

Baldwin again: Six in a row!

Bruins rally from 13 points down to take 'AAA' title

BY BRIAN HEYMAN
brian.heyman@newsday.com

The hole was 13 points deep against Port Washington midway through the second quarter. A sixth straight county title was at stake for the boys basketball dynasty from Baldwin, but Darius Burton saw that his team was looking uncharacteristically nervous.

"I tell them, 'We don't feel the pressure; we make the pressure,'" the coach said.

The top-seeded Bruins settled down, rallied and ultimately yielded just six points in the fourth quarter. They beat Port Washington, 47-40, in the Nassau Class AAA final Saturday night at Farmingdale State.

Six in a row.

"It's unbelievable," said Burton, who guided Baldwin to the county 'AA' title last season while Port Washington took the 'AAA' crown. "But I've got to say, it takes a village."

"I've been blessed with a tremendous amount of talent in Baldwin for the 26 years I've coached. Starting with PAL, my middle school, my JV, we go 12 months a year."

Rian Gittens helped the Bruins (21-2) earn their 16th straight win, sinking four threes and scoring a team-high 14 points in his first game back after missing almost two months with a torn MCL.

The senior forward said Burton had given the players this



The rush of victory never gets old for Ethan Sainsbury (2): "I always loved winning. I always like to say, I hate losing more than I like to win."

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message about the title streak: "Don't be the group not to do it."

Senior point guard Ethan Sainsbury added nine points and set a record with this championship — first four-year player in Baldwin history to win four county titles.

"Ever since I was young, I al-

ways won championships, AAU, little leagues," Sainsbury said. "I've always loved winning. I always like to say, I hate losing more than I like to win."

Baldwin will pursue a second straight Long Island championship at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at Farmingdale State against Bay Shore (19-4) in a state Class AAA subregional contest.

"A great team," Burton said. "I picked them to come out at the beginning and I was right."

Billy Edelstein, who drilled five threes and topped Port Washington (17-6) with 15 points, hit from beyond the arc, cutting Baldwin's lead to 39-37 with 3:51 remaining.

Devon Mitchell soon scored off his offensive rebound for a four-point lead.

In the final minute, Jordan Williams hit a free throw for Baldwin, Sainsbury made three of them and Williams converted a layup — 47-37, 14.9 left.

"They made a couple of

more [shots] than we did there late," Port Washington coach Sean Dooley said. "We had some good looks. Just didn't go down for us. But I'm proud of my kids, the effort and the way we battled for 32 minutes."

His kids led 19-6. Then Gittens nailed three threes in an 18-2 run — 24-21 Bruins at half-time.

"I put the work in," Gittens said. "I believe in myself. My coaches put me in the right positions to do the right things."

Reid's 23 points help Titans win state title

Holy Trinity junior Ryan Reid stood at the free-throw line with the Titans leading by four points against Canisius, just a couple of seconds away from the program's first state championship since 2014.

He knocked down the first free throw, slapping the hand of sophomore Makhi Reeves. Reid intentionally missed the second, and as Reeves grabbed the offensive rebound, no Canisius player moved toward him.

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Game over. Holy Trinity 57, Canisius 52.

The Titans flooded the court Sunday at Erie Community College in Williamsville, dogpiling at midcourt as it celebrated its new CHSAA state Class A title.

"It felt good; all the hard work we put in paid off," Reid said.

"And now we're state champs."

Reid finished with a game-high 23 points. Senior Jagger Verzosa continued a dominant defensive season with numerous steals, including one that he took himself to score to give Holy Trinity (24-4) its largest lead, 49-41, with 4:10 left. He scored all six of his points inside the final five minutes.

"He hit a huge three, and he gets those little steals for us," Holy Trinity coach Steve Gnus said. "He's been doing that all

year, all playoffs. He was great."

Reid's twin, Myles, hit two clutch free throws inside the final 20 seconds to make it 56-52 Holy Trinity. The Titans stopped Canisius (20-7) on the ensuing possession.

Senior Tristan Thomas had 14 points, including a buzzer-beating layup to end the third quarter. It couldn't be a better ending to Gnus' debut year, who began coaching at Holy Trinity in 1995 and worked as an assistant coach for the var-

sity team for 10 years.

"I've been here a long time, and we've had some really good teams that didn't get a chance to win the state championship," Gnus said. "So you never expect it."

That is, unless you're Ryan Reid. What would he have said in November if someone told him Holy Trinity would win a state title?

Said Reid, "I would've said you're probably right."

—MICHAEL SICOLI