

By Pastor Vince Carrig

Sports Writer

North Platte St. Pat's popped in a staggering 13 of 14 free throws in the fourth quarter to oust Perkins County from the NSAA's C2 sub-district 11 playoffs with a 51-47 victory Tuesday night (Feb. 21) in McCook.

Senior guard Sean O'Malley saved his best for last: scoring all seven of his points in the last frame, he hit a three pointer and all four free throws he shot.

O'Malley's "trey" gave his Irish a critical 36-31 cushion in the fourth.

Plainsmen co-leading scorer Michael York hung in the air behind the arc before hitting a dramatic three pointer to pull Perkins County to within a basket at 49-47 in the final 10 seconds.

Trailing forced Perkins County to trade fouls for ball possession, and the Irish refused to play that game nicely with them.

Sophomore Irish forward Joseph Clinch also hit all four fourth quarter free throws he shot, and broke Plainsmen fans' spirits by finishing a press break in finishing with 10 points.

Joseph Clinch's easy basket gave St. Pat's a 44-39 lead inside the final minute.

Three St. Pat's scorers reached double digits: Joseph Clinch, Micki Clinch and Andrew Vinton (all with 10 points apiece).

Guard Quinton Hite also made heroic efforts in order to advance the Plainsmen, converting a three-point play on a rebound run-out and downing two other free throws for seven points in the fourth quarter.

Hite's three-point play left Perkins County trailing by just three points (40-37) with 1:57 left.

Teammates York and Hite co-led the game with 15 points each. The Plainsmen nearly scored as many points in the fourth quarter (22) as they did in the first three quarters combined (25).

Jake Sexson came through with two desperately-needed three pointers in the fourth quarter for the Plainsmen. Sexson only hit "threes" and finished with nine points.

Along with their excellent free throw shooting (18 of 24/75 percent), St. Pats' excellent interior defense played a large role in their advancing. They made lane penetration very difficult for the Plainsmen; Perkins County swung their possessions around the perimeter more than once looking for a point of entry for a high-percentage shot.

Locking down the lane helped the Irish hold Perkins County to a distressing 30 percent shooting from the field.

The Plainsmen fell behind 11-5 early, but senior guard Jeremy Hagan shot his team back into the game with two outside jumpers to cut St. Pats' lead to one at 11-10.

Two six-point runs in the second quarter, highlighted by Andrew Vinton's cramming close shots into the basket, sent the Irish into halftime with a 26-18 lead.

P.C. 47, NPSP 51

Perkins Co. 10 8 7 22—47

Irish oust Plainsmen from subdistrict playoffs

NPSP 12 14 5 20—51

Notes: The Plainsmen finished their 2010-11 season with an 8-15 record, and will lose Michael York, Jeremy Hagan, Tyler Brott and Austin Gaston to graduation this year.

The North Platte St. Patrick's Irish won C2 District 6, squeezing past Chase County 49-46 in the sub-district championship game and overcoming Bayard 51-46.

The NSAA had not announced their opponent in the state tournament at press time.







