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Eaglets just edged Orchard Lake St. Mary's loses in final seconds in regional semis

By Christian Davis
C & G Sports Writer

Orchard Lake St. Mary's basketball coach George Porritt recalled a mad scramble for a loose ball under the Hartland High hoop in the waning moments of a Class A regional semifinal.

Then there was a pass to a Hartland player, who raced down to the other end of the court for an easy two just before the buzzer sounded March 16 at White Lake Lakeland, giving Hartland a 57-55 victory.

"It was a great game," Porritt said. "We were down seven at the half, rallied back and took the lead (by 10 points). They rallied back in the fourth and made the shot at the buzzer to win the game. We had our chances."

Porritt added that his team battled all the way through.

"I more or less just told them I was very proud of the way they competed," the coach said.

"That was a very good team that beat us. I just told the kids they did the right things and it didn't go our way that time."

The Eaglets finished the season 14-9 overall and third in the Catholic High School League Central Division.

With only three players measuring taller than 6 feet 4 inches, Porritt said rebounding was the team's "nemesis" at times, but that didn't keep the Eaglets from hustling and doing the little things to be successful.

"Rebounding always hurt us a little bit, but we had some kids that knocked down some big shots and kept us in ball games. I think that's why we won 14 games," he said.

Case in point, against West Bloomfield High in a district semifinal at North Farmington March 11, the Eaglets hit six 3-pointers in the second quarter to lead them to a 63-37 victory.

Two days later, St. Mary's hit more big shots and beat North Farmington 50-45 for the program's fourth straight district championship, which Porritt called the highlight of the season.



Photo by Tracy Dreslinski
Orchard Lake St. Mary's sophomore Juwan Moody takes a shot against West Bloomfield High in a Class A district semifinal March 11. The Eaglets won the game and the district title before falling in a regional semifinal.

The Eaglets say goodbye to seniors Suave Lavallis, Dion Sims, Aston Williams and Jeff Jones.

“They just kept the tradition going of St. Mary’s basketball,” Porritt said. “I’m very proud of that group. They were great kids.”

Even with the loss of that group, the coach expects big things next season — as he does every year — especially with his junior varsity winning the CHSL tournament this season.

“Our expectations are high, and they’ll continue to be high, and the kids have that to look forward to,” Porritt said. “I have a good group of kids coming back.”

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