

Bulldogs dominate Falcons

■ Romeo grabs its second-straight district championship with 74-46 victory.

By Aaron Walker

Journal Register News Service

ROCHESTER HILLS — The Romeo Bulldogs won the Class A district championship, 74-46 over the Rochester Falcons on Friday evening, and it was over almost from the start.

The game began with the Bulldogs' Blake Cushingberry sinking an NBA-range 3-pointer.

Romeo held a 17-6 lead at the end of the first period and maintained a double-digit lead the rest of the game.

Class A at R. Adams

"As he takes a shot, I'm on the bench thinking, 'That's too far,' but it turns out to be nothing but net. Blake, that's his game," Romeo coach Dale Teller said. "To force turnovers and score off the defense was our intent. Our whole plan was to keep the tempo in our favor."

His Bulldogs (19-3) forced 27 turnovers in the lopsided match and they were successful at their game plan by converting their steals into layups and free-throw opportunities.

"They're very good. We knew going in we'd have to play our 'A' game. Cushingberry is a unique player," Rochester coach John Pleasant said of the Oakland University signee. "He can score in three different ways. He can shoot, drive, and post up. Their point guard (Nick Kosovich) is savvy and active. We battled, but their defense was there too."

One bright spot for the Falcons (7-16) was found in junior forward Keith Newberry, who scored a team-high 23 points on 10-for-16 field goal shooting and 3-for-4 from the free-throw line.

"We knew Romeo was a tough team," Newberry said. "I got into a rhythm. Our point guards did a real good job of passing. As a team we're looking toward next year."

Although Cushingberry drew a lot of attention from his opponent, his demeanor remained calm throughout the game.

Nearly every time he touched the ball, he was double-teamed and the Falcons bench shouted to get the ball out of his hands.

Cushingberry still found open teammates and made passes out of those double-teams. He drew several fouls on field goal attempts, and he did not force his shot. He seemed to let the game flow.

"This game means a lot to us. We wanted to get at least to the regionals," said Cushingberry.

The Bulldogs will face Clarkston in a regional semifinal Monday evening at Lake Orion High.

"This game gives us momentum going into Monday," said Kosovich, who led Romeo with 20 points and three steals. Cushingberry scored 16 points and Kyle Maxwell scored 11 points for the Bulldogs.