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Lynnwood beats Cleveland 54-42 to win Class 3A girls state title

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Kevin Clark / The Herald

Lynnwood's Mikayla Pivec scored 31 points and grabbed 17 rebounds as the Royals defeated Cleveland 54-42 on Saturday to win the Class 3A state basketball title.

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TACOMA — The Lynnwood girls basketball team is actually looking forward to going to school on a Monday.

The Royals know there is going to be a celebration on the Lynnwood campus thanks to the basketball team, which is bringing a big trophy home after defeating Cleveland 54-42 in the 3A state championship game Saturday afternoon at the Tacoma Dome.

“It’s awesome,” said junior Jordyn Edwards. “We have an assembly that our team is going to on Monday. We have an amazing crowd and I’m just excited to go to school and show them that trophy.” Led by the 31 points of Mikayla Pivec, who scored Lynnwood’s first 12 points, the Royals claimed the first championship in the basketball program’s history. Pivec’s 31 were the most scored in a game in the girls 3A tournament this season and helped earn her the tournament’s Most Valuable Player award. The 5-foot-10 junior wing also added 17 rebounds for Lynnwood, which finished the year with

a record of 25-2.

“She’s had more dominant games against opponents,” said Lynnwood head coach Everett Edwards.

“But in the state championship game, to score 31 points and (have) 17 rebounds and all the other intangible stuff she does, what a great way to win a state championship there.”

“I just tried to stay aggressive and my teammates put me in some good positions to finish,” Pivec said.

Lynnwood trailed most of the first half, with two-time defending champion Cleveland leading by as many as eight late in the second quarter. The Royals got the halftime deficit down to 29-25, and used an 8-0 run to start the third quarter to turn a four-point deficit into a four-point lead.

The Royals led the rest of the way, much to the delight of the large Lynnwood contingent at the Tacoma Dome.

“It’s great to win a state championship,” Everett Edwards said. “I couldn’t ask for anything more for our high school, for our players, for our community. And what a great way to win the game. We faced some adversity in the first half, things weren’t going our way, and we just continued to fight the fight.”

It’s the first state basketball title for a team from Snohomish County since the Meadowdale girls won the 3A title in 2004. The last team to appear in a state championship game was the 2013 girls team from Arlington, which won Saturday morning to finish fourth in this year’s tournament.

“For our Wesco league, how great is it for Lynnwood to be champs and for Arlington to get fourth?” said Everett Edwards, who completed his eighth year with the Royals on Saturday. “It shows that we’re playing good basketball up in Snohomish County.”

Jordyn Edwards — who, like Pivec, was a first-team all-tournament selection — scored 12 points and grabbed four rebounds. She also had three steals and helped hold Cleveland senior, and Kansas commit, Jayde Christopher to three points.

Aqeelah Williams scored 14 points to lead the Eagles.

“We played hard for parts of the game, but we didn’t play hard for 32 minutes,” said Cleveland head coach Jamie Redd, a former University of Washington player. “And in the third and fourth quarters, we struggled to score. Hats off to Lynnwood. They’re an excellent team.”

Everett Edwards’ favorite moment came in the final 13 seconds of the game. Up 52-42, Edwards put in Lynnwood senior Monty Cooper, who injured her ankle early in Friday’s semifinal against Bellevue.

Much to Cooper’s surprise, she received a pass from Jordyn Edwards and threw up a shot, for the game’s final points.

“I was just nervous. I was like, ‘Do I take the shot?’” Cooper said. “I went for it and when it went in, that was exciting.”

“I am very happy for Monty Cooper to be able to enter the game. She is my warrior,” Everett Edwards said. “She couldn’t play in the state championship game and I know that hurt her. And for her to not only enter the game, but for it to work out for her to make the last bucket of the state tournament — and her high school career — it’s a storybook ending and you can’t ask for much more than that.”

Cooper’s shot also capped a storybook ending to the Royals’ season. After finishing third at last year’s tournament, Lynnwood looked like a determined team, winning its first two state games at Tacoma by an average of 30 points.

“It’s amazing. We don’t know how often we’re going to get here,” Pivec said. “This is a great opportunity to just try to make the most of it.”

Saturday’s finale was a lot closer, which made it all the more sweet for the Royals.

“This is the biggest stage for the state of Washington,” Everett Edwards continued. “It just goes to show that hard work does pay off. We really worked hard, starting in the summer, and to get the ultimate prize it just is surreal. It seems like a dream. And what a great dream it is.”

At the Tacoma Dome

Cleveland 15 14 4 9 —42

Lynnwood 13 12 12 17 —54

Cleveland—Ryshel Sampson 3, Teja Kirby 0, Zakeya Flowers 0, Myla Hightower 9, Jayde Christopher 3, Giavanni Flowers 3, Aqeelah Williams 14, Joyce Harrell 10, Ti'Erycka Clark 0.

Lynnwood—Reilly Walsh 0, Monty Cooper 2, Jordyn Edwards 12, Mikayla Pivec 31, Sarah Grant 0, Kelsey Rogers 5, Kaprice Boston 2, Taylor Fahey 0, Danielle Hayes 2. 3-point goals—Sampson 1, G. Flowers 1, Williams 2. Records—Cleveland 19-9. Lynnwood 25-2.

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