

SPORTS

Stowe-stopper in quarterfinals



PHOTO BY JESSE ROMAN

Thetford pulls an upset, 38-29, in state tournament

BY JESSE ROMAN

Defense wins championships. No matter the sport or the level of play, almost all coaches drum that cliché into their players from the beginning of practice until the final game of the year. And the bigger the game, the more that cliché seems to prove true. For proof, look no further than Saturday's quarterfinal boys' basketball contest between Stowe (16-5) and Thetford Academy (13-8). The two teams combined to score just 30 first-half points and only 67 for the game, and the Thetford Panthers ground out a 38-29 playoff victory at Stowe High School.

Stowe, which scored 70 points in its first-round victory against Poultney, struggled mightily on offense. It shooting was off, turnovers were a problem, and the team never seemed to find any rhythm on its way to recording its lowest offensive output of the season.

Stowe hit just 12 of its 41 shots, the stat sheet said, 29 percent.

The loss was eerily reminiscent of Stowe's second-round defeat a year ago, when Twin Valley ousted Stowe — also 15-5 — from the playoffs on the Raiders' home court.

"I just think we let the pressure get to us," Stowe Coach Evans Bouchard said after the game. "We were here last year under the same circumstances, and not getting off to a real good start today put the pressure on us, and we weren't able to get rid of it."

Thetford's size down low played a big role in limiting the Raiders' offensive attack.

The Panthers' frontcourt — 6-foot-3 Jason Grey, 6-2 Michael Mann and 6-0 Nick Lincoln — shut down the interior, forced Stowe to settle for outside jump shots, and limited Stowe's offensive rebounding.

Thetford also kept Stowe's senior star, Sam King, from catching any entry passes in the post, and limited him to just nine points for the game.

"You can't really shut down a player like Sam," Thetford Coach Barrett Williams said after the game. "We were just fortunate to have a hand in his face most of the night and he didn't hurt us inside like he has other teams and he didn't knock a lot of shots down from the perimeter."

Although Stowe managed only 11 first-half points, the Raiders were far from out of the game, because its own powerful man-to-

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A key Thetford strategy was to box out Stowe's big man, Sam King, No. 24.

A WORLD TREASURE IN JEOPARDY



BRIAN MOHR/EMBER PHOTOGRAPHY

Vermont skier-adventurer Emily Johnson, high above the headwaters to Chilean Patagonia's wild Rio Baker Valley, hopes Chile has the foresight to protect the region from industrial-scale hydroelectric development.

Moretown adventurers show what's at stake in Chile

In a world of high-stakes adventures, where people pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to be led up a mountain supported by satellite phones and contracts for rapid helicopter evacuation, Moretown residents Brian Mohr and Emily Johnson strap 70-pound packs on their backs and head into the wilderness to scope out and ski some breathtaking lines.

Yes, Patagonia and others give them some clothes and gear, and Backcountry magazine helped out with the costs of their latest adventure, but this Vermont couple's



Roger Murphy

backcountry style is both admirable and refreshing. They convey no sense of bloat-

ed self-worth or "look what I can do" heroics that many well-known outdoorspeople do, and they take some inspiring and elegant photos at the same time.

As part of their "Wild People, Wild Places" project, the two came to the Vermont Ski Museum in Stowe to talk about a recent trip to Chile's Rio Baker Valley, a place they visited six years ago by bicycle and returned to recently with plans to explore and ski some of the high mountains, many of which had no record of being climbed, let alone skied, before.

A significant part of the impetus for this trip was to make people aware of the potential destruction of this part of Patagonia by a Spanish-owned company, Endesa, which hopes to dam two of the rivers that give life to the region.

As you might expect, the company is trying to construct power-generating dams in an environmentally destructive way, and then erect transmission lines 1,800 miles long to connect with the national grid. And it wants to do this in one of the last remaining biologically diverse and remote

wildernesses in South America.

After this slide show by Mohr and Johnson, I hope this never comes to pass, but just in case, I've started scheming with my wife about how we can get down there in the coming years.

The couple's message can be summed up pretty simply: Look at this amazing place and all that it has to offer environmentally, culturally and recreationally, and think about what its destruction would mean.

The alternative to this destruc-

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tion is clear and in its beginning stages. People are trying to create a Chilean National Park out of the region, thereby thwarting attempts to dam the rivers.

Locals are behind these efforts, and look forward to the potential income that ecologically sound and sustainable tourism would bring.

To highlight the beauty of the region, Mohr and Johnson narrated a slideshow of their latest adventure. In a very unassuming way, they explained the art of skinning to the people in the audience who were unfamiliar with it, and took us through their adventure, speaking with great respect for the landscape and people they have come to know in Chile. (On a side note, Mohr also showed some helmet-cam footage from the Valentine's Day snowstorm at Mad River Glen. What a day that was.)

There were some super-crisp images of skiers peeling away corn snow and then skinning those same lines to get back to the other side, where they had made camp. Given almost equal time were the people of the Rio Baker valley, their hospitality and camaraderie, and their appreciation for the gift they have in their mountains and rivers.

What struck me most about their presentation, aside from the great skiing and potential destruction of a Chilean garden of Eden, was the style in which they conducted their adventure.

Speaking Spanish and interacting with locals all along the way, they seemed to genuinely connect with the people who had a significant part in the success of their project. There was no arrogance in their accomplishments, no testosterone-driven mugging for the camera, and no sense that, if I put my mind to it, I couldn't make the

same trip happen for myself.

Instead of multiple video clips of skiers launching off cliffs or skiing death-defying lines, we were treated to dramatically scenic skiing (and lots of skinning), complemented by footage of a young Chilean boy talking about his goats.

Those moments captured by Mohr and Johnson were significantly more memorable than most of the ski-porn films I've seen.

Next month the couple returns to the Ski Museum with a slideshow about their bicycle tour through the same region that predates the ski trip, and I'll be getting there early for a good seat.

For more information on the dam project, head to the International Rivers Network at www.irn.org, and for Mohr and Johnson's photography, log on to emberphoto.com.

Roger Murphy is a teacher at Stowe High School, and an avid fisherman, hiker, snowshoer and cross-country skier. E-mail our writers at news@stowereporter.com. All messages will be forwarded.



BRIAN MOHR/EMBER PHOTOGRAPHY

Vermont skier-adventurers Emily Johnson and Brian Mohr ski high mountains in Chilean Patagonia's wild Rio Baker Valley.

Stowe High girls' skiers sixth in state championships

The Stowe High School girls alpine ski team finished sixth among 11 teams in the state championship races Monday at Burke Mountain.

Team captain Heather Bradford finished on the podium in both giant slalom and slalom, and earned a spot at the Eastern High Ski Championships at Cannon Mountain in two weeks.

Bradford, a 10th-grader, finished ninth in the giant slalom and eighth in the slalom in the field of about 80 racers. Bradford won the ninth slot among 10 Vermont athletes

who will compete at the Eastern regionals, a three-day event.

Bradford said the big, tough field at States was a challenge.

"I felt pretty good about my results after looking at the list of girls ahead of me," she said. "There were a bunch of girls I hadn't raced against."

"I'm excited that I did good enough to go even further this year."

"Heather worked hard for this and I am thrilled for her and for Stowe," said Stowe Coach Biddle Duke. "She's steady, consistent and

humble. When the team needed her to at the district championships, she skied carefully and still finished in the top, and when she saw the openings she went for it and won."

"This bodes really well for the coming years. Heather has two more years on the team."

The Stowe High team has a handful of other up-and-comers, including 11th-graders Kaitlin Dougherty and Katie Landwehrle, and freshmen Tori Blaine and Rachel Nunez. All skied to scoring positions Monday at the state races. To qualify, teams must have four finishers per event. Also racing were 10th-grader Molly Hayden and freshman Justine Dougherty.



Heather Bradford

Team results: 1. Rutland 72; 2. Mount Mansfield 77; 3. Woodstock 147; 4. Champlain Valley 187; 5. Burr and Burton 219; 6. Stowe 224; 7. St. Johnsbury 229; 8. Essex 238; 9. Harwood 249; 10. Lyndon 255; 11. South Burlington 284.

Giant slalom top 20 individuals: 1. Margot Benedict, BB, 52:24; 2. Julia White, Rut, 52:54; 3. Erin Wry, MMU, 57:30; 4. Katherine Goller, CVU, 53:82; 5. Haley Gray, SJA, 54:55; 6. Katie Cutting, Rice, 54:81; 7. Kelsey Pearson, Wood, 55:42; 8. Molly Cournoyer, Burlington, 55:64; 9. Heather Bradford, Stowe, 55:85; 10. Molly Eaton, Mount Anthony, 56:32; 11. Whitney Davis, MMU, 56:41; 12. Katie Carey, Rut, 56:53; 13. Laura

Dillon, Har, 56:65; 14. Anna McGee, Wood, 56:89; 15. Mallory Smith, Oxbow, 57:07.

Slalom top 20 individuals: 1. Erin Wry, MMU, 1:30.34; 2. Margot Benedict, BBA, 1:31.17; 3. Julia White, Rut, 1:32.94; 4. Katie Cutting, Rice, 1:33.70; 5. Karly Acker, Rut, 1:36.62; 6. Katherine Goller, CVU, 1:36.66; 7. Kelsey Pearson, Wood, 1:38.53; 8. Heather Bradford, Stowe, 1:39.85; 9. Whitney Davis, MMU, 1:40.85; 10. Mallory Smith, Oxbow, 1:41.16; 11. Danielle Landry, BFA-St. Albans, 1:41.51; 12. Anna McGee, Wood, 1:41.70; 13. Nykea Williams, LI, 1:43.05; 14. Maria Lorentzen, ind, 1:43.07; 15. Heron Russell, MMU, 1:43.16.

Morrisville senior is MVP for University of Vermont

Corey Bronner of Morrisville has been honored as the most valuable player on the men's soccer team at the University of Vermont.

Bronner was selected by a vote of the team, and Coach Jesse Cormier announced the award at the team's breakup dinner.

Bronner was a four-year starter, and was the defensive leader of the America East runner-up Catamounts. He was named to the NSCAA All-Region third team for the third straight season and was selected to the America East All-Championship Team for the second straight season.

He began the season by winning the Nike Invitational Tournament Defensive MVP after a strong performance against Pac-10 power Washington and host Portland.

He was also named the Smith Barney Nike Soccer Classic

Defensive MVP for the second time in three seasons and was on the UMass Soccer Classic All-Tournament Team.

Bronner, an excellent student majoring in business administration, was named to the America East All-Academic Team and was selected to the ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American Third Team for the second straight season.

Bronner and UVM's two other seniors, Chris Scherbel of Bethesda, Md., and Danny Broughan of Ashbourne, Ireland, were recognized at the breakup dinner for their efforts. In 2006, the Catamounts (9-7-3 overall, 5-1-2 in the America East Conference) advanced to the title game of the America East championship for the sixth time in the program's history.

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