

Basketball: Cream City celebration as Ferndale wins first-ever NCS boys basketball title

Ray Aspuria/The Times-Standard
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FERNDALE -- What does a supremely dominant inside game get you?

A North Coast Section basketball title.

Just ask the Ferndale High boys basketball team.

The top-seeded Wildcats overpowered the visiting No. 2 San Francisco Waldorf Wolverines 61-46 en route to their first-ever NCS Division VI Championship in the program's history on Saturday night.

"I'm so proud of our guys and I'm happy for our town," said a grinning and ecstatic Ferndale head coach Justin Mora. "This is a special group of kids and I love them. It's been a long season and I'm just at a loss for words."

He was not the only one struck with the awe of the achievement.

"This was the biggest game of our (high school) lives and we wanted to win," said Adam Coppini. "I just can't explain it ... I probably won't be able to sleep tonight."

The historic championship win permanently cements the 2010 boys basketball team into Ferndale lore.

"That's going to be awesome," Jon Losa said. "People might not forget this. They'll remember us for a while."

The senior-less Wolverines simply had no answer for the twin towers -- Ferndale's Cole Salmon (16 points) and Losa (17 points) -- while on defense and could do little when they entered the Wildcats' interior as the Sultan of Swat -- Coppini -- made sure of that with numerous blocks.

"That was their obvious game plan from the start -- the height

advantage," said Waldorf head coach Zeke Lopez. "They pounded the ball inside all game long. Their big guy just stayed on the weakside and they rotated the ball to him. They were too big and too strong."

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From the first quarter until the starters left with 2:20 to play in the fourth, the Wildcats imposed their will. Crashing the boards, getting the ball to Salmon inside, Ferndale was a wrecking ball as it out-rebounded Waldorf 23-5 in the first

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half.

Mix in Coppini's rejections with a number of steals and the result was 15-9 and 32-13 first- and second-quarter leads.

"It helps that we're bigger than them," said Ferndale's James Slade. "We have a 6-foot-7 (Salmon) and 6-4 (Losa) guys and they are so strong. They were the key."

However, despite being smaller, Waldorf lived up to its namesake.

Wolverines may be small, but they're tenacious, and Waldorf didn't go down without a fight, proving physicality can somewhat diminish height.

"They weren't that big and I didn't think it was going tough," said Losa who took his lumps from the Wolverines. "But they were physical and rough which made it fun."

Jamarea Biggins (game-high 22 points) did his best to cut into the Wildcats' lead draining four-third quarter 3-pointers. Still, even with the outburst, Waldorf was behind 47-32 at the start of the fourth quarter.

Late in the final stanza came the game's loudest and most raucous reaction by the capacity, mostly-Ferndale fans, as senior exchange student and reserve Jakob Junkermann found nothing but net on a 3-pointer.

Junkermann gave a Michael Jordan-esque shrug after the shot and it presented Ferndale's final points of the night.

Waldorf ends the season with an 18-7, however, getting to the championship game was quite the feat for such a young squad.

"We started three sophomores and two juniors, it's definitely something to look forward to next season," Lopez said. "Hats off to Ferndale. They're a great team. They have balanced scoring and they played a phenomenal game."

Saturday's Box

(1) Ferndale 61, (2) San Francisco Waldorf 48

at Ferndale High

Waldorf 9 4 14 21 -- 48

Ferndale 13 17 13 18 -- 61

Scoring -- (Waldorf) Biggins 22; P. Schwarzenbach 7; Bonilla 2; Woodhouse 5; Beleson 1; E. Schwarzenbach 9 (Ferndale) Coppini 7; Losa 17; Junkermann 3; Slade 8; Townsend 1; Salmon 16

3-Pointers -- (Waldorf) Biggins 4; Zapota 1; P. Schwarzenbach 1 (Ferndale) Matyshock 2; Coppini 1; Junerkmann 1

Free-Throws -- (Waldorf) 6-8 (Ferndale) 9-15

Times Standard Photo

NCS Championship game March 6, 2010

Ferndale High School

