

Rolla Bulldogs Hold Off Salem to Win District Title

By Bill Battle
Missourian Sports Editor

Rolla's big first half was just enough to earn the Class 4 District 9 boys basketball championship Friday in Union, 54-49.

The Bulldogs (12-16) will play in their hometown for Tuesday's sectional game against Helias (20-6). That game, at Missouri S&T, tips off Tuesday at 7:45 p.m.

It's the second meeting of the season between the teams. Helias beat Rolla Feb. 20, 62-47.

The fourth-seeded Bulldogs jumped out to a huge lead against No. 2 Salem (13-14), gaining a 20-point advantage with five minutes to go in the second quarter.

Rolla led 17-4 after eight minutes and 36-17 at the half.

However, Rolla struggled to find the basket on the other end.

Meanwhile, Salem was chipping away at the lead. Rolla's advantage eroded to seven points, 41-34, through three quarters.

It got even closer in the fourth quarter.

Class 4 District 9 Basketball

At Union
Boys

Saturday, Feb. 29

(4) Rolla 66, (5) Owensville 51
(6) Union 40, (3) St. Clair 34

Tuesday, March 3

Rolla 50, (1) Sullivan 43
(2) Salem 61, Union 50 (OT)

Friday, March 6

Championship — Rolla 54,
Salem 49

Girls

Saturday, Feb. 29

(5) Salem 65, (4) St. Clair 61
(3) Union 55, (6) Owensville 25

Monday, March 2

(1) Rolla 64, Salem 26
(2) Sullivan 54, Union 46

Friday, March 6

Championship — Sullivan 43,
Rolla 30

Senior Reese Dodson scored off of a steal and then hit a three-point shot to cut it to 50-49 with 58.7 seconds to play.

However, that proved to be Salem's final basket. Rolla knocked down four of six free throws through the rest of the game to survive, 54-49.

Rolla hit seven three-point baskets, all in the first half.

The Bulldogs went

13-26 from the free-throw line.

Junior Danny Foster led the Bulldogs in scoring with 16 points. That included three three-point baskets.

Senior Muluken Pritchett was next with 12 points, including three three-point baskets.

Senior Colby Shivers scored 10 points while going 6-12 from the free-throw line.

Sophomores Gage Klossner and Ty Locklear scored five points apiece.

Junior Trey Brown added four points while senior Jack Hounsom contributed two points.

For Salem, Dodson led the way with 19 points, including three of the team's four three-point baskets.

Junior Braiden Carmack was next with 11 points.

Senior Carter Chilton scored nine points.

Junior Lucas Morrison was next with eight points.

Sophomore Garrett Connell posted two points.

Salem went 1-4 from the free-throw line.



Gaszak Signs

St. Clair senior Zoe Gaszak recently signed a letter of intent to play soccer for East Central College. She becomes the first official signing of the college's new women's soccer program. Seated with Zoe are her parents, Erin and Jason. Standing are (left to right) East Central Head Coach Martin Clayes, St. Clair Head Coach Tim Isgrig and former St. Clair Assistant Coach Ted Brinker.

Missourian Photo.

Area High School Coaches React to East Central Adding Women's Soccer

By Bill Battle
Missourian Sports Editor

Area high school girls soccer coaches see the addition of women's soccer at East Central College to be a positive for the community.

Martin Clayes has been named the overall head coach for both the men's and women's teams and he's signed his first player, St. Clair senior Zoe Gaszak.

Overall, there has been a very positive reaction to the school's announcement it's adding the sport starting in the fall of 2020.

"I couldn't be more excited about the addition of women's soccer at East Central," Union Head Coach Matt Fennessey said. "What an exciting time for our community. As an alumnus of East Central College, I can honestly say that I had a great educational experience and soccer was the reason I ended up there. I feel it'll be the same way for the young women who decide to continue their education there. They will gain great experience through the soccer program."

Sullivan Head Coach Bill Kackley helped his father coach women's basketball at East Central.

"I think it is great that they are starting both programs (women's soccer and baseball)," Kackley said. "I believe it will open more oppor-

tunities for my players and players around the area. I don't know how many will take advantage of this opportunity to go play at ECC, but I am going to try and guide them to take advantage of the opportunity."

Washington Head Coach Adam Fischer feels the program will be received well in the community.

"I think any time that the community can offer the kids in our area a chance to continue playing a sport they love while earning a degree it is a plus," Fischer said. "We have loads of talent in this area with girls soccer and allowing the kids to stay close to home and play can be exciting for the communities involved."

St. Clair Head Coach Tim Isgrig led his Lady Bulldogs to the Class 2 quarterfinals last season.

"I think the addition of women's soccer is exciting for the area," Isgrig said. "We have a lot of quality players in our area who are capable of playing at the next level and this gives the opportunity to do that close to home."

Fennessey was in goal when the school finished third in the 2003 NJCAA Division I Men's Soccer Championships. As a former player and longtime coach, Fennessey sees East Cen-

tral as the perfect spot for many of his players to continue their careers.

"The real experience will be the education they receive, though," Fennessey said. "We have a very strong area in regards to women soccer. I think our geographical location will be able to add players to the program each year. I think the future coach of the Lady Falcons will look to add several Franklin County athletes to his team. I'm sure that number will fluctuate from year to year."

Union has been one of the area's top programs in recent history, one any future ECC coach would want to recruit. The Lady 'Cats have dominated the Four Rivers Conference and finished fourth in the last two MSHSAA Class 3 State Championships.

Isgrig said his team is ready to contribute to the new program.

"We have one who is interested in playing there next year, and if soccer was available there the last couple years, we would've had two or three a year go there to play," Isgrig said. "I like that it allows the girls an opportunity to continue playing a sport that they love but not going way in debt in order to continue their athletic career. With the A-Plus program in most of our area schools it will give these girls a great



Driving the Baseline

Rolla's Ty Locklear goes up for a shot while being defended by Salem's Lucas Morrison Friday during the Class 4 District 9 boys basketball championship game in Union. Rolla held on to defeat Salem for the district title, 54-49.

Missourian Photo/Bill Battle.

opportunity to play and continue their academic careers."

Fischer said the Lady Jays should be another contributor to the East Central program.

"I would hope three or four would take advantage of a free education, or close to free, to continue playing the sport they love while starting their college education," Fischer said.

Kackley is for on-campus housing as well.

"The only (other) thing that I would like them to do is build some dorms to house student athletes," Kackley said. "I believe that would be very beneficial to the college."

Coaches are happy to see the school adding a sport which currently is popular in the area.

"I would just like to thank ECC for making this decision," Fischer said. "I know they have had their ongoing discussions on this for years, and I truly

hope our area student athletes help keep this program successful at ECC."

Fennessey is looking forward to seeing the new program in action.

"I'm really excited for the college," Fennessey said. "They have done a lot in the recent years to bolster their educational programs. This move shows a continued effort to improve their athletic department as well. Very proud to say I was a Falcon. I look forward to watching the girls this fall."

See photo galleries at www.emissourian.com.

FRC Coaches Benefit March 27

The second annual Four Rivers Conference Coaches Basketball Game will be held Friday, March 27, in New Haven.

The game will tip off at 7 p.m. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for students.

All admission proceeds will be donated to the area's Special Olympics. The game is expected to be split between North (Union, Owensville, Hermann, and New Haven) and South (Pacific, St. James, Sullivan, and St. Clair).

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