

Danehy sparks Mansfield past Wellesley

By Mark Farinella mfarinel@thesunchronicle.com

Mar 3, 2018



Mansfield's Margaret Danehy, left, is guarded by Wellesley's Sofie Paulsen.

(Photo by Mark Stockwell)

TAUNTON — A 17-7 deficit at the end of the first quarter of play is no way for a team to instill confidence in itself in the pressure-packed environment of tournament basketball. And down 24-17 at halftime? Scary.

But there was something about the last four baskets scored by the Mansfield High School girls' basketball team in the first half Saturday night against Wellesley that told the Hornets they were going to be all right.

- Maggie Danehy, drive to the basket off Mady Bendanillo's feed.

- Danehy, a 16-footer on a pass from Bendanillo.
- Meg Hill, an eight-footer off Ann Maher's pass.
- And finally, Hill's score in the paint off Sydney Mulkern's feed.

The Hornets went to their "bigs," exploiting Wellesley's inability to effectively cover both the 6-3 Hill and the 5-11 Danehy. And they did that repeatedly in the second half, leading to the Hornets' eventual 48-35 triumph in the MIAA Division 1-South quarterfinal game at Taunton High.

Third-seeded Mansfield (20-5 overall) outscored the sixth-seeded Raiders (16-6) by a 14-3 tally in the third period, with Danehy and Hill combining for six of the points. Bendanillo, not normally a scorer from the point guard position, added two hugely important dribble-penetration baskets in the midst of a half-opening 9-0 run, as well as a lot of on-court leadership after that.

"The third quarter has been somewhat magical for us," Mansfield coach Mike Redding said. "I don't really say much ... they come out and start making shots and the momentum builds. And when you make shots, you start playing better on defense because momentum is just so powerful in the game of basketball."

Danehy, a junior, scored a career-high 20 points on 10-for-15 shooting — a mix of outside jumpers, dribble penetration and positioning in the paint.

"Since they were double-teaming Meg, I was open a lot more than I usually am," she said. "They left the lane open a lot so I could drive that, and then if they didn't, the shooting was open."

Hill drew two quick fouls in the first four minutes of play, and at first, it appeared as if the Hornets might be mortally wounded because of it. Also, Wellesley hit four 3-point baskets in the first half, padding the early lead.

But the Raiders may have exhausted their long-range ammunition in the early going. They hit only one of their 11 tries from outside the arc in the third quarter (1-14 overall), and with Danehy scoring almost at will and Hill returning to play wisely with her foul trouble and to dominate the rebounding, all the signs were there for a Mansfield comeback.

Hill and Danehy both scored in the paint to start the third quarter, but Bendanillo made the next step up — first stealing the ball and scoring a traditional three-point play to tie the score at 24-24, then going coast-to-coast with a defensive rebound for a driving basket for Mansfield's first lead since the opening minute.

Wellesley regained the lead on a three by Gianna Palli, but Danehy's putback of a Hill miss with 2:21 left put the Hornets in front to stay.

The Hornets deliberately challenged Wellesley's outside shooters more in the second half.

"They were a little further off the line, and it gets tougher when you move just a step back off that line," Redding said.

The closest the Raiders would get in the fourth quarter was seven points (39-32) on a foul-line jumper by Hailey Feinzig. But the Hornets answered with a Maher lay-in off an inbound pass, a Hill layup and another Bendanillo transition bucket to make it 45-32 with 2:17 left, all part of a 9-3 finishing kick.

Hill added 10 points and a game-high 12 rebounds, and Bendanillo added 10 points and four assists. Sofie Paulsen topped Wellesley with 15 points and nine rebounds.

The Hornets advance to a semifinal-round meeting with second-seed Braintree (19-3), which defeated Walpole 64-41 on Saturday. The site and date have yet to be set by the MIAA.



03/03/2018

Hornets Turn It On After Break to Reach Semifinal



Mansfield junior Maggie Danehy (42) scored a game-high 20 points to help the Hornets come from behind and beat Wellesley in the Div. 1 South quarterfinal at Taunton High. (Josh Perry/HockomockSports.com)



By Josh Perry
Managing Editor

TAUNTON, Mass. – Mansfield scored the final four points of the first half to cut the Wellesley lead to single digits going into the break in Saturday afternoon’s Div. 1 South quarterfinal at Taunton High. At the time it didn’t feel like much of a turnaround, but for a team that has been dominating in the second half all season it was just the spark that was needed to get going.

The Hornets turned that small four-point swing into a 13-0 run to get its first lead since the game’s opening basket, allowed only three points in the third quarter and only gave up 11 in the second half. In the end, it turned out to be a 35-11 run to close out the game and give Mansfield a 48-35 victory that books a return to the semifinal.

“That third quarter has been somewhat magical for us,” said Mansfield coach Mike Redding. “I don’t really say much, they just come out and figure it out and start making shots and the momentum builds. When you make shots, then you play better on defense and momentum is so powerful in the game of basketball.”

One of the keys to the comeback was a change from a 1-3-1 zone into a more traditional 2-3 look that allowed the Hornets to get out to the Raiders’ shooters. In the early going, Mansfield was scrambling and Wellesley took advantage.

Emma Dougherty, Brooke Guiffre and Sofie Paulsen each knocked down threes in the opening quarter, as Wellesley opened up a 17-7 lead, which was aided by Meg Hill picking up two fouls inside the opening four minutes of the game. Paulsen (15 points) also got free for seven points in the second, including a three that put Wellesley ahead 24-13.

“We tried some gimmick stuff,” Redding explained. “We didn’t practice; we literally walked through at Mass Premier in the dark this morning how we were going to defend them. We went back to just basic zone and our kids rotated. They have three really good players, but we did a really good job of finding those three.”

The comeback started innocuously enough, as Hill came back into the game and scored off an assist by Ann Maher and then she got a layup off a drive and dish by Sydney Mulkern. The four points cut the lead to seven going into the break and Redding was pleased with the way the team weathered the storm while Hill was in foul trouble.

He said, “We hung in the second quarter with Meg with two fouls and that was the turning point. It was starting to get away from us and when she got two [fouls] in the first quarter I was worried but we hung in, got it to single digits, got into halftime with a little confidence and now we’ve got Meg back in a regular rotation.”

Mulkern assisted on another Hill bucket coming out of halftime and then Maggie Danehy knocked down a jumper to cut the lead to three. Junior point guard Mady Bendanillo then went on a personal 5-0 run that put Mansfield ahead for the first time since it was 2-0. She got a steal and layup plus the foul to tie the game and then grabbed a defensive rebound and beat everyone down the floor for the layup and the lead.

“I don’t know if she had a turnover,” said Redding of Bendanillo. “We run a lot of stuff and she knows exactly where to go with it and I thought that few minute stretches where she was driving and off transition, scoring points for us, really put the game away for us.”

The lead didn’t last long, as Gianna Palli stepped way beyond the arc to hit a three to make it 27-26, but that would be the only basket that the Hornets allowed in the third. Danehy

scored on a put-back and then Maher (seven points) made her only three of the game to put the Hornets up by four heading to the fourth.

Mansfield kept the pressure on in the fourth thanks to Danehy, who scored six of the first nine points in the quarter, including a free throw line jumper off a Maher assist that made it 37-30. She finished with a game-high 20 points and pulled down six rebounds.

“Since they were double-teaming Meg, I was open a lot more than I usually am, which helped,” Danehy said after the game. “They left the lane open a lot, so I tried that. It’s way better once you get a couple baskets. It’s always harder to get going if you don’t score in the beginning.”

Wellesley only managed eight points in the fourth, including a pair of threes, and was never able to get any closer than five points.

Maher got free with a cut down the lane off an inbounds pass from Emily Vigeant, who had three assists in the fourth. Hill scored a layup off a Vigeant pass and Bendanillo (10 points and four assists) scored with a drive down the lane. Hill (10 points and 12 boards) capped the win with a layup in traffic off a Danehy assist.

When asked to explain the Hornets’ second half dominance this season, Danehy replied, “We realize that we need to get it together after halftime and [Coach Redding] is always so good at telling us what we need to improve on.”

Mansfield (20-5) will face another familiar Bay State Conference opponent in the semifinal, as the Hornets will get a rematch with No. 2 seed Braintree, which beat Mansfield in last year’s sectional final.

Margaret Danehy leads Mansfield to D1 South semifinals

By Nate Rollins Globe Correspondent March 04, 2018



Robert E. Klein for the Globe

Mansfield junior Margaret Danehy (42) goes high over Wellesley’s Emma Dougherty (11) to score two of her team-high 20 points in Saturday’s D1 South quarterfinal victory.

For the fourth straight season, the Mansfield girls' basketball team has punched its ticket to the Division 1 South Sectional semifinals.

The third-seeded Hornets rallied from an 11-point deficit Saturday evening to eliminate sixth-seeded Wellesley, 48-35, in a quarterfinal game at Taunton High School.

"It feels incredible," said senior captain Meg Hill, a four-year starter who had 10 points. "I feel really lucky. It's so amazing to come back and play our hearts out. It's my favorite time of year."

Mansfield will next face second-seeded Braintree (19-3), which advanced to the semis after scoring a 64-41 victory over Bay State Conference rival Walpole (16-6).

The Hornets (18-3) used a 22-3 run that spanned the two-minute mark of the second quarter well into the fourth quarter.

With 4:50 remaining in the third quarter, junior guard Madyson Bendanillo (10 points) drove to the hoop and gave Mansfield a 26-24 lead; it's first since the opening quarter.

"The third quarter has been somewhat magical for us," said Mansfield coach Michael Redding. "I don't really say much, they just come out, figure it out and start making shots and the momentum builds.

Wellesley (16-6) would regain the edge with a 3-pointer from junior Gianna Palli, but a 9-0 Hornets run — sparked by a pair of buckets from junior Margaret Danehy (game-high 20 points) — pushed Mansfield in front, 35-27, with 6:18 remaining.

Wellesley senior Sophie Paulsen scored 12 of her 15 points in the first half to give the Raiders a 24-17 lead at the break, but was held to just three points for the remainder of the game.

"We were triangle 2-and-3 on Sophie and she was just killing us, so we had to get out of that and go to a more traditional zone," said Redding. "She was the difference in the first half."



Robert E. Klein for the Globe

Wellesley guard Sophie Paulsen, who scored 12 of her 15 points in the first half, found it difficult to score in the second half against Mansfield's spirited defense.

Mansfield 48, Wellesley 35

WELLESLEY (35)

Zarle 1-10 0-0 3, Palli 1-7 2-2 5, Cronin 1-5 0-0 2, Dougherty 2-2 0-0 5, Paulsen 5-14 2-2 15, Glashow 0-0 0-0 0, Feinzig 1-4 0-0 2, Guiffre 1-8 0-0 3, Goehringer 0-1 0-0 0, totals 12-51 4-4 35.

MANSFIELD (48)

Daniel 0-1 0-0 0, Vigeant 0-0 0-0 0, Mulkern 0-4 1-2 1, M. Bendanillo 3-6 4-5 10, Santos 0-0 0-0 0, Kemp 0-0 0-0 0, Maher 3-8 0-0 7, K. Bendanillo 0-1 0-0 0, Hill 5-9 0-2 10, Danehy 10-15 0-0 20, totals 21-44 5-9 48.

Team	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Final
Wellesley	17	07	03	08	35
Mansfield	07	10	14	17	48

3-point goals—Wellesley 7-29 (Zarle 1-8, Palli 1-6, Cronin 0-4, Dougherty 1-1, Paulsen 3-5, Guiffre 1-5),

Mansfield 1-9 (Mulkern 0-3, M. Bendanillo 0-1, Maher 1-4, K. Bendanillo 0-1).

Rebounds--Wellesley 36 (Paulsen 9), Mansfield 30 (Hill 12).

Assists--Wellesley 9 (Zarle, Guiffre 3), Mansfield 14 (M. Bendanillo, Maher 4).

Total fouls--Wellesley 14, Mansfield 10.

Fouled out--None.