

Cairo, Sesser-Valier shocked the world

Pilots, Red Devils pull upsets on Friday; Crab Orchard, Goreville took care of business

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BY JACK BULLOCK

EDITOR/WEB PUBLISHER

www.abaselineview.com

NORRIS CITY - The Norris City-Omaha-Enfield IA Sectional has a couple of teams that were supposed to make it past the regional finals, and two teams who were not.

Both Cairo and Sesser-Valier pulled shocking upsets on Friday night to advance to the sectional semifinals.

The Pilots shook up the basketball nation by ousting top-ranked ABV and Associated Press number one Meridian on Friday night, 68-65.

The Red Devils shot "lights out" on Friday night as they rolled past top-seed Woodlawn, 81-66, to win the Christopher Regional championship.

Coach Shane Garner's club has a Tuesday night match up with Black Diamond Conference rival Goreville.

The **Cairo Pilots** were the second seed at the Ullin Century Regional and took care of the host Centurions before topping the Bobcats in the finale.

Head coach Brian Brandtner has a diminutive club with not much height on the roster.

But this athletic bunch plays much bigger than their listed length.

The top scorer is 5-foot-5 senior guard Rayquan Nelson who is averaging 14.3 points a contest for the 14-13 Pilots.

Five-foot-eleven senior Jarvis Woodson is tossing in 10.9 p.p.g. for the Cairo club and he runs the show from the point.

Freshman forward Dave Taylor is part of the scoring list for Coach Brandtner, averaging 12.1 points a night.

Six-foot seniors Trevon Houston (7.6 p.p.g., 8.1 r.p.g.) and Bryce Gardner (8.3 p.p.g., 9.5 r.p.g.) do the work in the middle for Cairo.

Five-foot-nine sophomore Melvin Duncan, 6-foot-2 senior Ronald Henderson and 5-foot-8 seniors Jeffrey DeWitt and Keyonte Graham are all solid contributors from a deep bench.

The Pilots have signature wins over Meridian and Marshall County (KY.) and they won the Du Quoin Tip-Off Classic by beating 2A teams Flora, Hamilton County, Du Quoin and Vandalia.

They also topped Crab Orchard, 82-77, back on January 3.

Crab Orchard has the best won-loss mark of this sectional, sporting a 25-5 record after taking care of Gallatin County, 60-52 on Friday night to win the Hardin County Regional.

The team leader is Caleb Perry, a 5-foot-11 senior guard/forward, who has racked up a lot of points this season.

Perry has averaged 25.4 points per game this season and has led the team with 79 percent from the foul line.

If ABV was to give a "Comeback Player of the Year" award, Perry would receive it hands-down. After breaking his leg last season in a game, Perry rehabbed and came back this season with a vengeance.

Perry netted 40-points on Thursday night in a come-from-behind win over Thompsonville and then 24-hours later he torched Gallatin County with 28-points in the regional title game win

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for Coach Jon Brown.

Gunner Galloway is second to Perry on the stat sheet in scoring. Galloway is a 6-foot-1 junior who averages 15.0 points a game for the Trojans.

Five-foot-ten senior Tyler Deaton tosses in 8.1 p.p.g. for Crab Orchard.

The Trojans won their own Thanksgiving Tournament and were second to Zeigler-Royalton at the Wayne City Holiday Tournament and lost at the GEC Tournament to Gallatin County, 54-49, back on February 1.

The Trojans won the rubber game with the Hawks to advance.

The **Goreville Blackcats** have the best one-two punch in the sectional with Zeke Snell and Kyfer Cavins.

The 6-foot-4 Snell is a post player supreme, averaging 22.5 points a game and 9.4 rebounds per contest.

He is one of the few players in the ABV area who can create havoc in the post or the outside.

Snell routinely throws down a dunk or two per game for the Blackcats, who took care of Zeigler-Royalton at home last Friday to win the Goreville Regional.

Cavins is an outside player who can get to the basket. Cavins averages 21.1 p.p.g. while grabbing 8.6 r.p.g.

Daniel Lanham, a 5-foot-9 senior guard, adds 7.8 points a night for the Blackcats, who are 18-12 in a war of a schedule.

Shon Messmer, a 5-foot-9 senior guard, and 6-foot-2 senior Dallas Melot chip in 7.5 and 3.1 points per game respectively.

Sesser-Valier and first year head coach Shane Garner have put together a nice run since Christmas and are in a position to make another run to Peoria after having finished second in 2010.

The Red Devils got hot at the right time, netting 155 points in two wins over Christopher and Woodlawn last week. Sesser-Valier beat Goreville in both of their regular season games as the Red Devils finished tied for the Black Diamond Conference West Division with a 9-3 mark, 19-10 overall.

The Red Devils guards have carried a lot of the load this season for Coach Garner. Six-foot-two senior Jordan Gunter, 6-foot-1 senior Tyler Baxter and 5-foot-10 junior Nick Marlo all have been part of the regional championship run.

Gunter netted a game-high 29-points in the Woodlawn win while Marlo and Baxter added 18 and 10-points respectively.

Six-foot-four senior Nick McCarty added 10-points in the regional title game victory. Sesser-Valier went on a 22-0 run in the first half and led 47-22 at intermission.

The Red Devils ended the Cardinals six-year run of winning regional titles.

ABV Projected Winner – Cairo.

Jack Bullock is the Editor/Web Publisher of A Baseline View.com. For the past 16-seasons, ABV has covered boy's high school basketball in southern Illinois. Previews, Rankings, Scores, Standings, Tournament Brackets and Game Stories for over 100-teams.