

# Marquette Catholic boys crush Sparta 61-23 in regional opener

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**WATERLOO – Marquette Catholic** ran out to a big lead Tuesday night and went on to crush **Sparta** 61-23 in the semifinals of the IHSA Class 2A Waterloo Gibault boys Regional.

The Explorers improved to 27-3 on the year and advanced to Friday night's final, where they will meet the winner of tonight's semifinal game between the host Hawks and Red Bud at 7 p.m. Friday, with a trip to the Nashville Sectional next week at stake against the Hillsboro Regional winner.

“I thought our kids played well,” said **Explorer coach Steve Medford**. “We were a little sluggish to start the game a little bit, but we picked up the intensity a little bit and got after it and did what we needed to do. We knew Sparta was a team that probably struggled a little bit this year, but they've been playing a lot better.

“I think they played Okawville to a 13-point game the other night and Okawville turned right around and beat Breese Central. We're happy just to have the opportunity to win a regional championship; I think our kids are really focused on the task at hand, so we're going to go back to practice tomorrow and see what we get done.”

With the season being at the stage where it's win-or-go-home, Medford said “right now, there's no excuses for effort, there's no excuses for anything else other than that. We know it's the time of the year some kids are cashed out and some kids are really ready to go.

“I feel like I've got 12 guys who are really ready to go and they're really anxious about the opportunity; hopefully, we can keep winning. If we continue to shoot the ball well and hopefully we can keep defending well, we'll have an opportunity to continue to do some things.”

Marquette stormed out to a 20-8 lead at quarter time and expanded it to 34-13 at the half, limiting the Bulldogs to one point in the third quarter to run out winners on the night.

**Isaiah Ervin** led the Explorers with 16 points, with **Bryan Pettiford** and **Sammy Green** each scoring eight, **Reagan Snider** seven, **Nick Messinger** six, **Nick Heimann** and **Jake Hall** four each and **Jeremy Strebel** had two points.

The Bulldogs were led by seven points from Nassur Hobbs, with Jaden Gleghorn adding five and Jacob Soderlund and Jonah Boston three each.





