



NATHAN UEBELHOER Special to The Bee

Kaia Foster scored 32 points as Christian Brothers High School defeated Woodcreek 72-48 in a CIF Sac-Joaquin Section Division II semifinal on Tuesday.

Foster scores 32 as Christian Brothers blasts Woodcreek

BY NATHAN UEBELHOER
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It was a playoff atmosphere for the ages at Christian Brothers High School on Tuesday night.

Ron Limeberger Gym was full and it was intense, similar to what unfolded up the road at Sac-Joaquin Section Division I power Folsom for its Division I semifinal game against McClatchy in another example of how popular the girls game has become.

The Oak Park community wanted this kind of turnout at Christian Brothers. Students are charged

for section playoff tickets, but someone anonymously and graciously gobbled up dozens of tickets for students, and that vibe added to the fun.

Top-seeded Christian Brothers beat No. 4 Woodcreek 72-48 in a Division II semifinal to punch a return ticket to Golden 1 Center, where the Falcons (29-2) seek their fourth championship since 2017 under coach Shandyn Foster, an alum of the school.

That her daughter, Kaia Foster, scored 32 points to lead the charge over a pesky Timberwolves team made the night all the more meaningful. It was a

breakout performance for the 5-foot-8 junior guard. Foster isn't the leading scorer for Christian Brothers, but she is a steady, talented player who is capable of scoring in bunches. She had her bunches here.

The mother-daughter relationship comes with its ups and downs, but neither of them would have it any different.

"We have our battles," coach Foster said. "I've got to remember to shut it off when we get in the car sometimes. But I think this year is the first year we finally reached an understanding with each other.

She knows she's going to be the hardest coached kid out there. But she definitely showed her improvements tonight."

The younger Foster said that being mentored by her mother has forced her to work a little harder, push a little longer.

"Sometimes it's hard," Kaia Foster said. "But I think being coached by mom has driven me more. Knowing that she's coaching on the sideline and that I am her daughter definitely puts on a little more pressure."

Emma Fisilau scored 18 points for Woodcreek, which will advance to the CIF Northern California playoffs as a section finalist. The Timberwolves came in at 25-4 after winning 12 of 13.

Coach Foster said Woodcreek presented a challenge and a reminder of what more is needed to be a championship team.

"We knew that Woodcreek was not going to lay down," she said. "One thing I told them was we have to withstand their runs. Basketball is a game of runs. They're going to go on a run, but we have to maintain our composure. We have to finish."

Though they did finish, coach Foster reminded that her team has to do better on free throws and rebounding. No coach is ever satisfied. Christian Brothers will play No. 3-seeded Whitney, a 55-50 winner over No. 2 Vista del Lago in the other semifinal, for the championship Friday at 6 p.m. at Golden 1 Center.

Coach Foster said she sees a team still improving.

"I think as a group, we have grown close together," she said. "It's like we go to war together. We're a family and that bond has been a driving force in our ability to keep pushing and winning."