

# **Carrollton heads to regional title game with 57-46 win over Greenfield-Northwestern**

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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Very rarely do the Carrollton Hawks and the Greenfield-Northwestern Tigers play each other in the same regional, despite the 13 miles that separates the two towns in Greene County. It is just as rare that both schools have solid teams competing in a regional semifinal.

The top-seeded Hawks downed the No. 4 Tigers 57-46 in the IHSA Class 1A North Greene Regional semifinal contest on Wednesday night.

Luke Palan led Carrollton with 17 points. Luke Gillingham dropped in 14 and Cody Leonard, despite foul trouble in the first half, ended up with 13 points.

For Greenfield, Austin Plogger ends his stellar senior season with 22 points in a game where multiple defenders were constantly guarding him whenever he penetrated to the basket. Connor Shade added 12 points.

“The game plan was to make someone else shoot the ball, double him, and force him to pass it,” Krumwiede said. “As hard as we tried that there were times when he still got to the rim and got to the free throw line.”

Both teams appeared to play tight for most of the first quarter. Palan and Leonard scored on layups and Plogger knocked down a baseline jumper and then a layup. Apart from those scores neither team was aggressive as the first foul wasn't committed until the 4:00 mark.

With just 3:47 to play in the first quarter Cody Leonard picked up his second foul and didn't see the floor again until the second half started. Foul trouble has been a reoccurring theme for the Hawks all season and it dogged them again in this game.

“The key is keeping your people on the floor and we talked about it before the game,” Krumwiede said. “When a player gets two fouls some coaches might leave him in, but we decided to play with it.”

Gillingham and Palan nailed two triples to propel the Hawks to a 13-7 lead after the first frame, but Greenfield began to assert its talent. Since Plogger would draw attention from almost every Carrollton defender, it freed up space for the 6'4" Shade to be a force in the paint. He scored six points in the second quarter while Plogger scored seven as the Tigers took two separate one point leads on Carrollton. But just when Greenfield looked to go on a run, the Hawks always responded with a bucket or two.

A key turning point occurred with 0.1 second left till halftime when Shade fouled Jacob Smith as he was getting off desperation three-pointer. Smith converted on all three of his free throws and the Hawks led 28-25 at the intermission.

With Leonard back in the Hawks looked like a different team at the start of the third quarter.

“His defensive rebounding if nothing else was a difference,” Krumwiede said.

Carrollton took a 37-32 lead into the fourth quarter, but momentum was on their side. Greenfield turned the ball over on two straight possessions. After the second turnover the Hawks dribbled around the perimeter for over a minute until Palan scored on a mid-range jumper to go up 44-34.

With a 4:02 left a sequence of crazy events took place. Palan threw an ally-oop pass to Leonard, but Shade was in the way and forced Leonard to ride on shoulders momentarily. The ball was knocked loose and picked up by Shade. He dribbled up the court for a couple of feet, but lost control of the ball and had to save it from going out of bounds. He frantically threw the ball across the court right into the hands of Palan, who drove to the basket, made a layup, and was fouled by Plogger for an and-one.

Carrollton led 50-36 with 1:43 left, but the game threatened to get interesting when Plogger got an and-one. He missed the free throw and it was rebounded by Leonard, but he threw the ball out of bounds. Greenfield scored to make it 50-40. Smith missed the front end of a 1 and 1 and the Tigers came down again and got another two points from Plogger. Once again the Hawks missed the front end of a 1 and 1, but Plogger missed an open three pointer with 58.7 seconds to go, and the Hawks would finally put the game to bed by hitting most of their remaining free throws.

Carrollton (25-4) will take on the No. 2-seeded North Greene Spartans (13-15) for the third time this year in the regional championship game at 7 p.m. on Friday.

Greenfield ends their season at 17-11.