

## **Mondays with Mauro Fuller goes full Gaga**

**This year's 5A State Tourney may have been one of the best in recent memory.**

**The tournament got going on Monday with an early morning Upset Alert as the upstart J-Hawks from Urbandale led the top seeded Dragons from Johnston 41-23 at half. Johnston looked flat and U-Dale was sizzling from the outside, knocking down 6-11 from 3 in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. Johnston flipped the script in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, outscoring U-Dale, 43-16, to coast to a nine point win, 66-57. Maya McDermott led the way with 22 points and Kendall Nead added 15 points in the victory. The Gyamfi sisters combined for 20 points & 10 boards in the loss.**

**The second 5A quarter was a thriller as Valley upended I.C. High in OT, 66-59. Close thru out, Valley outscored City High 9-2 in OT to secure the win. Zoe Young put a 30 spot up, while Aubrey Joens scored 19 in the loss. Shea Fuller contributed a deuce in the win.....but the best was yet to come from her.**

**Quarterfinal #3 proved to be an Instant Classic between Dowling and Waukee. This one went 3 OT's and the Maroons survived, 75-70. Dowling was led by Caitlin Clark, who scored 42 points and had 10 boards. If Clark was Superman, then it was mild mannered Clark Kent (Grace Gaber) who saved the day. With the scored tied in the 3<sup>rd</sup> OT, Clark would foul out and Grace Gaber took over. Drawing fouls and knocking down huge FT's to seal the win for the Maroons. Gaber had 14 points in the win and allowed Clark & Co. to live another day. For Waukee, Katie Dinnebier had a HUGE game on the biggest stage. She scored 31 points including big shot after big shot in keeping the Warriors in the game. Dinnebier, who sat out with injury her freshman year, knocked down five 3's and shot 10-14 from the field. Jori Nieman also had a big game in scoring 20 points. It was the final go-around for Nieman, Anna**

**Brown and Paityn Rau. Three really good players and even better young women.**

**The last Quarterfinal of 5A found SE Polk against Ankeny Centennial. And guess what?? Yes, it too went to OT. The Rams from Polk would prevail in this one, 61-56. Centennial got down double digits early, but used a balanced attack including four in double figures to force OT. Rachel Schon and Meg Burns each tallied 12 points in the loss. Schon also grabbed 12 rebounds. Grace Larkins, for SEP, scored 15 in the win and helped her team advance.**

**The first Semifinal in 5A on Thursday pitted Valley against Johnston. This one was tight thru 3 quarters as it was tied at 47 all. Johnston seemed to have this one under control with just under 2 minutes left and a 7 point lead. But, before the clock would even tick down to hardly under a minute, Valley would have the lead. Young (37) and Fuller (22) led the charge and this one would require an OT to decide it. It was all Tigers in OT (14-2) and Valley would advance to the Finals. The tandem of Young and Fuller combined to hit six 3's (3 each) and shoot 15-16 from the line. For the Dragons this was the toughest loss of all, for it seemed victory was in their grasp and it just slipped away. Regan Nesheim did score 26 in the loss and snare 9 boards, while Maddie Mock grabbed 11 rebounds.**

**The second Semi found Dowling leading SEP by 5 after 3 quarters. But a 25-9 blitz by the Rams in the final quarter pushed them by Dowling, 72-61, and advanced them to the finals and a date with Valley. Grace Larkins, who earlier attempted a double flip on the floor exercise with her car, escaped serious injury and scored 24 points in the win. Caitlin Clark scored 31 in defeat and grabbed 10 rebounds. Clark seemed to tire down the stretch and was unable to get to the FT line (only 2 attempts for the game). The 3 OT victory over Waukee seemed to catch up with Dowling in the latter stages of this one.**

**The 5A Final was a good one as it pitted Eastern Polk vs. Western Polk. The Rams from SEP held a 5 point lead at half. But Valley would outscore SEP by 3 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and enter the final 8 minutes down by 2. Again it was Shea Fuller and Young who willed Valley to victory down the stretch and their 2<sup>nd</sup> state title in 3 years with a 65-60 victory. Shea was incredible, going 6-8 from 3, five rebounds and 22 points. She shot 9-18 (50%) for the tourney from 3 and averaged over 15 ppg. She was better each game of the tourney as each game meant more and more and saved her best for last, literally, her very last high school game on the biggest stage. In other words, Shea Fuller went full Lady Gaga (A Star is Born).**

**Fuller made the 5A All-Tournament team along with Grace Larkins, who led SEP in the final with 17 points. Larkins will have to continue to develop her outside game to supplement her game around the rim to become an elite player in the state. As for Valley, one can't predict the next time they will win a state tournament, but there is another Fuller in the pipeline, if that gives you any clue.....**

**In 4A, things got started with top seeded Marion defeating C.R. Xavier in the 1<sup>st</sup> round 70-35. Kayba Laube, the "blonde bomber", was 5-8 from 3 in this one and 8-8 from the line in putting up 25 points in the win. Riley Wright added 15 points and 7 boards to the cause.**

**Mason City booked a date with Marion in the Semis by downing Waverly-Shell Rock 55-49. Megan Meyer led the way with 21 points, while Anna Deets chipped in 12 points.**

**The matchup between Marion and Mason City began with Marion holding a 4 point lead after the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. The lead grew to 9 at half and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter is when Marion put it away with five 3's in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and a 17 point lead after three. Marion would coast to a 75-54 win behind the strength of 13-26 from beyond the arc and 18-22 from the line. Again, it was Laube who led the way with 20 points and the Van Weelden**

sisters (Leah & Ella) who combined for 25 points and 18 boards. Riley Wright also finished with 14 points in this one. In her final high school game, Megan Meyer tallied 23 points, including six 3 pointers, to cap off an amazing career from a wonderful kid. Anna Deets, too, contributed double figures with 11 points in defeat.

While Marion was taking care of business in the top half of the bracket, North Scott was doing the same in the bottom half and these two would meet in the finals, a rematch of the 2017 classic, which North Scott won in OT. This one did not disappoint, as it came down to the wire, with North Scott pulling out a 50-49 win in a thriller. Marion had to rally after trailing at half by 8. Marion was able to grab the lead, 49-47, with an and 1 by Riley Wright with under 2 minutes left. A lot happened in the time remaining, including a “questionable call” at mid-court. But, with 1.4 seconds left, Marion executed a well devised side out of bounds play that allowed Riley Wright to get a look, but it wasn’t meant to be and North Scott prevailed. Kayba Laube, again, led the way with 18 points (4-8 from 3) and Riley Wright followed with 12. Both were named to the Class 4A All-Tournament team. Megan Meyer also was named to the team.

On to 3A, where top seeded North Polk opened with a 59-47 win over Estherville-LC. Maggie Phipps led the way with 19 points and four steals.

Next up was Coach Justin Morton, the Red Suit and Roland-Story vs. DSM Christian. This was the last game on Monday night and it looked bad for Coach Morton, down 41-29 with just minutes left in this one. But, the Norsemen made one last run and closed the gap to 41-40 in the waning moments. But, Christian would hang on with a 49-41 victory. Freshman Reagan Barkema led the way with 14 points and 7 boards in defeat.

**North Polk would match up with Waukon in the Semis. Polk got off to a quick start and maintained a safe distance from Waukon in winning 65-49. Phipps again with a big game in scoring 20 points, including three 3's. Waukon finished at 19-4 including knocking out defending champ Crestwood in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the tourney.**

**In the finals of 3A, North Polk would match up with a long, talented Center Point-Urbana squad. Polk got off to a 5-0 start, but couldn't build on it and CPU finally got on track and ended the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter with 7 point lead. By half the lead was 13 and North Polk was struggling to score. CPU put it away in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and entered the final quarter with a 20 point lead. The final would be 54-36. Phipps finished with 7 points and landed on the All-Tournament team.**

**The 2A field was loaded with good teams, with great records, including undefeated Grundy Center and Central Decatur and once beaten Treynor.**

**Treynor would knock off both Central Decatur and Grundy Center to win the 2A title. Hailey Wallis and Emma Atwood both were named to the All-Tournament team in 2A.**

**One of the more entertaining games, witnessed by Attack personnel, was the Montezuma-CAM, Anita game in 1A. CAM got off to a great start and led by 9 points after one quarter. Then like a "Boult" of lightning, Elise Boulton began to rain down 3's in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and give her team a 25-22 lead at half. After each bomb from Boulton, she would leap in the air with great emotion, celebrating the moment with her teammates in transition back to defense. She was loving the moment; certainly refreshing to see such raw emotion. Eventually, Shateah Wetering joined the party with 17 points, 7 rebounds and 4 steals and the fighting 'Zuma won 59-45. Boulton would finish with 13 points in the win.**

**Montezuma would fall in the next round to West Hancock, 59-50 and was eliminated. Wetering led the way with 14 points and 9 boards and Boulton, again, would contribute three 3's in defeat. They finished the season at 22-3 and Wetering was named to the All-Tournament team.**

**West Hancock would go on to lose in the finals to Newell-Fonda, who finished the season undefeated at 27-0.**

**Well, that will wrap it up for this edition of Mondays with Mauro. Attack season will commence soon and we will see everyone back in the gym for another successful spring and summer of action.**

**See 'ya in Ames.....**