Kodiak HS Basketball Teams Rule the NLC, Head for State

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Going into the Northern Lights Conference championship tournament last week, the Kodiak High School Lady Bears were the odds-on favorite to come back with the championship trophy. After all, they were 22-and-0, and spent most of the season as the state’s top-ranked team. But also toting first-place hardware home were the Kodiak boys, who had been ranked second to the tournament’s host team.

On Saturday afternoon, both the Kodiak girls and boys defeated Colony on the Knights’ home court to win the championships.

The Lady Bears started slow, as they did in their opening game against Wasilla on Friday, but after a second quarter rally, it was no contest. Trailing 21-13 half way through the second quarter, the Lady Bears rallied with back-to-back three pointers by Jerica Nelson and Adrian Horn and went on a 15-point run to take the half-time lead 30-23. Kodiak didn’t let up in the second half, outscoring Colony 34-20 to win going away, 64-43.

Colony Coach Jeff Bowker described the Lady Bears as “a scoring steamroller.”

Hannah Wandersee led all scorers with 25, while Horn finished with 13, including four three-pointers. Carissa Cannon added 10, and Nelson, who played her freshman and sophomore years with Colony, drained seven for Kodiak.

On Friday, the Lady Bears trailed the Wasilla Warriors by as much as 8, and by five in the fourth quarter, but rallied to win 55-47. It was only the second time this season Kodiak had not won by double-digits.

Saturday’s title was the first for a Kodiak girls team since 1985, and the first Northern Lights team not from the Valley to win in 21 years.

The Kodiak boys also trailed, but it was in the fourth quarter before rallying to beat Colony 56-50. The Bears led by 8 at the half, 28-20, and by 1 at the end of the third, 38-37. Though the Bears outscored the Knights in the fourth, it wasn’t until after Colony had taken a six point lead. Then Kodiak went on an 11-6 run, sparked by clutch free-throw shooting by Alec Canete-Hall, who finished with a game-high of 17, including hitting five of six from the line. Austin Frick had 13 points, and Jemuel Mangalus added 10.

By virtue of making it to the Northern Lights Conference title game, the Colony Knights, both the boys and girls, will join the Kodiak High School Bears and Lady Bears at the state large school championships next week in Anchorage.