

2014-15 DANVERS BOYS BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS AGAIN



DAVID LE/Staff photo

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EDITION BY

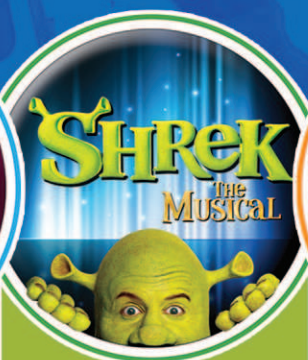
 **THE SALEM NEWS**

The Danvers High boys basketball team poses after winning the Division 2 North title at the Tsongas Center in Lowell. The Falcons would win two more games – the state semifinal and championship games – to finish the season a perfect 27-0.

CONGRATULATIONS DANVERS BOYS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONS



JUNE 2
THRU **JUNE 14**



JULY 7
THRU **JULY 19**



AUG 11
THRU **AUG 23**



SEPT 29
THRU **OCT 11**



NOV 3
THRU **NOV 15**



DEC 4
THRU **DEC 23**



BILL HANNEY'S
NORTH SHORE
MUSIC THE TRE



978.232.7200
NSMT.ORG
62 DUNHAM ROAD • BEVERLY, MA



DAVID LE/Staff photos

Danvers senior captain Peter Merry gets a clean block on Marlboro freshman Christopher Doherty during the first half of the Division 2 state final.



Danvers sophomore Devonn Allen (24) and junior Mike Nestor bring over the Division 2 North trophy to share with their fans.



Senior captain Devan Harris of Danvers gets off a hook shot around Marlboro's Christopher Doherty.

DANVERS FALCONS BOYS BASKETBALL 2014-15

| No. | Name | Position | Year |
|---|------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | Rashad Francois | Guard | Junior |
| 2 | Tahg Coakley | Forward | Freshman |
| 3 | Tre Crittendon | Guard | Junior |
| 5 | Justin Roberto | Guard | Freshman |
| 12 | Mike Nestor | Guard | Junior |
| 13 | Jordan DeDonato | Guard | Sophomore |
| 14 | Stephen Medeiros | Guard | Senior |
| 20 | Andrew Dunn | Forward | Senior |
| 21 | Vinny Clifford | Guard | Senior |
| 24 | Devonn Allen | Guard | Sophomore |
| 25 | Devan Harris | Forward | Senior |
| 32 | Peter Merry | Center | Senior |
| 34 | Kieran Moriarty | Forward | Sophomore |
| 44 | Tom Gillespie | Forward | Senior |
| Head Coach: John Walsh | | | |
| Assistant Coaches: Mark Garrity, Bob McKenna, Jarhon Giddings, Peter Spiros | | | |
| Team Manager: Brian Dunn | | | |

DANVERS HIGH SCHOOL 2014-15 BOYS BASKETBALL STATISTICS

Danvers High boys basketball coach John Walsh has had an amazing five-year run as the Falcons' head coach. Walsh needed only 120 games to reach 100 career wins. Here is a year-by-year look at Walsh's record:

| Season | RS | PS | OR |
|---------|---------------------------------|---|---------------|
| 2010-11 | 11-9 | 2-1 (lost to Watertown, 52-35, in Division 3 North semifinals) | 13-10 |
| 2011-12 | 16-4 | 5-0 (beat St. Joseph's, 59-47, in Division 3 state championship) | 21-4 |
| 2012-13 | 18-2 | 6-0 (beat Smith Academy, 66-50, in Division 3 state championship) | 24-2 |
| 2013-14 | 17-3 | 3-1 (lost to New Mission, 61-50, in Division 2 North final) | 20-4 |
| 2014-15 | 21-0 | 6-0 (beat Marlboro, 52-49, in Division 2 state championship) | 27-0 |
| Career | 83-18 (.822 winning percentage) | 22-2 (.917) | 105-20 (.840) |

RS – regular season record PS – postseason record OR – overall season record

DANVERS STATISTICAL LEADERS

- Points: Devan Harris, 497 (18.4 per game)
- Rebounds: Devan Harris, 195 (7.2 per game)
- Assists: Devonn Allen, 160 (5.9 per game)
- Blocks: Peter Merry, 138 (5.1 per game)
- Three-pointers made: Vinny Clifford, 85 (3.1 per game)

DANVERS TEAM STATS

- Total points scored: 1,827
- Points per game: 67.7
- Total points allowed: 1,323
- Points allowed per game: 49.0
- Total margin of victory: 504 points
- Average margin of victory: 18.7 points

CONGRATULATIONS DANVERS HIGH BOYS BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS!



M-Sat. 6am - 9pm
Sun. 6am-8pm

NEW BROTHERS RESTAURANT & DELI
Celebrating Our Fifteen Year Anniversary
31 Maple Street • Danvers Square • Danvers, MA • 978.750.0100

Gift Certificates Now Available
for Your Favorite Star

Falcons have the market cornered on hoop success

Matt Jenkins



An errant pass. A forced shot attempt. A missed defensive assignment.

The Danvers High boys basketball team turned in a perfect season this winter by going 27-0 and winning the Division 2 state championship, but the Falcons weren't always perfect.

Like every other basketball team that ever bounced a ball on hardwood, the 2014-15 Danvers Falcons made their occasional mistakes. Ultimately, it was the way the Falcons responded to those mistakes that helped them rise above — and stay above — their opponents.

Mishaps and blunders weren't going to multiply. Not on head coach John Walsh's watch.

From a spectator's point of view, the scene was almost always amusing.

A Danvers player would turn the ball over or commit a ticky-tack foul far away from the hoop. A look of anguish would come over the face of Walsh, followed

by him calling out the player's name. A look combining fear, annoyance and, then, understanding would wash over the player's face while he did his best to not look at the sideline.

He didn't need to look. He already knew.

Walsh and his coaching staff put a premium on preparation. The Falcons would be ready for anything that came their way, whether it was a tactical approach from an opponent or the inevitable cold spell that every basketball team faces at one time or another.

On the court, the communication between coach and player was key — even though many times it could be misunderstood by the casual observer.

In the state semifinal game at Boston's TD Garden against Bishop Feehan, Danvers senior guard Vinny Clifford was struggling with his shot early in the game. After rolling off a screen and attempting a contested three, Walsh could be heard saying to Clifford, "Vinny! Stop shooting!"

Now, telling Clifford — a knock-down, heat-check type of shooter — to put the jumper away is a little like telling Pablo Picasso to stop painting.



DAVID LE/Staff photos
The Danvers High fan section celebrates as senior Robert DiStefano, center, displays the Division 2 state championship plaque after getting it from one of the Falcons' players.

DAVID P. ST. PIERRE, M.D.

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AND SPORTS MEDICINE

**CONGRATULATIONS DHS FALCONS
ON A GREAT SEASON!**

4 STATE ROAD
DANVERS, MA 01923
(978) 774-3400

100 HIGHLAND AVENUE
SALEM, MA 01970
(978) 745-0820

Of course, when Walsh tells Clifford to stop shooting, he doesn't *really* mean stop shooting.

In the Garden press room after Danvers dispatched Bishop Feehan for its 26th win of the year, Walsh clarified what he meant.

Stop shooting in this case, Walsh explained, meant stop forcing shots. Instead of taking a quick jumper say 10-15 seconds into the shot clock, run the play through. And if the jump shot isn't there, go to the basket.

You know what ended up happening?

With the game on the line and Bishop Feehan making a serious run at the Falcons on the famous parquet, Clifford, ignoring the voice in his head to pull up for a three, went hard to the rim, drew a foul and made the shot. The three-point play turned a four-point lead into a seven-point advantage with less than three minutes to go.

Feehan was, for all intents and purposes, done, and

Danvers was moving on to play for its third state championship in four years.

State champions don't materialize without players giving up what seems to be good for them for what's actually good for the team.

Danvers players made sacrifices all year. Junior guards Mike Nestor and Rashad Francois were great examples of that.

Francois, a talented offensive player with deep shooting range, started several games early in the year but moved to the sixth man role because it suited the team better. He could be the spark off the bench when shots weren't falling for Clifford, Devan Harris, Devonn Allen or Peter Merry.

That move also opened the door for Nestor to do what he does best: defend. Nestor often drew the toughest defensive assignment on the floor, many times guarding players he didn't necessarily match up with physically.

In the final two games of the season, Nestor made life

miserable for Bishop Feehan forward Frank Oftring in the state semis and Marlboro's sensational 6-foot-6 freshman Chris Doherty in the Division 2 championship game. Nestor is 6-feet tall.

Danvers was focused on defense all season. Sure, there were games that the Falcons put up big offensive numbers, but they were more concerned with holding their opponent back.

With Merry, a 6-10 rim protector who could still get out to the perimeter to alter or redirect jump shots, and the solid Harris under the hoop, very few teams could beat Danvers inside. Athletic and versatile defenders like Nestor, Allen, Clifford and Francois made things hard on opposing guards.

Offensively, the Falcons could beat their opponents in a variety of ways. Harris was so difficult to stop in the post and had the ability to step out to the three-point line. Merry, who was named the Northeastern Conference Player of

the Year, could shoot over any defense that managed to push him away from the basket, and was very capable of dunking or laying the ball in if he maintained inside position.

Clifford forced opposing coaches to game plan for him no matter what. He was the deep threat that had to be accounted for at all times. Let him roam free around the three-point arc, and the postgame discussion would inevitably turn to the five, six, or seven 3-pointers Clifford connected on.

Some teams did a good job taking away Danvers' big three. Salem and Marblehead played zone defenses and sometimes triangle-and-twos on the Falcons, so there would be help waiting when Harris, Clifford or Merry had the ball in their hands.

In all of those games, Allen made big plays. Francois and reserve guard Tre Crittendon hit big shots, too.

The development of Allen may have been the single

biggest factor in Danvers winning its first state title in Division 2 after capturing Division 3 crowns in 2012 and 2013.

Walsh counted on the athletic sophomore to run the offense. He had to break the presses, find the hot hand and make shots himself when defenses controlled Harris, Clifford and Merry. It was Allen that made the biggest play when Arlington was threatening to end Danvers' season in the North final.

The Spy Ponders took the lead late in the game and held a one-point advantage when Allen broke for the basket and drew a foul. He made both free throws — the second of which proved to be the winning point in what turned out to be a 50-47 victory — with just 21 seconds remaining.

Some might say the Falcons weren't a very deep team. It's true the Danvers rotation was typically 6-7 players, but all of the reserves were ready if Walsh needed them.

Crittendon played important minutes in the North semifinal game against Brighton when Allen was on the bench in foul trouble. Even in the final game, senior Andrew Dunn, who was usually just a mop-up guy, was pressed into action late in the first half against Marlboro when Walsh was trying to keep Harris, Merry and Allen from getting into foul trouble.

It may have been a minor footnote to the Danvers victory, but Dunn — in about 30 seconds of action — boxed out Marlboro's Doherty, drew an over-the-back call on him for his third foul, then made one of two free throws.

Perfect may be unobtainable, but the way Danvers dealt with its imperfections was perfect. And that guided the Falcons to the state championship, which was the perfect ending to a four-year run that may never again be matched in program — or North Shore basketball — history.

Congratulations DANVERS HIGH BOYS BASKETBALL State Champs!

Hometown Service Superstore Prices

www.douglasappliance.com

Family
Business
of the Year



PARTS SERVICE SALES
Family Owned & Operated Since 1967
SERVICE ALL BRANDS
Over The Counter Parts - All Brands
Douglass Appliance
Showroom: 74 High Street, Danvers
978-777-0166
The extra "S" stands for Service!



IMAGES FROM A(NOTHER)



DAVID LE/Staff photos

Danvers junior guard Rashad Francois battles for a loose ball with Francis Roche of Arlington during the Division 2 North title game at the Tsongas Center in Lowell.



Danvers sophomore guard Devonn Allen gets fouled in midair by Arlington senior Joshua Lee during the second half of the Division 2 North final at the Tsongas Center in Lowell.



Vinny Clifford holds up the Division 2 state championship as fellow senior captain Devan Harris (25) pumps up the Falcons' crowd.

MOORE GMC

SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS SINCE 1969

GMC

PROFESSIONAL GRADE

More at MOORE New Car Inventory in Stock

**Congratulations to:
Danvers High Boys Basketball
State Champions!**

MOORE GMC
80 High St. Danvers

GMC

www.MOOREGMC.COM
978-774-0040

Sales Hours: Sunday CLOSED

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Monday – Thursday | 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM |
| Friday | 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM |
| Saturday | 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM |

Service Hours: Sunday CLOSED

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Monday – Friday | 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM |
| Saturday | 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM |

CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON



Mike Nestor, left and Devonn Allen get set to leap into each other's arms following the Falcons' North title game triumph over Arlington.



Danvers junior Marco LaGambina hugs junior guard Mike Nestor, left, and sophomore guard Devonn Allen, right, after the Falcons captured the the Division 2 state crown.



Danvers senior captain Peter Merry takes a jumper over Marlboro freshman Christopher Doherty.



Peter Merry shows everyone who's No. 1 following Danvers' Division 2 North championship victory.



Congratulations to
the Falcons on a
great season!

**NORTH SHORE BANK**
Well north of your expectations.™
Beverly • Danvers • Middleton • Peabody
Salem • Saugus • West Peabody
northshore-bank.com |     
Member FDIC Member SIF Equal Housing Lender 

Danvers High boys basketball game recaps

GAME 1: December 16 DANVERS 62, WINTHROP 28

Six-foot-10 senior center Peter Merry couldn't have started the season much better. Merry registered a triple-double in the first game of the year by scoring 10 points, grabbing 13 rebounds and blocking 12 shots. Senior forward Devan Harris scored 18 points to lead the Falcons, and senior guard Vinny Clifford hit five first-half three-pointers to finish with 15 points.

GAME 2: December 19 DANVERS 73, SWAMPSCOTT 45

Devan Harris was unstoppable in the post and scored 27 points in a one-sided victory for the Blue-and-White. Devonn Allen chipped in 12 points, Vinny Clifford had 10, and Rashad Francois pitched in nine as the Falcons made it two straight wins to start the season.

GAME 3: December 20 DANVERS 59, SOMERVILLE 53

Danvers saw a double-digit fourth quarter lead get cut down, but were able to finish off a tough Somerville club in non-league action. Devan Harris scored 25 points and grabbed eight boards while sophomore point guard Devonn Allen had 12 points. Senior center Peter Merry scored nine points, gathered 12 rebounds and blocked three shots. Vinny Clifford chipped in with nine points.

GAME 4: December 22 DANVERS 74, GLOUCESTER 49

Vinny Clifford came out on fire, scoring 27 first half points and finishing with a game-high 29. He hit four three-pointers and also grabbed eight rebounds. Devonn Allen added 12 points, six steals and eight assists while Peter Merry came through with eight points, five blocks and six rebounds.

GAME 5: January 5 DANVERS 88, SAUGUS 66

Devan Harris had his biggest statistical game of the season,



DAVID LE/Staff photo

Senior captain Devan Harris splits Arlington seniors Gabriel Adams-Kean (0) and Matthew Moroney and sinks the go-ahead bucket for Danvers in the second half of the Division 2 North championship contest.

dropping a career-high 40 points and grabbing 11 rebounds. Peter Merry just missed another triple-double, scoring 12 points while grabbing nine rebounds and blocking nine shots.

GAME 6: January 7 DANVERS 46, MARBLEHEAD 43

The Falcons saw a late lead slip away and actually trailed (43-41) with under a minute to play. Junior guard Rashad Francois hit a wing three-pointer, however, to help Danvers escape with a win. Devonn Allen and Tre Crittendon also made some huge shots down the stretch for the Falcons. Peter Merry scored 11 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and blocked five shots. Francois led the way with 13 points and Allen also hit double figures with 10.

GAME 7: January 9 DANVERS 67, LYNN CLASSICAL 56

Peter Merry had a career night, going off for 36 points, 12

rebounds and six blocked shots in the win. He also threw down a big dunk on an alley-oop to highlight the victory. Harris pitched in 14 points and eight rebounds as the Falcons moved to 7-0.

GAME 8: January 13 DANVERS 66, BEVERLY 42

Junior guard Rashad Francois hit five three-pointers and scored a season-high 21 points to power the Falcons. Vinny Clifford (13 points), Devan Harris (12) and Allen (10) also hit double figures for Danvers.

GAME 9: January 16 DANVERS 39, SALEM 37

The Falcons survived a defensive battle thanks to sophomore point guard Devonn Allen, who scored his team's final six points and finished with 10 for the game. Devan Harris led all scorers with 16 points and Vinny Clifford contributed eight points for the winners. Peter Merry pulled down eight rebounds.

GAME 10: January 20 DANVERS 94, REVERE 49

Senior guard Vinny Clifford buried six three-pointers and scored 20 points to lead the Falcons to victory. Devan Harris also hit for 20 points for Danvers. Junior point guard Tre Crittendon scored six points off the bench and Devonn Allen dished out eight assists. Freshman Justin Roberto also played well in the second half.

GAME 11: January 23 DANVERS 65, PEABODY 51

Senior forward Devan Harris destroyed the Tanners inside. He scored a game-high 27 points in the win, the majority of them coming in the paint. He had 10 points in the first quarter and added 13 points in the second half to help the Falcons pull away. Peter Merry scored 13 points to join Harris in double-figures and Vinny Clifford chipped in nine, all from behind the three-point line.

GAME 12: January 30 DANVERS 86, SAUGUS 41

Four players hit double-figures as the Falcons improved to 12-0. Senior Vinny Clifford scored 15 points, sophomore Devonn Allen had 14, Devan Harris put in 11, and Peter Merry chipped in with 10. The 45-point margin of victory equalled their biggest of the season.

GAME 13: February 3 DANVERS 88, WINTHROP 50

Danvers got to 13 wins without a loss with the help of Rashad Francois, who scored a team-high 15 points. Devan Harris chipped in with 14 points, Peter Merry scored 10 points and grabbed five rebounds, and Vinny Clifford scored 11.

GAME 14: February 4 DANVERS 79, MALDEN 40

Devan Harris dropped 20 points and Vinny Clifford knocked down five three-pointers in the first half for 15 points to help the Falcons run away

from Malden. Rashad Francois added 10 points, Peter Merry scored nine points, blocked five shots and corralled seven rebounds, and Devon Allen chipped in with five points and eight assists.

GAME 15: February 6 DANVERS 77, SWAMPSCOTT 39

Seniors Devan Harris and Vinny Clifford each scored 21 points to power the Falcons. Harris pulled down seven rebounds in the win while Clifford hit five three-pointers. Sophomore point guard Devonn Allen also stood out, scoring 11 points and dishing out six assists.

GAME 16: February 11 DANVERS 74, GLOUCESTER 45

The Falcons moved to 16-0 behind 23 points from Devan Harris. Vinny Clifford contributed five three-pointers and 18 points while Peter Merry chipped in with seven points, six blocks and nine rebounds.

GAME 17: February 12 DANVERS 53, MARBLEHEAD 47

The game was tied heading into the fourth quarter and was all locked up later at 44-44, but sophomore Devonn Allen hit a pair of huge three-pointers to help Danvers close the game out. Devan Harris and Allen each had 21 points while junior guard Tre Crittendon also hit a big three-pointer in the fourth quarter.

GAME 18: February 16 DANVERS 60, BISHOP FEEHAN 56

With their 18th win of the season, the Falcons matched the 2012-13 state title team for the best start to the season in team history. Reserve junior guard Tre Crittendon knocked down two free throws in the final seconds to seal the win. Vinny Clifford knocked down five three-pointers and Devan Harris scored 13 points before fouling out. Devonn Allen scored 11 points in the second half for Danvers.

GAME 19: February 17 DANVERS 79, MALDEN CATHOLIC 59

The Falcons captured the Division 2 Comcast Tournament Championship with this win. Sophomore Devonn Allen scored 10 points and was named the tournament MVP. Peter Merry added 19 points and was selected to the All-Tournament team. Devan Harris chipped in 18 points, Vinny Clifford contributed 14 points, and Rashad Francois hit double-figures with 11.

GAME 20: February 18 DANVERS 79, LYNN ENGLISH 78

Devan Harris drew a foul on a last-second three-point attempt and made his first free throw to snap a tie and give Danvers a win over the Northeastern Conference power. The win locked up the Falcons' undefeated league record.

Senior guard Vinny Clifford knocked down eight three-pointers and scored a game-high 28 points. Senior center Peter Merry contributed 16 points, 10 rebounds and four blocked shots while Harris scored 15 points and pulled down nine rebounds. Rashad Francois added 11 points for Danvers.

GAME 21: February 19 DANVERS 68, ROCKLAND 55

The Falcons closed out the perfect regular season by rolling on the road. They built a 60-38 lead after three quarters, then rested the starters. Devan Harris and Vinny Clifford each had 18 points to lead Danvers, while Peter Merry turned in a solid game that included three dunks. Devonn Allen also stood out.

GAME 22: February 27 DANVERS 69, WAKEFIELD 52

In the first round of the Division 2 North state tournament, sophomore point guard Devonn Allen got the Falcons off to a great start, scoring 18 of his game-high 23 points in the first half. The win was Danvers' 22nd



Congratulations
Danvers High School Basketball Team
Division II State Champions

DANVERS INDOOR
SPORTS
www.danversindoorsports.com

of the season and 100th under coach John Walsh.

Rashad Francois came off the bench to score 12 points, Devan Harris had 11, and Vinny Clifford chipped in 10.

GAME 23: March 2 DANVERS 64, LATIN ACADEMY 48

The Falcons shook off a slow start and pulled away in the second half. Seniors Vinny Clifford and Devan Harris each scored 21 points in the North quarterfinal matchup. Danvers had a difficult time holding back Latin Academy's Rayshawn Miller, but his 24 points weren't enough for the upset. Devonn Allen scored 12 points for the Falcons.

GAME 24: March 4 DANVERS 65, BRIGHTON 58

Division 2 North final by holding off a young, talented Brighton team. Devan Harris was an inside-outside threat for the Falcons, hitting a pair of three-pointers and dominating in the paint. Harris led all scorers with 26 points and he pulled down 13 rebounds.

Vinny Clifford scored 12 of his 14 points in the first half and Peter Merry added 13 points before fouling out late in the game.

Tre Crittendon played well off the bench when Devonn Allen got into foul trouble. Rashad Francois also played well, scoring eight points off the bench.

GAME 25: March 7 DANVERS 50, ARLINGTON 47

In arguably Danvers' toughest test of the season, the Falcons

got clutch free throws and a couple critical defensive stops down the stretch to survive at Lowell's Tsongas Center.

Josh Lee buried a three-pointer to give Arlington a 47-46 lead with 1:24 to go, but Devonn Allen drew a foul going to the hoop with only 21 seconds left and made both free throws. Danvers forced a contested three after regaining the lead with Devan Harris grabbing the rebound and then sinking two free throws for a 50-47 lead. The Falcons then got one final defensive stop to earn the North trophy.

Harris was the only Danvers player to reach double figures with 26 points. Vinny Clifford and Peter Merry each had eight points and Allen chipped in with six.

GAME 26: March 10 DANVERS 51, BISHOP FEEHAN 40

Bishop Feehan kept making small charges to cut into the Falcons' lead, but each time the North champs answered. Danvers finished the game on an 11-4 run to pull away from the Shamrocks at the TD Garden.

Devan Harris led all scorers with 17 points while sophomore point guard Devonn Allen handled Feehan's pressure defense and produced 13 points of his own. Senior center Peter Merry scored seven points and blocked six shots while Vinny Clifford added nine points, including a critical three-point play with under three minutes to play.

Bishop Feehan didn't have one player reach double figures against the Falcons' solid defense.

GAME 27: March 14 DANVERS 52, MARLBORO 49

The Falcons finished off their historic, perfect (27-0) season with a hard-fought victory on the DCU Center court in Worcester. Danvers built an 18-point first half lead, but saw it whittled away in the second half as Marlboro tightened up on defense and got more aggressive on the offensive end.

Danvers' lead was cut in half by the end of the third quarter and the Panthers pulled to within two points (48-46) in the final two minutes of the game. Senior center Peter Merry came up with the play of the game when he blocked a Chris Doherty layup attempt that would have tied the game.

Senior forward Devan Harris made four clutch free throws down the stretch to help the Falcons hang on for the win.

Harris battled foul trouble, but ended up leading the team with 12 points.

Even though Harris picked up three fouls before intermission, senior guard Vinny Clifford was scoreless in the first half and Merry had just three points at the break. Danvers led Marlboro 33-15. Junior guard Rashad Francois buried three long triples off the bench in the first half and added a pair of free throws for 11 points.

Sophomore point guard Devonn Allen chipped in nine points, Clifford added eight, and Merry finished with seven. Mike Nestor played outstanding defense (with some help from Merry) on Doherty, Marlboro's freshman sensation, holding him to three points in the first half and 16 for the game.

CONGRATULATIONS DANVERS HIGH BOYS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPS!

The Law Office of

STEPHEN M. FORLIZZI

FIGHTING FOR YOU ON THE NORTH SHORE FOR OVER 35 YEARS!

978.739.4898 • www.forlizzilaw.com

491 Maple Street • Danvers, MA 01960 • Steve@ForlizziLaw.com • Matt@ForlizziLaw.com

AUTO ACCIDENTS • PERSONAL INJURY • DIVORCE • CRIMINAL DEFENSE

CONGRATULATIONS DANVERS HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM!

*I am passionate about what I do because it's about...
Home ~ Family ~ Community*



RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE
50 Dodge Street, Suite 105
Beverly, MA 01915
NewEnglandMoves.com

PAMELA GETCHELL SPIROS

Danvers Real Estate Sales Specialist For Over 13 Years

(978) 808-6022

Pamela.Spiros@NEMoves.com



PERFECT FINISH

Danvers boys basketball wraps up undefeated season with Division 2 title

BY MATT JENKINS
STAFF WRITER

WORCESTER — Sometimes it's just a fingertip that separates a win from a loss, a champion from a runner-up.

On the evening of Saturday, March 14 at the DCU Center, it was literally a fingertip that helped the Danvers High boys basketball achieve the amazing.

With less than a minute to play in the Division 2 state championship game, Falcons' senior center Peter Merry seemingly came from nowhere to make a fingertip block on Marlboro freshman Chris Doherty, preventing the Panthers from pulling even and setting the stage for another Danvers victory.

Senior forward Devan Harris made four free throws in the final 24 seconds to help Merry's block stand in the Falcons' 52-49 championship win over Marlboro.

The win wrapped up an undefeated season for Danvers (27-0) and brought home the third state title for the program in four years. Danvers captured Division 3 state titles in 2012 and 2013; this was its first championship in Division 2.

"I just had tears of joy in the locker room. It's the best feeling ever," the 6-foot-10 Merry said. "There's nothing else you could want from this. Words can't describe it. I love this team so much."

The Falcons came into the season with high expectations — and delivered.

"It means so much because it was such a grind. People say smile and stuff, but it was just hard," Danvers head coach John Walsh said. "It was great to go undefeated but man, it was hard because you were supposed to win every single night out, every game. It took a lot, not from me, but it was a lot on the kids. You just want to win, you feel like you're supposed to, you feel like you have to."

If the team felt pressure it didn't show it on the court, especially as Marlboro was slicing into what was an 18-point Danvers halftime advantage.

The Panthers increased the pressure defensively and attacked more ferociously on offense after halftime. That 18-point lead was cut in half by the end of the third quarter (41-32) and Marlboro pulled to within two points (48-46) when junior Liam Shanahan



DAVID LE/Staff photos
Danvers senior captain Peter Merry made his presence felt all season, as shown by this dunk he threw down in the state final against Marlboro.



Danvers sophomore Devonn Allen floats in a hook shot against Marlboro during the first half of the Division 2 state championship contest in Worcester.

Danvers

FAMILY DOCTORS
P.C.

We are so Proud of this Team!
"Danvers High School Basketball Division 2 State Champions"
Congratulations on a great season!

140 Commonwealth Ave. • Suite 202 • Danvers, MA 01923 • 978-762-6262 • Fax 978-750-8312 • www.danversdocs.com

converted a layup with 1:51 to go.

Danvers then missed the front end of two 1-and-1s, giving Marlboro three chances to tie. On its last attempt, Doherty (a game-high 16 points) caught the ball in the paint and squeezed off a shot. He beat the Danvers defense to the offensive rebound and had plenty of space on the left side of the hoop and the ball in his strong hand.

But Merry stepped across from the other side of the rim and got just enough of the ball to lightly re-direct it up before grabbing the loose ball.

"We knew that he was the best player on the court by far. He's the best freshman I've ever seen in my life. I even told him that, 'You're going to go somewhere in life,'" Merry said. "I knew I had to stop him somehow. Once I saw him get away from me, I knew that if I jumped to block him I could get it."

The block alone wasn't enough to finish the game for the Blue-and-White. The Falcons had to take care of the ball, then take care of business at the line.

Harris made two free throws with 23.9 seconds left to push the lead to 50-46, then added two more to ice the game with 9.4 seconds left.

"You can't doubt yourself when you step up there in that situation," Harris said.

Harris, who scored 12 points despite battling foul trouble, didn't doubt himself. His teammates had confidence in him as well.

"He's cool. He's just a cool cat, really," Danvers senior Vinny Clifford said. "He wanted the ball; we heard

him in timeout. They were saying get me the ball, get whoever the ball, but Dev's like, 'Get me the ball. I want the ball.' And he knocked them down."

Doherty was Danvers' defensive focus all game. They limited him to three points in the first half, but the Panthers did a good job getting him in the right position in the second half as Doherty found space inside and got to the line frequently.

Brian Short shook free for some open threes as well. Short connected on a pair of triples in the second half and made three free throws after getting fouled attempting another. He finished with 15 points.

Danvers, meanwhile, spread the offensive wealth. Harris led the way with 12 points, Rashad Francios came off the bench for 11, Devonn Allen chipped in nine and Clifford scored eight.

Francois' play in the first half was huge. He connected on three long 3-pointers and two free throws to help Danvers open a 33-15 lead.

Scoring became much more difficult in the second half for the Falcons, which managed only eight points in the third quarter and 11 in the fourth.

Somehow, the Falcons found a way to hold on.

Danvers 52, Marlboro 49

Division 2 state championship at DCU Center, Worcester

Marlboro: O. Cappadona 2-0-5, Tirpak 1-0-2, J. Cappadona 0-1-1, Short 4-3-15, Doherty 4-8-16, DeLaCruz 1-1-4, Shanahan 2-2-6. Totals 14-15-49.

Danvers: Francois 3-2-11, Nestor 1-2-4, Dunn 0-1-1, Clifford 3-1-8, Allen 3-2-9, Harris 3-6-12, Merry 2-3-7. Totals 15-17-52.

Halftime: Danvers, 33-15.

3-pointers: M, Short 4, O. Cappadona, DeLaCruz; D, Francois 3, Clifford, Allen.

Records: D, 27-0; M, 21-4.



The Danvers Falcons storm the DCU Center court in Worcester after winning the Division 2 state championship over Marlboro.



Danvers High seniors Alex Taylor and Robert DiStefano, left, and junior Patrick Cunningham got into the spirit during the Falcons' state championship win at the DCU Center in Worcester.



Present this ad and take

\$30 off* your tuxedo rental



*Valid until May 31, 2015. Present coupon when booking rental. Other restrictions may apply. CODE: TUX30SalemNews

TUXEDOS BY
GIBLEES
MENSWEAR

85 Andover Street (Next to Ira Lexus)
Route 114, Danvers 978-774-4080
www.gibleestux.com

BEST OF
BOSTON
2014



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DANVERS HIGH BOYS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

HARTNETT'S

Gift Certificates
Available

ALL SOFT CLOTH CAR WASH

15 Water St., Danvers

(Exit 23 S, Rte. 128)

978-774-2474

www.hartnetts.info

OPEN 7 DAYS

Mon-Fri 8-7

Sat 8-6

Sun 8-4

 **\$200 OFF ANY CAR WASH!**

Hartnett's 15 Water St., Danvers

EXPIRES 5/31/15