

NorCal champs

Mariners ride right wave to title

By RICHARD EGAN
SPORTSWRITER

The endless summer is going to have to wait for Aptos High's basketball team. Right now, the Mariners are still on the ride of their lives.

Aptos, like a gang of diehard surfers, had ridden the toughest waves through the Central Coast Section and Northern California playoffs to get to Saturday's NorCal title game ... only to come face-to-face with the Bonzai Pipeline of Division II basketball — undefeated, No. 1-ranked Mt. Eden.

The Mariners weren't worried about wiping out, they just didn't want everyone on the beach to laugh at them.

Aptos was the only one laughing after it pulled off a thrilling 75-71 victory at the Oakland Coliseum Arena and came ashore as NorCal champs.

"Not too bad for a little beach town, eh?" Aptos coach Bill Warmerdam said. "The players thought they'd be out boogie-boarding next week, but I guess it'll have to wait."

Wait, indeed. For while the coming of spring has most teenage boys looking for baseballs in the afternoon sun, girls, or — in Aptos' case — waves, the Mariners have one more date on their schedule — the state final.

Aptos (33-1) will return to Oakland to meet Southern California champ Wilson (Hacienda Heights) this Saturday at 4:30 p.m. for the CIF Division II championship. If it's any more exciting than last Saturday's victory, they'll have to hand out respirators.

The game had it all: Spectacular offense, frightening defense, a roaring comeback, last-minute strategy, heroes off the bench, and a final result that wasn't determined until Jeff Jones hit two free throws to give Aptos a four-point lead with :01 on the clock.

The Mariners weren't scared coming into the game — real worried would be more like it — and with good cause. Mt. Eden was 33-0 and had won the North Coast Section title game by 40 points; they had also beaten two NorCal tourney opponents by 25- and 23-point margins.

"The guys didn't want to get embarrassed," Warmerdam said. "But after we had such a good first half I told the guys in the locker room just to relax, play their game, and we'd be right in there."

Jones, who was voted to the NorCal all-tourney team along with teammates Craig and Warren Holt and Cris Warmerdam, got the Mariners off to a running start in the first

quarter with 12 of his single-game tourney-record 33 points.

High-arching bombs from the corners and the top of the key

were perfect, and when those shots weren't open the 6-foot-3 senior lowered his shoulder and drove for the hoop to score on running bank shots.

Meanwhile, Mt. Eden was having difficulty putting the ball in the hoop, or, for that matter, even getting shots off.

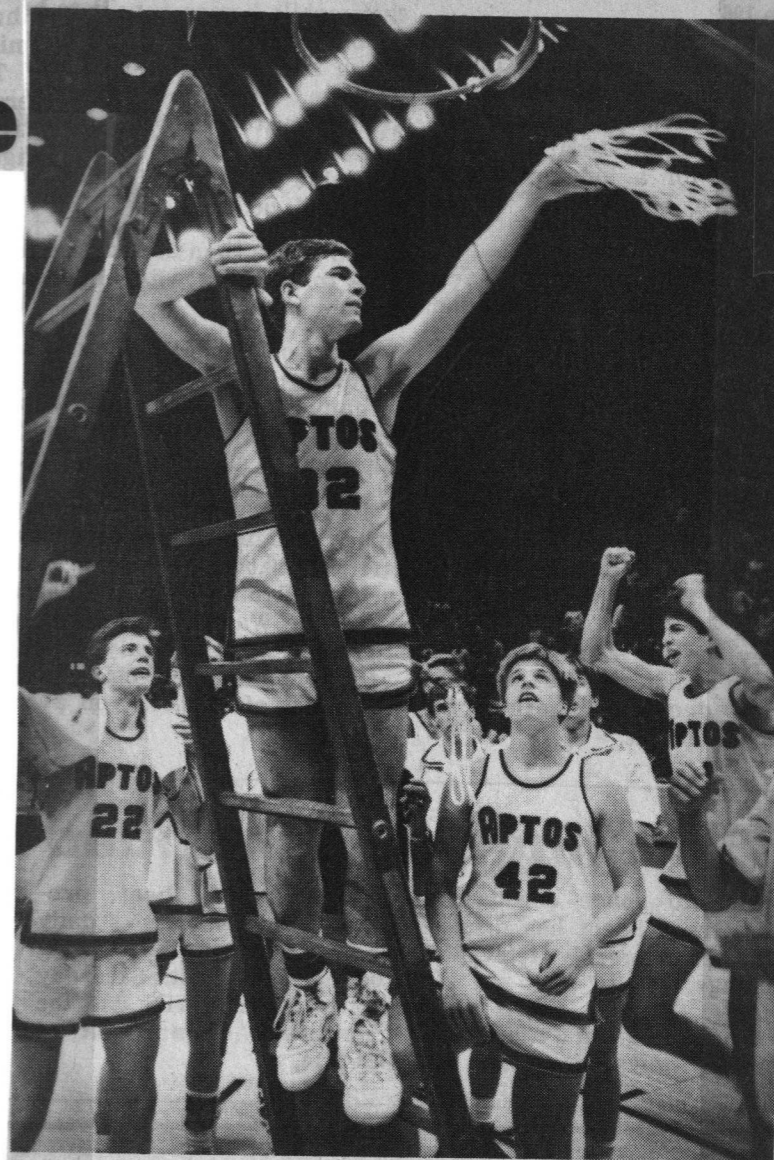
Sophomore leaper Cris Warmerdam was slapping shots down nearly as fast as the Monarchs could put them up. He blocked an incredible 13 shots for the game, and one just before the halftime buzzer assured the Mariners of a 34-27 lead at the half.

"I told Cris before the game that if he could slap their balls, we wouldn't be intimidated," Jones said.

The 13 blocked shots gave Warmerdam 31 in the past four games. An 82-inch arm span has a lot to do with it, and some sign-stealing from the Mt. Eden bench didn't hurt, either. "I looked over at their coach and he was motioning for them to double-pump before putting it up," Cris said. "So I just waited until they pumped before jumping."

"Blocked shots and rebounds

The champions



Kurt Ellison

Aptos' Jeff Jones takes down the net at the Oakland Coliseum arena Saturday after the Mariners defeated previously unbeaten Mt. Eden High of Hayward, 75-71, to win the Northern California Division II championship

REFERENCE

GREEN SHEET
March 19, 1986

APTOS
-1980-
1985

NorCal playoff picture

NORCAL TOURNAMENT DIVISION II First round Boys

Aptos 67, Chico 45
Pleasant Valley 63, Rio Linda 53 (2 OT)
Roseville 72, Eureka 65
Mount Eden 84, San Mateo 59

Semifinals

ARCO Arena, Sacramento
Aptos 71, Roseville 61
Mount Eden 64, Pleasant Valley 44

Finals

Oakland Coliseum Arena

Aptos 75, Mount Eden 71
Girls

First round

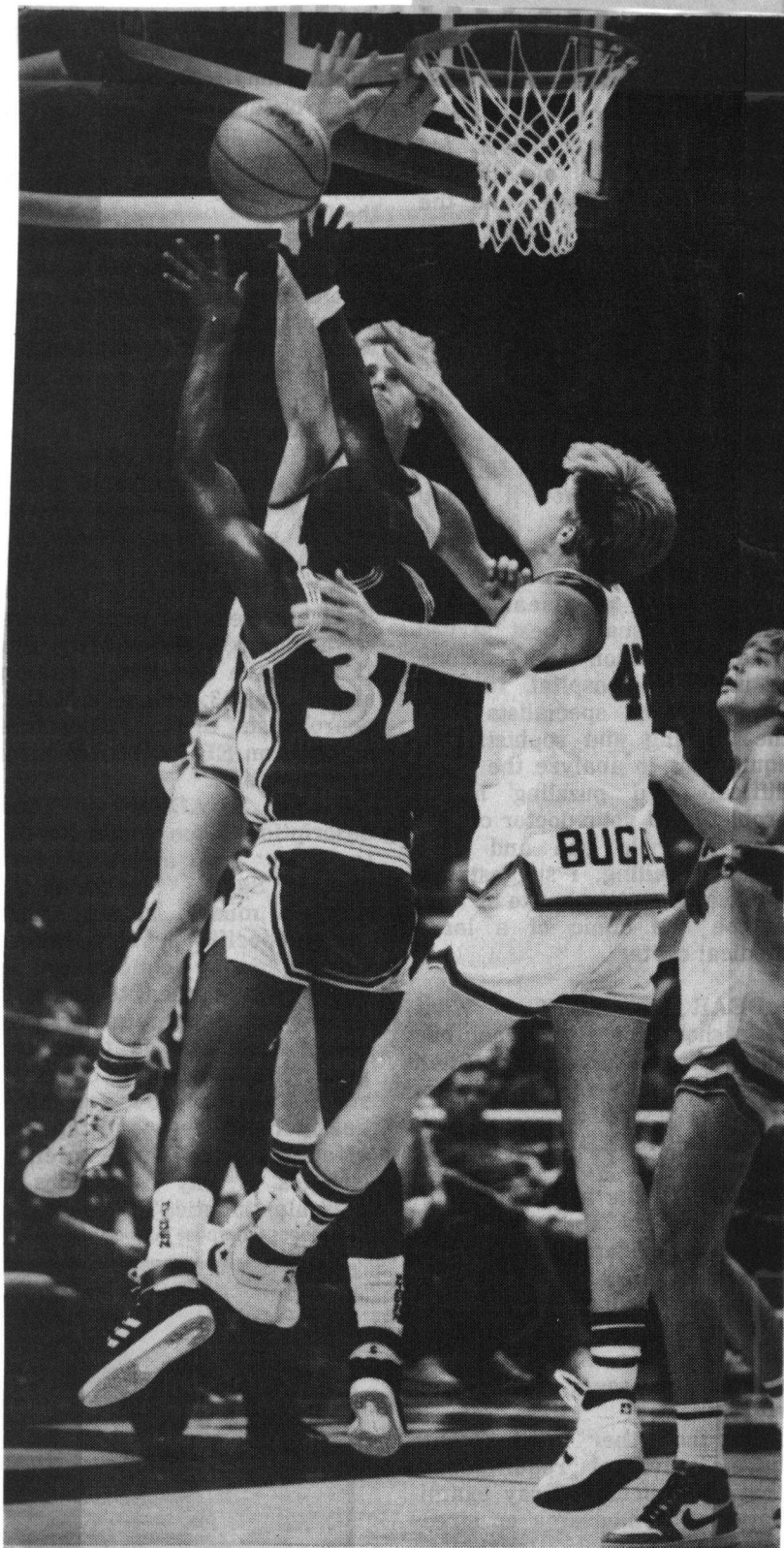
Red Bluff 67, McKinleyville 57
Pleasant Valley 59, Sonora 46
Novato 59, Burlingame 50
Harbor 68, Modesto 52

Semifinals

ARCO Arena, Sacramento
Red Bluff 78, Harbor 71
Novato 50, Pleasant Valley

Finals

Oakland Coliseum Arena
Novato 57, Red Bluff 54



Kurt Ellison

Aptos' Cris Warmerdam gets one of his 13 blocked shots against Donnelle Johnson (32).

(he had eight) are just like points to me, because my offense isn't that good yet." The second half was a different story. Mt. Eden was mad and the Mariners tired. The semi-final win over Roseville Friday night was draining, and Aptos was not used to playing so soon after a night game, especially a game of this magnitude.

"I got tired in the second quarter," Jones said.

The Monarchs scored to open the second half, and then all-tourney guard Pat Watson snatched the ensuing inbounds pass while standing under the basket and put it right back in.

Jones tipped in a missed shot for the Mariners, but Mt. Eden came right back with another easy basket inside, which was followed by another steal and a reverse lay-in by Watson that cut the lead to 36-35.

"We talked about playing with discipline at the half," Monarch coach Ron Benevides said. "What else can you say to a team that's 33-0."

"I didn't know what to think," Jones said. "I was scared to death. We knew they would come back. They were unbeaten and didn't know what it was like to be behind. But we knew if we held them off we could take them."

Coach Warmerdam took the responsibility of inboundng the ball from son Cris and handed it to senior reserve Bob Bugalski. "It wasn't Cris' fault," Warmerdam said. "A lot of times guys weren't coming back for the pass. But he panicked a little, so I had to go with Bobby."