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The path to success Bridgman, Saugatuck advance to tourney final

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BRIDGMAN — Bridgman and Saugatuck took similar paths Tuesday night to the championship game of the Bridgman Holiday Tournament.

Coach Mike Miller's undefeated Bees (5-0) breezed past winless Decatur, 66-27, and coach Russ Doane's Indians (3-2) knocked off New Buffalo, 58-35, to advance to Thursday's 8 p.m. championship game. The Bison (1-2) will face the Raiders in the 6 p.m. consolation game.

Last Jan. 8, Saugatuck nipped Bridgman in a regular season game 52-50 in overtime, but it appears both teams will be short-handed Thursday night.

Bridgman's 6-foot-5 junior center Craig Mc Nees, who led the Bees with 15 points, sprained his ankle early in the third quarter and did not return.

"It looks like a bad sprain," Miller said. "I doubt he'll be ready by Thursday." Saugatuck was playing without two starters, point guard Jonathan Hoshor, who is out with a dislocated shoulder, and 6-5 Chris Castro, who has a dislocated thumb.

Bridgman dominated all facets of its game.

The Bees led 28-16 with about two minutes left in the first half, before going on a 28-0 run that set off a running clock with 1:52 remaining in the third. Bridgman reserves played the rest of the way.

Dan Kunde (#20), the Bees' 6-7 senior forward, chipped in 10 points and eight rebounds, including a crowd pleasing slam dunk to start the second quarter.

Zac Nemitz came in off the bench to tally 10 points as the Bees hit 43 percent (26 of 60) from the floor, outrebounded Decatur 50 to 21, and committed 12 fewer turnovers.

"I was pleased with our focus, despite the score," Miller said. "We didn't shoot very well, but we played defense the whole game." Sophomore forward Nick Sweet led Bridgman with 11 rebounds. Dan Ponegalek, Todd Hendricks and Sweet all were credited with five assists.

DECATUR (27): Jeff Cerven 3 0-0 9, Steven Mastenbrook 0 2-2 2, Manuel Albelais 2 0-0 4, Zach Tyria 0 1-2 1, Bryin Wesley 3 0-0 8, Michael Wright 1 1-2 3. TOTALS: 9 4-6 27.

BRIDGMAN (66): Dan Kunde 5 0-0 10, Craig McNees 6 3-4 15, Todd Hendricks 2 0-0 5, Dan Ponegalek 2 2-2 7, Nick Sweet 2 3-4 7, Jon Malm 1 0-0 2, Zach Welsher 0 0-0 0, Zac Nemitz 4 0-0 10, Seth Coffing 2 0-4 4, Boo Ott 1 1-2 3, Blake Ivers 1 0-0 3, Casey Burli 0 0-0 0, Pat Kading 0 0-0 0. TOTALS: 26 9-16 66.

Decatur	5	16	22	27
Bridgman	15	35	58	66

3-point goals: Bridgman 5 (Hendricks 1, Ponegalek 1, Ivers 1, Nemitz 2), Decatur 5 (Wesley 2, Cerven 3). Total fouls (fouled out): Bridgman 10 (none), Decatur 13 (none). J.V. score: Bridgman 57, Decatur 13 (none). Varsity records: Bridgman 5-0, Decatur 0-5. Officials: Joe Gonzalez, Randy Melvin, Dave LoBack.

