

County rivalry could be renewed in Sectional

By John J. Dunn
Contributing sportswriter

For those who can't get enough of the Carroll-Delphi boys' basketball county rivalry, the IHSAA Class 2A Sectional draw held Thursday night has made it very possible that the two schools could meet for a third time this season, but this time

with tournament elimination at stake.

Pairings are out for the 99th Annual IHSAA Boys' Basketball State Tournament for 402 participating teams throughout Indiana. For the second time in as many years, Delphi and Carroll find themselves as potential opponents in Sectional play at Clinton Central.

But unlike last season when the two drew each other right off the bat in the Friday night game, Carroll, the defending champion and prohibitive favorite this year, has to get by Fountain Central in the opening round game on Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Delphi drew the bye and will face the Carroll-Fountain Central winner in the

semi-finals on March 6 at 7:30 p.m., immediately following the Clinton Central-Seeger game, tentatively scheduled for 6 p.m.

The Sectional championship game featuring the semi-final winners will be March 7 at 7:30 p.m.

The two rivals have met twice already this season in the newly scheduled home-

and-home series, with the Cougars winning both contests, 62-48 at Carroll on Nov. 26 in the season-opener for both teams and 58-48 at Delphi on Feb. 6.

The Cougars also eliminated Delphi from last season's Sectional with a 53-38 victory en route to the first Sectional championship in school history and have won three straight over the Oracles since the 67-65 thriller that went down to the final

buzzer last February at Carroll.

Carroll will enter Sectional 37 play with the best record, currently 15-3 at press time, followed by Seeger (11-8), Delphi (6-13), Fountain Central (5-14), and the host team at 3-15.

The winner of the Fountain Central Sectional will advance to the Tipton Regional on March 14 and face the winner from the Manchester Sectional.

Swimmers head to state Five DCHS records set

Five members of the Delphi Boys Varsity Swim team are headed to the State swim meet Friday at the Natatorium in Indianapolis.

After a less than stellar performance at last Thursday's preliminaries, the boys bounced back strong Saturday afternoon, winning five events.

The 200 medley relay team led from the start as backstroke Kyle Price handed breaststroker Clint McLeland the lead. Butterflyer Andrew Burton widened the lead and freestyler Jeremy Sterrett hung on for the win with a time of 1:40.86.

The 200 freestyle relay team came from behind for the win as Jared Kelley and Sterrett swam well on their first two legs of the relay. Price closed the gap on the third leg, almost handing the lead to anchor Burton who powered his way to win by nearly a second with a time of 1:31.67.

Price pulled away for the win in the 100 backstroke in what looked like a four-man race after the first 50 yards. His time of 54.54 was over a second faster than the runner-up.

Burton repeated as sec-



State bound swimmers

Delphi boys varsity swim team has five members who qualified to compete at the state swim meet on Saturday. A sixth, diver Andy Flora, was a regional qualifier. Swimmers pictured are (l-r): Front - Flora. Back - Jeremy Sterrett, Kyle Price, Clint McLeland, Andrew Burton and Jared Kelley Photo provided

tional champion in both the 50 and 100 freestyle events with times of 21.99 and 47.86. He won the 50 by half a second and the 100 by over two seconds.

All five winning times are school records as the medley relay dropped over two seconds, the 200 free relay took almost a second and a half off the old mark, Price, who had

tied the backstroke record at conference, took off three quarters of a second while Burton shaved off just over a tenth of a second in the 50 and a second off in the 100.

Diver Andy Flora's third place finish earned him a trip to the diving regional at Hamilton Southeastern. Flora is believed to be the first Delphi diver to qual-

ify for the regional. If Flora places eighth or better Tuesday, he will join his teammates in Indianapolis.

Delphi swim coach Al Brannan was chosen by his peers as Coach of the Year for the West Lafayette Sectional. The DCHS team placed third with 159 points.

Oracles riding four-game win streak

By John J. Dunn
Contributing sportswriter

For the first time since the 2004-05 season, the Delphi boys' basketball team has won four-in-a row following a pair of weekend victories over South Newton 57-54 at home and 51-48 at Pioneer.

Both games were thrillers decided in the waning seconds, but no matter, the Oracles have seemingly found ways to win games that they had become accustomed to losing.

Shooting extremely well from the field, including both from three-point range and from the free throw line, has not hurt Delphi's winning streak either, proving once again the known correlation between a high field goal percentage and a team's success rate at earning a victory.

The Oracles have now shot .559 percent or above overall from the field in each of their last three victories. They are a combined 26-of-30 (.867 percent) from the foul line in the last two contests to help cement the wins.

At Royal Center, Delphi had to fend off its second furious game-ending rally on consecutive nights as Pioneer (6-13) hit two three-pointers in a ten second span after going 0-for-12 during the game. They closed the lead to 47-46 with 25 seconds left before two foul shots

apiece from both Kris Bender and Justin Snider sealed the victory.

The Oracles opened the fourth period with a 31-29 lead when Matt Brown's drive to the basket sparked an 8-0 run, giving Delphi its biggest lead of the game at 39-29 with 4:42 remaining.

Delphi (6-13) would connect on 12-of-13 foul shots in the final quarter, including a perfect 6-of-6 from Austin Hawn, to hold onto the well-deserved win.

Hawn kept Delphi in it early, scoring the first 10 Oracle points to keep it close at 13-10. Jordan Wagner and Dustin

Salyer made baskets along with a Salyer trey with 20 seconds left to knot the score at the half.

Pioneer took its final lead of the game at 27-25 with 1:40 left in the third period before Brown fueled another Delphi surge with two more layups followed by a Bender short jumper to take the 31-29 lead into the final quarter.

The Oracles shot .586 percent (17-of-29) from the field and .882 percent (15-of-17) from the foul line to carry on their torrid shooting pace, as well as out rebounding the taller Panthers 22-17, led by Paul Zink with ten.

"Clutch free throw shooting helped us down the stretch," said head coach Brian Tonsoni. "We did a nice job of attacking the paint in the second half and Matt Brown played his best game of the year and really sparked us in the second half. We also played better defensively."

Hawn led another balanced Delphi attack with 16 points, with Salyer adding 11, Brown 8, Bender and Zink 6 apiece and Wagner and Justin Snider with 2 apiece. Brown added five boards to the Oracle rebounding effort.

The Oracles have now defeated Pioneer six straight

times since the last Panther win during the 2002-03 season.

Vs. South Newton

Salyer's driving layup with seven seconds to play rescued Delphi from another desperate comeback attempt that again included consecutive three-pointers in a 12-second span that allowed South Newton to overcome a 53-48 deficit with 32 seconds remaining and take 54-53 lead with just 20 ticks left.

The Rebels were then called for an intentional foul after what appeared to be a tackle of Hawn on the ensuing inbounds play which resulted in the final two free throws with 1.1 sec-

onds left to account for the final margin.

It was a prelude to Saturday night's eerily similar contest and included some ironic statistical similarities rarely seen in any game, including identical shooting percentages by both teams, both overall and from three-range.

Both teams shot an identical .559 percent (19-of-34) overall from the field, including a sizzling .615 percent (8-of-13) from three-point range and .524 percent (11-of-21) from inside the arc.

But a glaring difference was

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Cougars claim 15th win of season

Greg Hoffman
Contributing sportswriter

Carroll won 2 of 3 games last week with road wins at Frontier (12-7) 61-51 and at Eastern (8-10) 51-42. The loss was at home Friday night as the Cougars let one slip away against Taylor (9-10) 46-42. Carroll's record now stands at 15 wins to 3 losses. The last time a Carroll team won 15 games was the 1994-95 season.

The Cougars never trailed at Frontier but no lead ever felt safe as the small Falcons bombarded the Cougars with 35 three-point attempts, hitting the target 13 times for 39 of their 51 points in the game and a 37% average. The Cougars went inside to combat or offset Frontier's threes as Carroll outscored their host 32-8 on twos and 23-4 from the foul line, 55-12 inside the arch.

Carroll jumped out to an 11-0 advantage early. Frontier closed to within 4 points at 13-9 and was down 17-9 after

one. In the second quarter the two teams played fairly even and by half time the score was 31-24, Carroll.

The Cougars went up 9 points early just to have the Falcons hit back-to-back treys to close the gap to 3 points. The Cougars held a 4-point, 40-36, lead after three periods. This would be as close as Frontier would get the rest of the way. A Primer Zook three-pointer put Carroll up by 7 at 43-36 and the Cougars started the parade to the foul line, hitting 16 for a 62% average. The Falcons went cold from the field on 4 of 13 shooting.

Adam Spesard led all scorers with a double-double, 20 points and 10 rebounds. Carson Spesard had 13 points and Kyle Geheb and Zook split 16 points. Zook's 8 points was a career high.

Vs. Taylor
Friday night Carroll was done in by 5'11" junior guard Reomey Northington, who scored 21 points on the night, 13 coming in Taylor's big

third period and the final 4 points in the game as Carroll's big men were kept at bay all night.

This game saw the return of senior Riley Eller, who played in parts of three quarters before he re-aggravated his knee injury and had to leave the game. Back-to-back treys by Geheb and Eller gave Carroll a 10-4 lead early before Taylor came back to tie the game and take a 12-10 lead after one. There were two ties before a Noah Allen fielder gave Carroll a 16-14 lead and the Cougars held that 2-point advantage at half time, 20-18.

In the third quarter, Taylor took over. There were two ties and three lead changes before the visitors used a 9-2 run to pull away. They held a 36-29 lead after three. Carroll fought back with an 11-4 run to tie the game at 40 on a Zook three-pointer with 2:12 left in the game. Taylor took the lead back but an Allen lay-up tied the game at 42 with 1:10 remaining. The Ti-

tans worked the clock and Northington's runner with 4 seconds left gave Taylor the win.

Brad Benson led Carroll with a career high 12 points. Geheb led his team in rebounding with 6 and handed out 6 assists.

Vs. Eastern

At Eastern, Carroll owned the boards as the Cougars out rebounded the Comets 38-21 (21-6 in the second half). A. Spesard who had a double-double led the way with 14 points. C. Spesard had 9 points and Geheb 6. Carroll also out shot Eastern, going 19 of 41 for 46% from the field, holding the Comets to 17 of 47, 36%.

Carroll led Eastern 14-7 after one period. The Comets fought back to tie and take the lead at 20-18 with 4:04 left in the half. A pair of free throws by Zook and a runner by Chad Griffin gave Carroll the lead at 22-20. By half time Carroll was still up, 23-22.

Both teams scored 10 points in the third period as

the Cougars held the slim one point lead at 33-32 after three. In the fourth, A. Spesard took over. He had 11 of his 13 points in the quarter and pulled down 5 offensive rebounds. With the score tied at 36, Carroll outscored Eastern 15-6 for the win.

C. Spesard led all scorers with 14 points and Allen and Geheb had 7 points each.

Friday's home game with Lafayette Central Catholic (14-6) will be for the Hoosier Heartland Conference championship. Both teams are 4-0 in league play.

Junior Varsity

Carroll's JV won one of three games played last week. They lost to Frontier 43-29 and to Taylor 36-27 before bouncing back Saturday to defeat Eastern 47-44. The young Cougars are 10-8 on the season.

Carroll never led at Frontier. The hosts held a 10-3 advantage after one and were up 22-12 at the half. By the end

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Carroll County Comet
Delphi, Indiana
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