

Lions still roaring in Class A

South Lyon beats Kalamazoo Central in overtime, 69-66

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BATTLE CREEK — The horn sounded and Coach Rex Stanczak jumped into the arms of his assistant coach. Stanczak raised his arms and shouted words foreign to South Lyon basketball — until Wednesday.



CLAYTON

69-66 overtime win over Kalamazoo Central. And the Lions won in improbable manner.

“We’re going to the Sweet 16! Sweet 16, baby!”

The Lions’ improbable run through the Class A state playoffs continued at Kellogg Arena with a

‘I never in my wildest dreams thought we would be in the Sweet 16. Absolutely this is my biggest win.’

— South Lyon coach Rex Stanczak

South Lyon held the basketball for two minutes and 34 seconds of overtime as Central sat back in a zone defense. Finally, Mitch Anderson drove the baseline and found Justin Clayton under the basket for the winning score with 13 seconds remaining.

The Lions (11-12) advance to the regional final Friday against Battle Creek Central, 60-56 upset winners over top-ranked Lansing Sexton.

“I never in my wildest dreams thought we would be in the Sweet 16. Absolutely this is

my biggest win,” Stanczak said after leading his team through a rousing chorus of cheers in the locker room.

“Districts was the biggest win for me, and this is like a dream,” Lions guard Scott Belsley said. Clayton, who scored a game-high 25 points, said Wednesday’s win was “like gravy on top of the meal.”

Three times, South Lyon fought back from seven-point deficits, and the Lions led by five with three minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, only to miss four consecutive free

throws to let the Maroon Giants back in the game and force overtime.

Central (11-13) won the tip in the extra stanza, drove the lane and scored, but was whistled for charging. South Lyon then held the ball until Clayton’s shot. Belsley forced a Central turnover on the ensuing possession and was fouled. Belsley hit the front-end of a one-and-one to ice the win.

“Maybe we should have tried to match up in overtime but we didn’t want a slap foul and put them on the line,” said Central coach Don Jackson of the overtime period. Jackson coached his final game after 33 years on the bench, the last 25 at Central.

Class B Regional at Willow Run — Chelsea faces No. 2-ranked Inkster (22-0) in Friday’s 7 p.m. regional final at Willow Run High. Inkster had little trouble beating Carleton Airport, 76-55, in the semifinal. Chelsea upset Grosse Ile, 51-50, Tuesday.