds left to win it for Newington, 39-38.

Monday, Southington left no doubt, taking an 18-6 lead after one quarter and answering a Newington rally by outscoring the Indians 18-6 in the final 6 minutes.

"We feel great," said Southington senior Jen Kelland, who scored 10 points in the final. "We won the game that was most important to prove that we were the better team."

Senior center Bridget Buist scored 24 points and had six rebounds to lead Southington to its sixth title in nine consecutive finals.

"Newington is one heck of a team," Daddio said. "But I think we proved that if you have some heart, play good defense and execute a game plan, you can do anything."

Coaches poll

Final / The Hartford Courant

Records and first-place votes in parentheses. Points tabulated on a 30-28-26-24-22-20-18-16-14-12-11-10-9-8-7 basis:

School	Pts.
1. Southington (22-2) (9)	298
2. Newington (21-1) (1)	282
3. Sacred Heart-Hamden (24-2)	252
4. Shelton (24-1)	223
5. Bridgeport Central (21-3)	204
6. Seymour (21-5)	184
7. Stonington (27-1)	173
8. McMahon-Norwalk (18-7)	145
9. Thomaston (21-5)	127
10. NW Catholic-W. Hart. (23-4)	123

Also receiving votes: Hand-Madison (21-4), 93; Aquinas-New Britain (24-2), 89; Putnam (19-6), 67; Naugatuck (21-3) and Lyman Hall-Wallingford (19-6), 49; Guilford (19-5), 40; Greenwich (20-4), 35; Glastonbury (19-3), 19; Ellington (22-4), 16; Masuk-Monroe and Immaculate-Danbury (19-4), 15; Hillhouse-New Haven (15-9), 14; Northwestern Regional-Winsted (23-2), 11; Manchester (19-4) and Torrington (21-4), 9; Somers (22-4) and Morgan-Clinton (18-7), 7.

Coaches voting: Maureen Rodgers, East Hartford; Caroline Flaminio, Holy Cross-Waterbury; George Hall, Berlin; John Marusa, St. Joseph-Trumbull; Tony Floyd, Bristol Eastern; Jim Muraski, Ridgefield; Marty Musket, Guilford; Bill Fortin, Ellington; Larry Umphlett, Wheeler-North Stonington; Nick Chaconis, Portland.

E.O. Smith takes care of business

Defeats Trinity Catholic to reach final

By KEVIN LYONS
Courant Staff Writer

BRANFORD — All business, the E.O. Smith-Storrs boys basketball team quietly celebrated its 70-60 CIAC Class M semifinal victory over Trinity Catholic-Stamford Wednesday night at Branford High.

There was no jumping for joy after the Panthers advanced to the state final for the first time in school history. Nobody made a mad dash around the court; no tears of happiness.

The Panthers know they still have one game left.

"We're pretty focused," said E.O. Smith forward Ian Dombroski, who scored 19 points, including two three-pointers. "Our main goal is [the state championship game] Friday night. This was a thrilling win, no doubt. But there is still one more left."

E.O. Smith (23-3) will play St. Thomas Aquinas-New Britain (23-4), a 76-46 winner over Prince Tech-Hartford, Friday at 7 p.m. in the Class M final at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain.

Trinity Catholic (24-3), playing in its first semifinal since a loss to Ansonia in 1975, may have been down before the game started. Sophomore center Rashamel Jones, who averaged 22 points and 15 rebounds for the Crusaders, did not suit up. Trinity Catholic coach Mike Walsh said Jones had a cold that developed "into bronchial asthma."

"Truthfully, we didn't find out he wouldn't play until 10 o'clock this morning," Walsh said. "We didn't miss [Jones] on offense as much as we missed him on defense. But we are not making any excuses. E.O. Smith did what they had to do and they beat us."

Said Panthers coach Ron Pires: "We didn't know that [Jones] would not be playing. You feel bad for Trinity Catholic because they've worked hard all year. But we had to make sure we came out with the same intensity and play hard. I'm proud of the way our guys responded."

E.O. Smith's Tom Greaser scored a game-high 25 points, including 13 in a row for the Panthers during 5 minutes, 21 seconds of the fourth quarter, which stopped Trinity Catholic's last comeback attempt.

"[Greaser] has been strong all year for us," Pires said. Greaser averages 17 points.

Trinity Catholic, which trailed 33-22 at halftime, tried to make a run in the third quarter. Guard Tim Powell (24 points) scored four of his six three-pointers in a 5-minute span. Brian Dineen also added a three-pointer.

But the Crusaders could only get as close as seven points as E.O. Smith followed each Trinity Catholic three-pointer with a layup.

Greaser's short jumper at the third-quarter buzzer pushed the E.O. Smith lead to 51-42.

"We expended so much energy coming back that we were tired on the defensive end," Walsh said of a third-quarter defense that allowed E.O. Smith seven easy layups. "[E.O. Smith] got open for its shots and they hit them."

"We knew they'd be trying to come back, so we had to keep running our offense," Dombroski said. "[Pires] was getting mad at us because [Powell] kept making all those three-pointers. We tried to get on him, but I guess we were not playing very intense defense at the time."

Greaser's layup with 2 minutes remaining gave the Panthers their biggest lead, 68-52. With 49 seconds remaining, Dombroski and Greaser were taken out of the game after Dombroski secured the victory with two more free throws.

Tournament trail

CIAC schedule

Boys basketball

Class LL

Semifinals — Wednesday
Danbury 67, Windsor 62
Hartford Public 82, Xavier-Middletown 60

HARTFORD PUBLIC 82, XAVIER 60

Xavier (60) — Joe Schuberth 2 2 6, Matt Civitello 0 1 1, Marcus Bloom 7 0 17, Zack King 0 0 0, Keith Bike 7 6 24, Scott Beeman 0 0 0, Anthony Pandolfe 0 0 0, Rob Corraro 4 2 12, Jermain Williams 0 0 0, Chris LeGoullon 0 0 0, Erin Hamcock 0 0 0, Mike Dowley 0 0 0. Totals: 20 11 60.
Hartford Public (82) — Kevin Lazarus 0 0 0, Ron Williams 1 0 3, Mike Thompson 1 2 4, Tyrone White 6 0 17, Kendrick Moore 9 2 20, Courtney Dunstan 6 0 12, Marcus Camby 8 4 20, Steve White 0 0 0, Keith Kendall 2 0 4, Luis Caballero 0 1 1, TaVarr Closs 0 0 0, Anthony Russell 0 1 1. Totals: 33 10 82.

Xavier	11	20	11	18 —60
H. Public	15	18	24	25 —82

Three-point goals: X—Bike (4), Bloom (3), Corraro (2); H—White (5), Williams. Records: Xavier 18-7; Hartford Public 26-0.

DANBURY 67, WINDSOR 62

Danbury (67) — Tavaughn Bunn 4 0 8, Rich Craber 1 0 3, Travis Coates 1 2 4, Elmer Harrison 1 0 2, Marcus McCollough 3 1 7, D'Quill Osbey 9 4 22, Anthony Scott 3 3 9, Kareem Scott 4 4 12. Totals: 26 14 67.
Windsor (62) — Greg Duncan 1 0 2, Tylan Cobb 0 2 2, Terance Christie 10 8 28, Russell Scott 1 0 2, Rondell Richardson 5 1 15, Kai Milling 0 1 1, Brandon Jubrey 5 0 12. Totals: 22 12 62.

Danbury	6	26	20	21 —67
Windsor	20	7	25	10 —62

Three-point goals: D—Craber; W—Richardson (4), Jubrey (2). Records: Danbury 22-4; Windsor 23-2.

Final: Saturday — Danbury vs. Hartford Public at Central Conn. State University, New Britain, 12:30 p.m.

Class L

Semifinals — Wednesday
St. Joseph-Trumbull 62, Kennedy-Waterbury 41
Bullard-Havens Tech-Bridgeport 71, Masuk-Monroe 59

ST. JOSEPH 62, KENNEDY 41

Kennedy (41) — Garrett Petteway 4 4 12, Marcus Taylor 5 0 10, Terrance Morrison 2 0 4, Bobby Nealy 2 0 4, Angel Mendez 0 0 0, Jeff Zappone 1 1 3, Armen Lavasseur 0 0 0, Steve Fillie 4 0 8. Totals: 18 5 41.
St. Joseph (62) — Mike Donnelly 3 1 9, Desmond Artis 5 2 12, Maurice Howell 7 5 19, Keith Vail 3 1 7, James Kennedy 4 0 8, Ken Martin 0 0 0, Brian Prioleau 0 0 0, Kyle Commodore 0 0 0, Robert Ernest 2 2 6, Tim Owens 0 0 0, Manuel Torres 0 1 1, Lueke Cooper 0 0 0, Bobby Hayden 0 0 0, Geoff Chadwick 0 0 0, Nick Brand 0 0 0. Totals: 24 12 62.

Kennedy	10	11	12	8 —41
St. Joseph	13	15	17	17 —62

Three-point goals: SJ—Donnelly (2). Records: Kennedy 17-6; St. Joseph 20-5.

BULLARD-HAVENS 71, MASUK-MONROE 59

Masuk (59) — Tim Davis 6 0 13, Courtney Alexander 9 3 21, Bill Galvin 1 0 2, Cory O'Connell 1 0 2, Jeff Arnold 5 0 11, Joe Ripke 3 0 7, Dave Rose 1 0 3. Totals: 26 3 59.
Bullard-Havens (71) — Andrick Anderson 1 0 2, Demetrius Dailey 1 1 4, Kiéga Eaddy 2 0 4, Curtis Williams 12 4 28, Ky Booker 0 0 0, Ronald Jones 7 11 25. Jerod Geter 4 0 8. Totals: 27 16 71.

Masuk	13	15	16	15 —59
Bullard-Havens	19	13	20	19 —71

Three-point goals: M—Davis, Ripke, Rose, Arnold; B—Dailey. Records: Masuk 20-5; Bullard-Havens 19-4.

Final: Saturday — St. Joseph-Trumbull vs. Bullard-Havens Tech-Bridgeport at Central Conn. State University, New Britain, 3:30 p.m.

Class M

Semifinals — Wednesday
St. Thomas Aquinas-New Britain 76, Prince Tech-Hartford 46
E.O. Smith-Storrs 70, Trinity Catholic-Stamford 60

AQUINAS 76, PRINCE TECH 46

Aquinas (76) — Tony Butler 1 0 2, Mike Nappi 6 2 16, Sam Smith 5 8 18, Jurgin Kaljuvee 3 2 8, Tony Cartiera 1 2 5, Dave Cichy 12 1 25, Dan Gianoli 1 0 2. Totals: 29 15 76.
Prince Tech (46) — Kyon Grice 5 0 11, Mike Scotchman 3 1 7, Andy Charles 3 2 8, Jackie Stokes 2 0 5, Andre Owens 2 0 4, Charles Hardy 4 0 9, Donyale Newman 1 0 2. Totals: 20 3 46.

Aquinas	12	19	22	23 —76
Prince Tech	5	17	6	18 —46

Three-point goals: A—Nappi (2), Cartiera; P—Grice, Grice, Hardy. Records: Aquinas 23-4; Prince Tech 21-3.

E.O. SMITH 70, TRINITY CATHOLIC 60

E.O. Smith (70) — Matt Raynor 2 0 5, Steve Crooke 3 0 7, Ian Dombroski 8 2 19, Tom Greaser 10 3 25, Peter Rider 1 0 2, Charles Ratcliff 2 2 6, Jack Champagne 2 0 6. Totals: 28 7 70.
Trinity-Catholic (60) — Dave Delaney 0 0 0, Brian Dineen 1 0 3, Don Hall 0 0 0, Earl Johnson 2 7 11, George Johnson 2 0 4, Alec Possidento 2 1 5, Tim Powell 9 0 24, Bob Spillane 5 3 13. Totals: 21 11 60.

E.O. Smith	16	15	20	15 —70
Trinity Catholic	7	12	23	18 —60

Three-point goals: E—Greaser (2), Champagne (2), Dombroski, Crooke, Raynor; T—Powell (6); Dineen. Records: E.O. Smith 23-3; Trinity Catholic 24-3.

Final: Friday — Aquinas vs. E.O. Smith at Central Conn. State University, New Britain, 7 p.m.

Class S

Semifinals — Today
Gilbert School-Winsted vs. Somers at Farmington High, 7:30 p.m.
Marianapolis Prep-Thompson vs. Cromwell at Windham High, 7:30 p.m.
Final: Saturday — at Central Conn. State University, New Britain, 7 p.m.

Boys swimming

Saturday — CIAC State Open at Yale, 6 p.m.

Infante awaits word

■ There has been no decision on Joel Barlow-Redding High School gymnastics coach Steve Infante's future, but he is expected to meet with school administrators today, principal Pete Quinby said.

Infante was suspended after ignoring a school administration directive prohibiting team members from competing in the CIAC Class S championship meet at Hall-West Hartford March 5 because of bad weather.

Infante has coached at Barlow the past six years and has won four consecutive Class S titles (1988-91) and five Western Connecticut Conference championships.

— Roberto Gonzalez

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