

# Bowland, Barnett lift Madison-Grant to first win

By Sean Douglas

Chelsea Bowland is an anomaly when it comes to basketball.

In a sport dominated by offense, Bowland prides herself on her defensive prowess every time she touches the floor. She consistently guards top players and ball-handlers, and she does so at an efficient and effective rate.

As usual, Bowland was exceptional on the defensive end of the floor on Wednesday night, and her play, combined with a stellar offensive

performance from Zoey Barnett, proved to be the difference in Madison-Grant’s 57-27 rout of the Wes-Del Warriors on Wednesday evening.

From start to finish, Bowland guarded Wes-Del point guard Andrea Stoughton, the Warriors’ best ball-handler and who they run their offense through, and shut her down, holding her to just one made throw in the course of 32 minutes.

“When we watched them on film, she was their domi-

nant ball-handler,” Madison-Grant Head Coach Brandon Bradley said. “It looked like they were very uncomfortable every time she didn’t have it. Our thought with that was if we could eliminate or minimize her touches, they would be less comfortable offensively.”

No matter what Stoughton tried, Bowland was right with her step for step. With Stoughton unable to set up the offense, the Argyll defense put on a clinic, forcing a remarkable 32 turnovers

and allowing just nine total field goals.

“That’s my biggest thing, not letting their leading scorer score,” Bowland said. “I feel like I did a decent job of it tonight. When they barely score anything, I know that I did a good job.”

Madison-Grant led from the onset, building an 11-6 first quarter lead due in large part to Barnett. The senior forward scored six of the Argylls’ 11 points, establishing her presence in the paint

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Chelsea Bowland played lockdown defense against Wes-Del, allowing just one point in Madison-Grant’s first win of the 2020 season.

Photo by  
Sean Douglas

## Giants

onship-level performance in a 28-20 triumph over East Noble.

For the Giants, it was their fourth regional championship in school history and their second in the last three seasons.

“It’s a wonderful feeling,” Marion Head Coach James Bell said. “Because of the adversity, because of the injuries, because of all the things you have to go through during the year, because of COVID, we had so many things going on, and they just continued to do what we asked them to do.”

Silmon led the Marion running backs in carries with 21, and he carried the load, collecting 114 tough yards and a pair of touchdowns in the Giants’ victory.

“Bell always goes with what works,” Silmon said. “Tonight, the inside run was working, so we switched it up.”

Khalid Stamps rushed for 130 yards on 18 carries, while Zaimar Burnett, on his lone carry of the game, scored from 49 yards out.

On defense, Marion star cornerback Ty Coleman collected a pair of game-changing interceptions on back-to-back possessions early in the fourth quarter, keeping the Knights out of the end zone and preventing them from seizing any sort of momentum.

“All year, he has been the best quarterback in the NCC,” Bell said. “He leads the conference in interceptions, and he added to it tonight. He’s an All-State corner.”

Much like last week, Marion’s defense was punched in the mouth early. Using a variety of misdirection and counter run plays, the Knights moved down the field quickly and efficiently, driving all the way to the Giants’ 10-yard line on the game’s opening possession.

fense stiffened, holding the Knights to a field goal, and from that moment on, East Noble only found the red zone twice.

“It starts up front with the four D-linemen,” Marion linemen Johnny Davis said. “You’ve got to play your gap, you’ve got to play as a team, and everybody has to do what the coaches tell you. You’ve just got to beat the man in front of you.”

After struggling to find much running room in the first quarter, the Giants’ running game dominated the second quarter, scoring touchdowns on three consecutive drives to turn a 3-0 deficit into a 21-3 lead late in the first half.

“I think we really just put our heads in the game,” Silmon said. “We worried about the team instead of ourselves, and everybody worked together, and we got the job done.”

Silmon scored Marion’s first touchdown from one-yard out, capping an eight-play, 61-yard drive to begin the quarter. After the Giants’ defense held East Noble to a three-and-out, Burnett returned the ensuing punt 45 yards to the Knights’ six-yard line. Four plays later, Marion quarterback Cubie Jones scored on a bootleg on fourth-and-goal to put the Giants up 14-3.

After another three-and-out for the Giants’ defense, Burnett, despite running into Jones on a handoff at the Marion 49-yard line, found room on the outside and ran untouched into the end zone, putting Marion up 21-3.

go down without a fight.

After scoring a touchdown in the final minute of the second quarter, East Noble seemed to gather a little momentum as the second half got underway. The Knights’ defense held Marion to a three-and-out on the Giants’ opening drive of the third quarter, before forcing a Stamps fumble and recovering it at their own 33-yard line. Three plays later, Justin Marcellus scored from 15 yards outs, cutting the Giants’ lead to 21-17.

As the third quarter rolled over into the fourth, the Knights were driving with a chance to take the lead.

But Coleman, as he has all season, made the play

when it mattered. On a 3rd-and-16 from the Giants’ 34-yard line, East Noble quarterback Cole Schupbach launched a pass down the right sideline for receiver Rowan Zolman, but Coleman read the route perfectly, coming down with the interception.

“No. 6 was kind of big, [but] I knew he wasn’t faster than me,” Coleman said. “I just got there and got to the ball.”

Coleman’s pick flipped momentum back over to Marion’s side, and the Giants took full advantage.

“They started coming back, but as a defense, we said, ‘We are not going out like that. We have to make a stop and execute,’” Davis said. “I thought the defense

did a great job. We all came together, and we played as a team.”

On 3rd-and-4 from their own 10-yard line, Stamps broke the biggest run of the night, scampering 78 yards all the way down to the Knights’ 12-yard line. On the next play, Silmon bullied his way into the end zone for the second time, putting the Giants up 28-17.

Coleman’s second pick came just three plays after Silmon’s touchdown, and it neutralized any sort of comeback bid for the Knights.

“It’s great playing with Ty. He’s a tremendous player,” Davis said. “He’s definitely come a long way. I think he is one of

the best cornerbacks in the state.”

The Knights did add a field goal late in the fourth quarter, but the Giants ran out the final 2:37, securing the victory.

“No matter how wins happen in the playoffs, a win is a win,” Davis said. “We are going on to the semi-finals now. The defense and the team as a whole made a statement that we are good, we are not to be played around with, and you have to take us seriously.”

Marion will face Hobart this coming Friday for the semi-state championship and a berth in the Class 4A State Finals in Indianapolis on Thanksgiving weekend.

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