



Today's NCS basketball championship games

Contra Costa Times

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No. 1 De La Salle (25-3) vs. No. 2 Newark Memorial (25-5) at Oracle Arena, 8:35 p.m.

How they advanced: The Spartans beat Monte Vista 47-32, Antioch 60-45; the Cougars beat Castro Valley 74-70 ,2 OT, Berkeley 70-62

Breakdown: The Spartans' problem last season was they had one main scoring option. This season, De La Salle is 13-0 when three or more players reach double figures, including the win over Monte Vista. Jose Rivera, Jefferson Powers, Dominic Martellaro and Brandon Smith have taken turns carrying the Spartans. E.J. Farris and Chris Jones have led the Cougars, who eclipsed the 70-point mark in six of their last seven games, including their last three. De La Salle has allowed only one team to score 70 or more points this season (Westchester-L. A. in a 75-56 loss). The Spartans' defense is allowing 38.6 points per game, which is 2.7 off the school record set in 2005-06, the last time De La Salle won a state title. The Spartans beat the Cougars 56-47 in the North Coast Section Division I final in 2004.

DIVISION II

No. 1 Hayward (22-6) vs. No. 3 Las Lomas (17-11) at Oracle Arena, 4:45 p.m.

How they advanced: The Farmers beat Windsor 59-51, Northgate 69-51; the Knights beat Casa Grande-Petaluma 70-54, Eureka 68-64

Breakdown: Guard Davion Berry averaged 20.9 in the Hayward Area Athletic League to lead the Farmers, who are appearing in their first title game since they won it all in 2004. The last time the Knights played for an NCS title, assistant coach Brian Dietschy was a sophomore guard in 1988, the same year Las Lomas won its lone crown. Brian Stafford is averaging 31.3 points in the postseason and has eclipsed the 30-point mark the last two games for the Knights. Stafford also has received help from teammates Kyle Klinck and Pat Evans. Hayward won an early-season matchup against Las Lomas 69-64 in overtime on Dec. 22, despite 34 points from Stafford.

DIVISION III


No. 1 Campolindo (21-7) vs. No. 6 Dublin (23-6) at St. Mary's College's McKeon Pavilion, 8 p.m.

How they advanced: The Cougars beat Acalanes 49-39, Del Norte-Crescent City 69-37; the Gaels beat Bishop O'Dowd 65-56, Miramonte 61-50, Analy-Sebastopol 72-58

Breakdown: The Cougars are the top-shooting 3-point team in the NCS with 223. It's something Dublin knows quite well. Campolindo hit 10 of its first 12 3-point attempts against the Gaels en route to a 91-49 win on Jan. 22. The Cougars finished that game with 14 3-pointers and it started a stretch where Campolindo hit 31 3s in two games. Will Shields leads the Cougars with 96 3-pointers. Dublin is appearing in its first NCS title game after knocking off a No. 3 and a No. 2 seed. Guard K.J. Scott has fueled Dublin's postseason success with 53 points in three games, including 19 in the win over Bishop O'Dowd.

DIVISION IV


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No. 1 St. Mary's (29-1) vs. No. 2 Kennedy (26-4) at Oracle Arena, 12:55 p.m.

How they advanced: The Panthers beat St. Joseph Notre Dame 62-38, Moreau Catholic 72-48; the Eagles beat Salesian 79-62, Cardinal Newman-Santa Rosa 48-46

Breakdown: The Panthers have won 13 straight games and are vying for their fourth straight win over the Eagles. In the Bay Shore Athletic League playoffs title game, St. Mary's second leading scorer, Will Brew, sacrificed offense for defense, holding Kennedy's leading scorer, Jonathon Williams, to a season-low 15 points. Williams had been averaging 28 points before St. Mary's 69-65 win. The Panthers are appearing in their fifth NCS Division IV title game in the last 10 years and are the defending champions. Kennedy is having its best season ever and is appearing in its first NCS championship contest. Williams and Marvin Boadu have carried the Eagles in the postseason, combining for 76 points in two games. Gerard Markham has also come on, scoring in double figures in two of the last three games.

-- Robert Jordan

GIRLS DIVISION I

No. 1 Deer Valley (25-3) vs. No. 2 Berkeley (25-3) at Oracle Arena, 6:40 p.m.

How they advanced: The Wolverines beat Washington 50-45 OT, San Ramon Valley 53-24; the Yellow Jackets beat Monte Vista 56-53 2 OT, Granada 54-39

Breakdown: The Wolverines have put their depth on display in the postseason. Point guard Patrice Saindon was asked to assert herself offensively and she responded with a 15-point performance against

Washington. Deserie Azlin leads a slew of post players that can rebound the ball. Azlin, Emily Allard and Cydnie Mixon collected a combined 41 rebounds in the semifinal win. Deer Valley has the bodies to throw at forwards **Chairese Culberson** and Airika Warren so it's Berkeley's guards -- Jazmine Perkins and Camila Rosen -- who could be the difference. The Wolverines are playing in their second NCS title game in school history. Deer Valley beat Berkeley in its first appearance in 2005. The Yellow Jackets have won 18 NCS titles, including 10 of the last 12 Division I crowns.

DIVISION II

No. 1 Carondelet (25-3) vs. No. 2 Northgate (25-3) at Oracle Arena, 2:50 p.m.

How they advanced: The Cougars beat Pinole Valley 57-47, Petaluma 46-35; the Broncos beat Maria Carrillo-Santa Rosa 39-32, Sonoma Valley 50-40

Breakdown: The Cougars hover over the Broncos like a black cloud since its been Carondelet that has eliminated Northgate from the postseason the last three years. But this time around, the teams appear even on paper despite Carondelet's height advantage. Both are young and extremely well coached but have a tendency to flounder when taken out of their system. The Broncos have received an offensive boost from point guard Courtney Hamilton, who raised her scoring average from 9.2 points in Diablo Foothill Athletic League play to 13.5 in two playoff games. Carondelet is seeking its fifth title in six years, while Northgate hopes to win its first NCS championship.

DIVISION III

No. 1 Miramonte (25-3) vs. No. 2 Hercules (24-4) at St. Mary's College's McKeon Pavilion, 6 p.m.


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How they advanced: The Matadors beat Dublin 63-48, San Marin-Novato 80-37; the Titans beat Bishop O'Dowd 55-46, Acalanes 53-35

Breakdown: The Matadors are perhaps the hottest team in the playoffs, winning its last 12 games by an average of 29.9 points. The defending NCS Division III champs enter as the favorites because they beat Hercules in last season's title game to claim their third NCS championship in school history. The guard matchup will be the best of the playoffs as Miramonte's Katie Batlin and Ashlee Burns square off with Courtney Oliver and **Brittany Boyd**. With the Titans using just a six-player rotation, their lack of depth could be a factor since Batlin excels at inducing foul calls when she drives to the basket. Hercules shared the Alameda Contra Costa Athletic League title and beat both Berkeley and Pinole Valley for the first time in its short history. To add an NCS title, the Titans will need senior forward Mariah Davis to be on her game. Davis was held to just three points in last season's NCS title game.

DIVISION IV

No. 1 Justin-Siena-Napa (26-2) vs. No. 3 St. Patrick-St. Vincent (24-4) at Oracle Arena, 11 a.m.

How they advanced: The Braves beat St. Mary's 64-53, Fortuna 79-51; the Bruins beat Moreau Catholic 72-49, McKinleyville 77-31


Breakdown: The Bruins look to repeat as Division IV champs with their trademark suffocating press and senior forward Alex Cowling, one of the most talented all-around players in Northern California. But it was Vicky Deely and the Braves who put an end to a nine-game St. Patrick-St. Vincent win streak with a 70-59 win on Jan. 21, sewing up the top seed. The rematch will be broadcast live on radio station KVVN 1440-AM in Napa and on the station's Web site <http://www.kvon.com>.

-- Ricardo Sanchez Jr.

ONLINE: For live updates from Oracle Arena on today's NCS basketball finals, see our Prep Corner blog.

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