

SPORTS

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Mershman, Blue Devils not afraid to roll the dice

By ZACH BAKER
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CANTON — For much of Saturday's Division VI state final in Canton, Carey coach Jonathan Mershman appeared to be assuming the role of a riverboat gambler.

Five times, Mershman had his offense go for it on fourth down against Coldwater. Twice, he had his team attempt the two-point conversion after a touchdown.

And with 3:41 left in the first half and his squad — consensus underdogs — leading 15-7, Mershman rolled the dice with an onside kick.

The results of these risks were mixed. The Blue Devils only converted two of their fourth down attempts, though they were 2 for 2 on 2-point conversions.

And the onside kick? It bounced out of bounds,

giving the Cavaliers the ball at midfield.

It's been said that everyone loves a gambler until he loses.

And yet, despite his gambles not always paying off, Mershman and Carey hit the jackpot.

The Blue Devils were able to celebrate a 26-14 win over defending champion Coldwater, and their first state title since 1975.

Afterward, Mershman sounded less like a Vegas high roller, and more like a coach who had supreme confidence in his players.

Whether the risks he took succeeded or not.

"The attitude was, these seniors and these captains for sure, have my back, and whatever I decide, they're

See MERSHMAN, B2

State Champions



STEVE WILLIAMS / for The Courier

CAREY'S DEREK LONSWAY gets upended during a run.

Carey stuns Coldwater for its first state title since 1975

By MATT NYE
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CANTON — There's a good chance Coldwater players, coaches and fans will never hear a train horn the same way again.

They will most likely think back to the Carey

train horn that kept blowing Saturday in the Division VI state championship at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium, or remember the freight train that was the Carey football team that steamrolled through the Cavaliers 26-14 for its second state championship in school history.

For the Cavalier players, it will certainly have nightmares of 6-foot-1, 265-pound running back Jordan Vallejo coming at them 25 times and scoring twice and Coldwater committing two

costly turnovers in the first half.

On the other hand, Carey players or coaches might've thought winning a state championship was a dream.

But Saturday it turned into a reality.

"It's indescribable, but all the hard work we put in as a class and with the underclassmen that helped us out to get where we are today," Carey's Derek Lonsway said. "I'm glad we went out with a bang. I'm so proud of our team, the town, the coaching staff, no words to

say really."

After the first five minutes Saturday, a state title wasn't looking likely for the Blue Devils (15-1). After each team traded punts to begin the game, Coldwater (13-3) struck first.

Quarterback Reece Dellinger hit Marcel Blas-ingame for a 15-yard gain and then tossed a 46-yard pass to Tyler Schwieterman in stride to get down to Carey's 1.

On the next play, Isaac

See CHAMPIONS, B2



STEVE WILLIAMS / for The Courier

CAREY'S JORDAN VALLEJO FIGHTS for yardage against a group of Coldwater defenders during the Division VI state title game at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton.

OTHER SPORTS

Findlay hockey blanked by defending state champs

SYLVANIA — Toledo St. Francis won the state hockey championship last spring and the Knights seem locked, loaded and prepared to make another run at the title after blanking Findlay 7-0 on Saturday in a matchup of state-ranked teams at Tam-O-Shanter Arena in Sylvania.

FHS goalie Cody Misna made 31 saves. But a St. Francis team that features 14 seniors returning from a club that beat perennial power Lakewood St. Edward in last year title game had plenty of firepower in backing up its No. 1 ranking in the state polls.

St. Francis upped its record to 6-1-0 overall and 3-0-0 in the Red Division of the Northwest Hockey Conference. Findlay, which was ranked No. 8 in the state entering the match, leveled off at 3-3-2 overall, 1-1-0 in the league.

BOYS BASKETBALL

L-BENTON 51
BLUFFTON 29

Liberty-Benton's Cason Doolittle pumped in 21 points and the junior guard got a little help from a lot of his friends in the Eagles 51-29 win over Bluffton.

While Doolittle was L-B's lone double-digit scorer, nine other players got into the scoring column as Liberty-Benton (3-1) raced to an 18-6 first-quarter lead and never looked back.

Trenton Donley scored 13 points for Bluffton (1-1). Usually one of the area's top 3-point shooting teams — Bluffton tied a single-game state record a year ago by making 25 3s in a game against Cory-Rawson — the Pirates connected on just three 3s against L-B and made 11 baskets overall.

BLUFFTON (1-1)

Donley 5-2-13, Soper 1-0-3, Kin 0-2-2, Boblitt 1-0-2, Schaadt 1-0-2, Donaldson 3-0-7. TOTALS: 11-41 4-8-29.

LIBERTY-BENTON (3-1)
Parker 2-0-4, K. Garlock 1-0-2, Eckford 3-0-6, Conaway 3-0-6, Doolittle 8-5-21, L. Garlock 1-0-3, Hendricks 1-0-2, Collett 1-0-2, Hanni-Wells 1-0-2, Gerken 1-0-3. TOTALS: 22-44 5-8-51.

BLUFFTON 6 7 9 7-29
LIBERTY-BENTON 18 8 13 12-51
3-Point GOALS: Bluffton 3 (Donley, Soper, Donaldson); Liberty-Benton 2 (Eckford, L. Garlock).

REBOUNDS: Bluffton 29 (Kin 10); Liberty-Benton 20 (Doolittle 6).

TURNOVERS: Bluffton 27, Liberty-Benton 15.

JUNIOR VARSITY: Bluffton, 62-51. 3 (Donley, Soper, Donaldson); Liberty-Benton 2 (Eckford, L. Garlock).

H. NORTHERN 46
ARCADIA 35

ARCADIA — Hardin Northern outscored Arcadia 11-3 in the first quarter and 17-12 in the fourth in chalking up a 46-35 win over the Redskins.

Hardin Northern's Nevin Robson made a night of it at the foul line. The senior wing attempted 14 free throws, connected on 11 and led all scorers with 19 points. Zeb Wilson had 13 points and eight rebounds in helping the Polar Bears level off their record at 2-2.

Hunter Philipot pumped in three 3-pointers and led Arcadia (0-2) with 13 points. Josh Cassell chipped in with 12 points and eight rebounds.

H. NORTHERN (2-2)
Thomas 2-0-4, Kuhlman 1-0-2, Z. Wilson 5-0-13, Robson 4-11-19, Curtis 0-2Wykes 1-0-3, X. Wilson 1-0-2. TOTALS: 14-30 13-18-46.

ARCADIA (0-2)
Philipot 3-4-13, Cassell 4-3-12, Lucius 1-0-3, Harris 2-1-5, Clagg 1-0-2. TOTALS: 11-34 8-14-25.

HARDIN NORTHERN 11 8 10 17-46
ARCADIA 3 9 11 12-35

3-Point GOALS: Hardin Northern 4-10 (Wilson 3, Wykes); Arcadia 5-23 (Philipot 3, Cassell, Lucius).

REBOUNDS: Hardin Northern 21 (Wilson 8); Arcadia 21 (Cassell 8).

TURNOVERS: Hardin Northern 13, Arcadia 18.

JUNIOR VARSITY: Hardin Northern, 32-22.

ARLINGTON 51
LIMA TEMPLE 29

ARLINGTON — Brady Kin scored 17 points, Caden Russell had 10 and Arlington's defense was up to the task once again in the Red Devils' 51-29 win over Lima Temple Christian



KENT TARBOX / for The Courier

LIBERTY-BENTON'S CARSON CONAWAY (5) puts up a shot around the block attempt from behind by Bluffton's Tyler Kinn (3) Saturday night at Liberty-Benton.

on Saturday.

Arlington, which is allowing an average of just 30 points through its first four games, led 31-10 at the half. The Red Devils (3-1) forced Lima Temple Christian (0-3) into 21 turnovers and limited the Pioneers to 11 of 34 shooting (32 percent) from the field.

LIMA TEMPLE (0-3)
Callahan 3-0-7, Clay 3-0-6, Huffaker 1-4-6, Motter 1-0-3, Wright 1-0-3, Kiser 1-0-2. TOTALS: 11-34 5-15-29.

ARLINGTON (3-1)
Kin 6-1-17, Russell 4-2-10, Agapiou 3-0-8, Vermillion 1-2-5, Berry 2-0-4, Essinger 2-0-4, B. Griggs 1-0-3. TOTALS: 19-52 5-8-51.

LIMA TEMPLE 6 4 6 13-29
ARLINGTON 14 17 8 12-51

3-Point GOALS: Lima Temple Christian 2-9 (Callahan, Wright; Arlington 8-25 (Kin 4, Agapiou 2, Vermillion, B. Griggs).

REBOUNDS: Lima Temple Christian 26 (Clay 7); Arlington 28 (Russell 7).

TURNOVERS: Lima Temple Christian 21; Arlington 13.

JUNIOR VARSITY: Arlington, 74-16.

ANTWERP 67
PANDORA-GILBOA 38

ANTWERP — Antwerp built a bit of a cushion through three quarters of play and capped Saturday's 67-38 win over Pandora-Gilboa with a 24-11 barrage in the fourth quarter.

Kaden Recker scored 17 points, Landon Brewer 14 and Carson Altimus 12 as Antwerp remained unbeaten through

See OTHER, B2

Trojans fifth at home duals

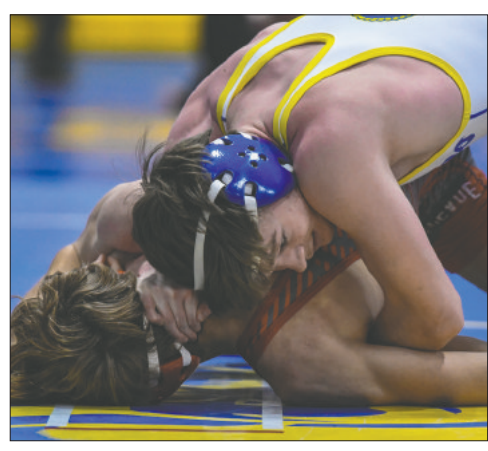
Five Findlay High wrestlers went a combined 14-6 in consecutive weight classes in leading the Trojans to a fifth-place finish in an elite field of teams competing in the 2021 Lee's Chicken/Findlay Duals held at FHS on Saturday.

Hudson Goebel at 126, T.J. Barnes at 132 and John Paul Smith at 138 were all 3-1 in their matches. Findlay won three of four matches with Will Jolliff and Will Johnston competing at 120 and Ethan Mitchell was 2-2 at 144.

Brecksville Broadview Heights, ranked No. 4 in the state in Division I by the wrestling site borofanohio.net, defeated Wauseon, ranked seventh in Division II, by a 47-19 margin to win the nine-team event. North Canton Hoover edged Napoleon by one point, 40-39, in the head-to-head match for third place, and Findlay beat No. 4-ranked Tiffin Columbian (Div. II), 47-36 for fifth. Bellevue, Olmsted Falls and Bowling Green rounded out the meet.

Goebel posted two wins and a 21-4 technical fall in his four matches. His lone loss a 2-1 ultimate tie-breaker decision to Kaden Jett of Brecksville in a battle of top-five-ranked wrestlers. Goebel, state runner-up in the 120-pound division last season, is ranked No. 4 at 126; Jett

See TROJANS, B2



KENT TARBOX / for The Courier

FINDLAY'S T.J. BARNES keeps control of Bellevue's Grant Woodruff during the 132 lb match Saturday at Findlay High School.



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