

Stingy Saints reach 4A regional final

Written by Randy Krejci

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The Cedar Rapids Xavier girls basketball team began its “second season” in style Saturday night with a convincing 50-27 victory over Solon in the semifinals of the Class 4A regional tournament at Xavier.

The Saints did not let Solon score a single point in the fourth quarter.

Sarah Dickes led the Saints with 13 points. Ashley Stulken and Maddie Bertsch were vital components with eight points apiece in a balanced attack.

The fifth-ranked Saints (13-9) will face the Washington Demons (14-7) in the regional finals Tuesday at Kennedy at 7 p.m. The winner will advance to the state tournament.

Hayley Deutmeyer scored only six points for Xavier, but it was her opening two buckets that gave the Saints a 4-2 lead and they were never headed. Dickes popped in a 3-pointer, and a long 3-point bomb by McKenna Andersen at the first-quarter horn gave the home team momentum.

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"My teammates boxed out, got rebounds and got me in the right spot to contribute," commented Deutmeyer. "We wanted this win for our seniors and we waited for the moment to break it open."

Xavier led by only six points at halftime and both teams battled evenly in the third quarter, but the stingy Saints blanked Solon in the fourth stanza and pulled away.

"We got out and created pace to our favor and I think their legs gassed a little bit in the final quarter," said Xavier Coach Tom Lilly.

Lilly praised Dickes, the team's floor general. He also was pleased with Kayla Armstrong, who played well despite the crowd yelling at her a good share of the game.

Lilly also felt that "we stepped up on the offensive glass, got some key rebounds, and they took it to heart as to what the coaches told them."

"We got in some foul trouble that got us out of sync. Sometimes we would mistake activity for achievement," he continued. "We had some goofy fouls."

"We knew we had our work cut out for us because Solon definitely plays with a hard-nosed effort, similar to their other sports like softball, and they did a good job of 'getting in our heads' early in the ballgame."

SOLON (27): Kristen Purdy 0 1-2 1, Rylee Smith 4 1-3 9, Kara Misel 0 0-0 0, Karly Kramer 1 2-2 4, Brittany Stinocher 0 0-0 0, Emily Capper 0 0-0 0, Alex Henry 1 0-0 2, Jordan Smith 0 0-0 0, Ali Herdliska 2 3-3 7, Molly Walkner 0 0-0 0, Emma Rickels 1 0-0 3, Madi Shafar 0 0-0 0, Shelby Gunnells 0 1-2 1, Candice Kucera 0 0-0 0. Totals 9 8-12 27.

XAVIER (50): Kayla Armstrong 3 1-2 7, Morgan Breitbach 0 1-2 1, Hayley Deutmeyer 3 0-2 6, Sarah Dickes 3 6-6 13, Jenny Dickes 0 0-0 0, Abby Watson 0 0-0 0, Maddie Bertsch 3 2-4 8,

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Lizzy Bailey 0 0-0 0, McKenna Andersen 1 2-2 5, Allison Chorzempa 1 0-0 2, Ashley Stulken 3 2-2 8. Totals 17 14-20 50.

Halftime - Xavier 26, Solon 20. 3-point goals - Solon 1 (Rickels 1), Xavier 2 (S. Dickes 1, Andersen 1).