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SPORTS

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SECTION

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HIGH SCHOOL BOYS SOCCER — DIVISION III REGIONAL SEMIFINAL

Well runs dry for Rovers



(Above) Rootstown's Brennen Hartung fights for possession of the ball on Tuesday during the Rovers' Division III regional semifinal loss to Wellington in a game played at Twinsburg High School. (Below) Nathan Dreger prepares to trap a pass from a teammate.

Wellington ends season for Rootstown with 2-1 victory in regional semifinal

By Colin Harris
Record-Courier staff writer

TWINSBURG — Two games in as many days proved to be a bit too much for the Rootstown Rovers to handle.

After a gutsy 2-1 win over Waterloo on Monday night, the Rovers traveled to Twinsburg on Tuesday to take on Wellington in a Division III regional semifinal game.

Fortune wasn't on the Rovers' side Tuesday as the Dukes scored two second-half goals to grab a 2-1 victory and a trip to Saturday's regional finals.

"We just had tired legs tonight and that was a big difference," said Rootstown coach Charlie Voth. "It just seemed like we were a step behind them all night and that's really all it took — a half-step here and there."

From the opening whistle, the Rovers played on their heels as the Dukes pressed the ball with a noticeably different energy level.

If anything, Wellington's aggression initially worked against it as the Dukes dominated shots with a 13-2 first-half edge.

Although the total is eye-popping, many of Wellington's shots over the first 40 minutes were poorly placed, sailing wide or over the net.

Rootstown took advantage of one of its few opportunities when sophomore Ronnie Moss cashed in only nine minutes into the contest. Wellington keeper Mike Hicks made a save on a Scott Kearley shot, but the ball took a strange bounce and ended up near Moss, who kicked it in for the score.

See Rovers, page B4



**KENT STATE:
AROUND THE BEAT**

Wagon Wheel rivalry begins again

The call to arms has sounded at Kent State.

Just last week, KSU head coach Doug Martin said he understood why the long-suffering fans of the Golden Flashes have been slow to embrace a 2009 team that had battled its way into contention in the Mid-American Conference East Division.

After the Flashes extended their winning streak to three games in impressive fashion Saturday against Western Michigan, Martin asked his program's dubious fan base to join the fight.

The Flashes aren't asking students and alumni to channel the fans of the 1969 New York Mets and show up to games carrying signs reading "We Believe."

They just want them to show up, and a good start would be Saturday when the Flashes make the short trip to the University of Akron.

The only shame in Saturday's 26-14 win was the fact so few fans showed up to see arguably the most well-played game at Dix Stadium in the last decade. Kent State announced a crowd of 15,206. In reality, only around 5,000 showed up, and that is a generous estimate.

"The people that were there, man, my hats off to them," said Martin. "They were outstanding. And boy, the sun came out in the second half and it was a great day. We really appreciate them being there."

"But we need a crowd. We need a home crowd. That's our responsibility. We have to win to get those people to come. I hope they are seeing that now. And hopefully (Saturday) we get more people."

Martin called the short 14-mile trip from Kent to Akron's brand-new InfoCision Stadium, "the same thing as a home game."

See Flashes, page B5

PTC COUNTY DIVISION FOOTBALL REPORT

Cats, Dogs share title; differ in playoff history

The playoff journeys of Portage Trail Conference County Division co-champs Mogadore and Woodridge are a real contrast in football history.

The Wildcats enter the playoffs for the 23rd time, while the Bulldogs are celebrating the program's first-ever appearance.



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Both teams face uphill battles against rich traditions and playoff-tested opponents.

...
BULLDOG BATTLE — Woodridge maintained the No. 6 seed with a victory over Waterloo and will now make the long journey down on the Ohio River to Martins Ferry. A piece of the division title and a trip to the playoffs is something Woodridge has never experienced before in school history. Hopefully the senior-laden team can work through pos-

sible playoff butterflies.

The Purple Raiders, a member of the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference, finished the season with an 8-2 record. This is the second straight and ninth overall appearance in the last 12 years for Martins Ferry. Last season, Martins Ferry fell to New Lexington 21-14 in an overtime battle for the regional title. The Raiders operate out of a pro-spread offense and own four defensive shutouts this season.

Woodridge's signature win this

year was the 52-7 rout of Mogadore. The high-powered aerial attack of Woodridge quarterback Anthony Westren and shifty running of tailback Anthony Kelly can break open a close game real quick. The Purple Raiders better not overlook Woodridge.

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TOUGH FIRST ROUND —

Even though Mogadore is the No. 3 seed, it could be facing its toughest first-round opponent in many years.

See PTC, page B4

Cavaliers wash away Wizards

By Tom Withers
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — LeBron James scored 27 points, Shaquille O'Neal added a season-high 21 while wearing out Washington's big men and the Cleveland Cavaliers won their third straight, beating the Wizards 102-90 on Tuesday night.

The Cavs trailed by 18 in the second quarter before turning up their defense and relying on their superstar combo of James and O'Neal to win their sixth straight at home over the Wizards.

See Cavs, page B3

**CAVALIERS 102
WIZARDS 90
(At Cleveland)**

▶ Thursday's Game: Chicago at Cleveland
▶ Time: 8 p.m.
▶ TV/Radio: TNT/WTAM

Much to enjoy at The Q

By Melissa Dilley
Record-Courier correspondent

CLEVELAND — People watching the Cleveland Cavaliers at home may have more comfortable seats for a cheaper price, but it's what goes on when the cameras are off that makes the game at The Q such a memorable experience.

Aside from getting to see some of the best and most well-known basketball players in

the world up close, here are some other things that are worth the money and the drive.

• Walking to the game: The Cleveland skyline is lit up with lights from buildings and thousands of street lamps; all the restaurants are buzzing and fans are walking everywhere. Come early to get dinner or a few drinks before the game and experience the ambiance the city has to provide, even on a cold night.

See Enjoy, page B3

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Basketball
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