

By JOHN HENSON

Harlan County Schools

It's pretty hard to win 27 games if you don't have multiple ways to beat someone. The Harlan County Black Bears demonstrated several in an 81-45 demolition of Harlan on Monday in the opening night of play at the 52nd District Tournament.

Junior guard Alex Sergent showed off his long-range shooting prowess early with four 3-pointers in the first quarter to help Harlan County build a 22-6 lead.

Tyler Brewer, the Bears' junior point guard, took over in the second quarter, slicing through the Harlan defense for four short-range shots off the dribble as the lead grew to 42-17 at halftime.

Aaron Caldwell, Harlan County's physical junior forward, posted up for four baskets in the paint as the Bears turned the game over to the reserves in the fourth quarter with a 61-32 cushion.

Brewer scored 23, Sergent and Caldwell added 15 each and junior guard Chad Massingill contributed 14 as the Bears improved to 27-4 overall and moved into Friday's championship game against the winner of the Middlesboro-Bell County game set for Tuesday.

"I thought we came out of the locker room really focused on what we needed to do and our kids were intense," Harlan County coach Mike Jones said. "We told them we couldn't allow them to play we felt they wanted to play, and we didn't, and that's a credit to our kids."

"They are one of the best teams in the region and are well coached. Their guards are probably the best in the region. Those three guys are really good and they play well together," Harlan coach Tommy Hensley said.

Harlan (8-18) was led by junior forward David Allen with 18 points, including three 3-pointers in the second half. Senior guard Chris Begley closed out his Harlan career with a 12-point effort.

Harlan County hit six of 11 shots from the field in the first quarter and outrebounded the Dragons 8-2 to take control of the game quickly.

"We saw some things and we thought we could isolate people and get them the ball," Jones said. "Our kids did a good job of doing that, and we finished pretty well. Some of the kids finished better than they have been. Alex got us started. The ones he gets are 3s we usually want him to take."

The Bears cooled off in the second quarter, missing 13 of 19 shots, but continued to build on their lead with the help of an 11-4 rebounding advantage. Harlan County doubled Harlan in rebounds, 38-19.

"When we played them here earlier we beat them on the offensive boards, and we felt we had to do that again tonight and get second shots," Jones said.

"When you give teams second shots the chances are they are going to fall," Hensley said. "We talked about that the last two weeks, but it didn't work out tonight."

Brewer and Sergent each had layups off turnovers, two of eight in the quarter for Harlan, as the Bears built a 38-9 advantage. Harlan County seemed to relax at that point and Harlan cut the deficit to 42-17 at the break. Caldwell had three baskets in the first three minutes of the third quarter as the Bears built a 52-21 lead, Begley and Allen had 3-pointers as Harlan cut the deficit to 29 at the end of the period. Allen continued to carry the Harlan offense in the fourth quarter with two more treys.

Trey Sanders, Cole Wilson and Fred Massey had baskets off the bench for Harlan County in the fourth quarter.

Middlesboro will take on defending region champ Bell County on Tuesday at 7:30 in the second semifinal matchup.

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#### HARLAN (8-18)

Cody Logan 2-8 1-2 5, Chris Begley 4-19 3-5 12, David Allen 6-10 3-4 18, Dakota Morris 1-1 2-2 4, Shane Lindsey 1-1 0-1 2, Isaiah Johnson 0-3 0-1 0, Manny Davis 0-1 1-2 1, Cody Nolan 1-2 1-2 3, Dylan McNeil 0-1 0-1 0, Leighton Piper 0-0 0-0 0, Nathan Young 0-0 0-0 0, Andrew Varney 0-0 0-2 0, Will Slusher 0-0 0-0 0.  
Totals: 15-46 11-22 45.

#### HARLAN COUNTY (27-4)

Tyler Brewer 8-11 6-8 23, Alex Sergent 5-13 1-1 15, Chad Massingill 3-10 8-11 14, Aaron Caldwell 6-7 3-3 15, Chase Calton 0-0 0-0 0, Tyler Miller 0-5 0-0 0, James Bond 0-2 1-2 1, Zach Caldwell 0-0 3-4 3, Shamil Clark 1-3 0-0 2, Cody Bumgardner 0-1 0-0 0, Trey Sanders 2-2 0-0 4, Cole Wilson 1-3 0-1 2, Fred Massey 1-1 0-0 2. Totals: 27-58 22-30 81.

Harlan

6 13

13 13

— 45

Harlan County

22 20

19 20

— 81

3-point goals: Harlan 4-21 (Allen 3-5, Begley 1-7, Davis 0-1, McNiel 0-1, Johnson 0-2, Logan 0-5), Harlan County 5-9 (Sergent 4-6, Brewer 1-2, Massingill 0-1). Rebounds: Harlan 18 (Begley 5, Nolan 5, Allen 3, Johnson 2, Logan 1, Morris 1, McNiel 1), Harlan County 39 (Bond 8, Miller 7, Massingill 6, A. Caldwell 4, Brewer 3, Sergent 3, Z. Caldwell 3, Clark 1, Bumgardner 1, Sanders 1, Wilson 1, Massey 1). Turnovers: Harlan 20, Harlan County 18. Fouled out: Harlan (Lindsey).