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information**



1661 ramblewood drive east lansing, mi 48823 517.332.5046 fax-517.332.4071 www.mhsaa.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2006

Contact: John Johnson or Andy Frushour

517.332.5046 or www.mhsaa.com

Bolton's Record Quarterfinal 50-Point Game Turns 50 Tuesday

EAST LANSING, Mich. – March 20 – *One of the magical stories of March is the 50-point performance turned in by Bob “Sticks” Bolton of Battle Creek Lakeview in a Class B Michigan High School Athletic Association Boys Basketball Tournament Quarterfinal game 50 years ago tomorrow. It set a record for single-game scoring in the Final Round of the tournament (Quarterfinal, Semifinal, Final) that has stood the test of time. Ironically, this year’s Quarterfinals are on March 21 as well.*

The text that appears below is a story written for the souvenir program for this year’s Boys Basketball Semifinals and Finals by MHSAA Historian Ron Pesch of Muskegon:

They called him “Sticks” for obvious reason. At 6-9 and 190 pounds, Battle Creek Lakeview’s Bob Bolton stood out. His brilliant performance 50 years ago in the Quarterfinal round of the MHSAA tournament guaranteed that he would never be forgotten.

The opponent that March 21 eve in 1956 was battle-tested Kalamazoo State High. Boasting a 19-2 record, including a 17-game winning streak, State High featured a front line standing 6-6, 6-6 and 6-5, unheard of back in those days. Yet, they were no match for Sticks, as the much-heralded prep star poured in a Final-round tournament record 50 points in piloting Lakeview to a 90-73 victory.

Before this magical night, in the first 50 years of Quarterfinal, Semifinal and Final competition, no athlete approached the total. In the 50 years since, Bolton’s output remains unequaled.

Antoine Joubert struck for 47 points in Detroit Southwestern’s 1983 Class A Final loss to Flint Central. Mark Macon tossed in 46 in Saginaw Buena Vista’s 1986 Class B Quarterfinal victory over Gladstone. Two years ago in 2004, Kent City’s Jeff Carlson readied the latest assault, hitting 47 in its win over Olivet in a Class C Quarterfinal. Five other players have scored 44 points in a Final round game.

To say Bolton was on fire that night might be an understatement. The contest was hosted at old Hastings High School before a standing room only crowd estimated at 2,500. Officially, with extra bleachers in place, the gym was able to seat 2,000, but fans lined the court in anticipation of a stellar contest.

Lakeview carried its own 16-game unbeaten streak into the game along with an 18-2 win-loss mark.

(more)

2-2-2 – Bolton’s 50 Turns 50

Everyone expected a battle, but against such a strong opponent, no one could have predicted Bolton’s performance.

“Sticks” warmed up with 12 points as the Spartans bolted to a 28-10 lead in the first quarter of play. Bolton added 20 of his team’s 21 second quarter points as Lakeview headed to the locker room with rock-solid 49-28 lead.

Bolton added 10 points in the third stanza and eight more in the final frame. He scorched the nets with 17-of-27 shooting from the field and 16-of-20 accuracy from the free throw line. The 50-point night upped his five-game tournament total to 191. The feat outshined a dazzling 30-point performance by State High’s 5-7 guard, Bob Miles. The effort by Miles established a new school single-game record for the Cubs.

Bolton went on to play collegiate ball at Western Michigan University earning all-Mid-American Conference honors before answering a call to the ministry, serving for many years at a Baptist church in Marquette. He is now retired from the ministry and living in suburban Chicago.

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MEDIA ADVISORY – The MHSAA has still images of Bolton from the 1956 available upon request. Contact Communications Director John Johnson via e-mail at jjohnson@mhsaa.com to request those images. Video of Bolton and Lakeview in a 1956 regular-season contest against East Lansing, then coached by former Michigan State University coach Gus Ganakas, is available on DVD. Contact John Johnson for more information.

RL06-040

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