

Mercer Lady Cardinals, for the first time, advance to the "Show-Me Showdown"

Sports

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The North Mercer senior class has done many remarkable things on the basketball court. For the Lady Cardinals, that list includes four straight HDC Conference regular season and tournament championships and four straight district titles, but until the last four days, one goal had eluded Mercer, that being a trip to the "Show-Me Showdown". On Saturday afternoon in St. Joseph, the Lady Cardinals knocked down that wall, stamping their ticket to Columbia.

Challenged throughout their state quarterfinal game by a spunky group from North Andrew High School, the Mercer firepower came through, particularly over the middle two quarters, with the HDC Champions moving to Columbia with a 59-39 victory, heard locally on Hot Country Z 101.7 and www.kgozfm.com.

Sierra Michaelis, facing North Andrew double-teams throughout the game, did manage 28 points to lead Mercer, but was only four of nine from the free-throw line. With eyes tracking Michaelis' every move, it was junior guard Hayley Sample who was given the opportunity to shine, and she did exactly that, striking in FIVE three-point field goals as part of a 17-point effort. Courtney Owens added 10 points for Mercer, now 28-1 on the basketball season.

North Andrew, finishing its year at 24-5, was led by 18 points from junior forward Danielle Chambers.

The Class 1 boys quarterfinal played at Bishop LeBlond High School on Saturday was a classic, with the Grand River Conference's Stanberry Bulldogs earning a spot in Columbia with a come-from-behind 53-51 victory over the Wellington-Napoleon Tigers. The win sends the Bulldogs into a 5 o'clock state semifinal on Thursday night against the Meadville Eagles. Meadville advanced with a 42-35 victory over Marion County. That game was broadcast on Hot Country Z 101.7 and www.kgozfm.com from Truman State University in Kirksville.

On Thursday night, at Chillicothe High School, the Meadville boys pushed past the sectional round with a 76-34 win over Hale. Sheldon Guilford had 15 points and Derek Smith 15 for the Eagles, with T.J. Schmitz scoring 12, and Kolton Friesner 10 points. Tyler Acklin had 10 for Hale. The Norborne girls won a sectional game at Chillicothe, over Meadville, on Thursday night, 49-39. Cheyenne Baxter led the Lady Pirates with 17 points, with Megan Mertenmeyer adding 13, and Kailee Wood 10 points. For Meadville, Erin Shiflett scored 15, and Haley Fitzpatrick 11 points.