

Vikings Fall In Regional Finals

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 08 March 2014 17:57

The Avery High boys' basketball team had a magical season. One that resembles a Hollywood script concerning a small-town team rising from the ashes and taking on a powerhouse program in a

desperation game for both teams.

It definitely resembles the movie "Hoosiers." Scott Polsgrove, a former college coach, makes his way to the high school ranks, and takes a team that won just four games just two years before his arrival, and he gets them within a step of the state championship.

Unfortunately, this isn't Hollywood, and it wasn't a storybook ending on Saturday. Instead, Winston-Salem Prep (25-4), the No.2 seed in the West, was the real deal and defeated Avery 64-39 in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Class 1A Western Regional championship game at UNC-Greensboro's Fleming Gymnasium.

Winston-Salem Prep advances to the state championship game next weekend at the Smith's Center in Chapel Hill. The Phoenix will play East Carteret in the state finals. East Carteret defeated Wallace-Rose Hill 68-51 in the Eastern Regional title game. The Vikings (26-5), despite Saturday's stinging loss, closed out their first winning season in the last five years. The Phoenix will be shooting for its third Class 1A title in a row.

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And Polsgrove has led the Vikings to 40 wins the last two seasons, a Final Four appearance---the first in school history---and the Western Highland 1A/2A Conference regular-season and tournament championships. But the Phoenix was just a little bit better on Saturday as they methodically pulled away in the second half.

Leading 15-8 after the opening stanza, and 28-20 at halftime, the Phoenix broke the contest open by outscoring Avery 20-9 in the third quarter. That gave Winston-Salem Prep a commanding 48-29 lead, and the Vikings never recovered.

Mike Hughes led the Phoenix with ten points and eight rebounds. He was Winston-Salem Prep's only player in double figures. Chance Watson paced Avery with ten points and eight boards. Tre Jackson had eight points, James Stewart finished with seven for the Vikings.

Ty Polsgrove, who was second on the team in scoring (averaging 11.1 ppg), only played nine minutes on Saturday and did not score. The Vikings also struggled from the field.

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They shot 29% from the floor (14-49) and 20% from the three-point line (5-25). The Phoenix outrebounded Avery, 39-30, but the Vikings did forced Winston-Salem Prep into 16 turnovers.

The Phoenix outscored Avery 24-12 in the paint, 22 points off turnovers, and they had 20 second-chance points.

WINSTON-SALEM PREP 64, AVERY 39

SCORE BY PERIODS 1 2 3 4 TOTALS

WINSTON-SALEM PREP 15 13 20 16 - 64

AVERY HIGH 8 12 9 10 - 39

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WINSTON-SALEM PREP: HOLLINGSWORTH 9, HUGES 10 (8 REBOUNDS), LIPSCOMB 9, SIMMONS 6, TATE 6, STEVENSON 2, COLLINS 8, TIBBS 8, ROBINSON 2, HOWARD 4. FG: 19-50, 3FG: 5-14, FT: 21-27. 39 REBOUNDS, 11 ASSISTS, 16 TURNOVERS.

AVERY: WALDROOP 3, WATSON 10 (6 REBOUNDS), STEWART 7, WOTELL 2, JACKSON 8, PUCKETT 2, CROWE 6, PHILLIPS 1. FG: 14-49, 3FG: 5-25, FT: 6-6. 30 REBOUNDS, 11 ASSISTS, 18 TURNOVERS.