

## South Gray uses big 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to topple Ness City

By Brett Marshall

DODGE CITY – It's an all-too familiar place for the South Gray Rebels to be.

Not only did they return to United Wireless Arena for their 17<sup>th</sup> state tournament appearance in 31 years, but they will find themselves in the state semifinals for the 11<sup>th</sup> time after a stirring 62-53 victory over Ness City in the last quarterfinal contest of the Class 1A-I State Championship on Wednesday night.

They will now face upset-minded Solomon, the No. 7 seed, in the 6 p.m. semifinal Friday with an opportunity to make their 10<sup>th</sup> appearance in the state championship game during Applegate's legendary career. Solomon toppled No. 2 seed Norwich in an earlier game by erasing a 12-point deficit at the start of the fourth quarter.

The Rebels, coached by Mark Applegate in his 40<sup>th</sup> season, earned their way into the Remaining Four with a lot of grit and some big performances from two talented underclassmen – sophomore Joseph Dyck and junior Jorge Lupercio.

Those two accounted for 35 of the Rebel points, with Dyck hitting 9-of-14 field goals for 19 points and Lupercio adding 16 while their two main offensive cogs – seniors Brady Deges and Brent Penner – reached double figures, too, with 13 and 12 points, respectively.

Applegate said it was a night where his whole group came up with that team effort.

"We had kids step up in a big way," Applegate said after getting his record-setting 746<sup>th</sup> career victory, all at South Gray and prior to that at Montezuma, which combined with Copeland back in the early 1990s. "We've got kids that can score and we were able to come up with the big plays when we needed them."

The game was a repeat matchup from the 2021 state semifinals when the Rebels came out on top 69-58 before falling to Olpe in the championship game, 54-47.

Getting to the semifinals is something that Applegate doesn't take for granted and never gets tired of the experience.

"It's still fun to see the kids perform and to excel," Applegate said. "This is a special group. We graduated four seniors off that runner-up team last year. This group has worked hard just to get back here and now we're here for the duration (a guarantee of two more games)."

It wasn't an easy road, though. The Rebels led 14-9 after one quarter and went in at halftime up by just four, 27-23. Ness City, getting a huge night from 6-5 Taylor Cable (25 point, 8 rebounds), cut the deficit to just two, 39-37, after three quarters that erased almost all of a 35-25 lead by the Rebels earlier in the third.

"We overcame a number of adversities at times, with Brady in foul trouble," Applegate said. "I'm proud of the way they handled things."

In the fourth, the Rebels built their lead into margins of seven (44-37), nine (48-39) and had enough breathing room at the end to run out the clock in the final seconds.

South Gray hit a solid 47.4 percent of its field goals (27-of-57) despite hitting just 2-of-16 from behind the arc. The Eagles, who finish the season at 18-6, were 22-of-56 from the field for 39.3 percent. Ness City had a 33-28 rebounding advantage with Corbin Ross grabbing a game-high 13. Lupercio led South Gray with seven caroms.

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**SOUTH GRAY 62, NESS CITY 53**

**Ness City 9 14 14 16 -- 53**

**Montezuma-South Gray 14 13 12 23 -- 62**

Ness City (18-6) – Guzman 5-12 1-2 13, Seib 2-10 0-0 5, Schreiber 2-5 0-0 5, Cable 12-15 1-1 25, Ross 0-8 2-5 2, Stoecklein 1-4 0-0 3, Schniepp 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 22-56 4-8 53.

Montezuma-South Gray (22-2) – Penner 5-15 2-2 12, Deges 5-10 2-2 13, Davis 1-1 0-0 2, Lupercio 7-16 1-2 16, Salmans 0-1 0-0 0, Dyck 9-14 1-2 19. Totals 27-57 6-8 62.

3-point goals—Ness City 5-19 (Guzman 2-7, Seib 1-6, Schreiber 1-4, Stoecklein 1-2), South Gray 2-16 (Penner 0-5, Deges 1-4, Lupercio 1-5, Salmans 0-1, Dyck 0-1). Rebounds—Ness City 33 (Ross 13), South Gray 28 (Lupercio 7). Assists—Ness City 14 (Guzman 6), South Gray 9 (Davis 3). Fouls—Ness City 15, South Gray 14. Fouled out—None.

**(BOYS QUARTERFINAL RESULTS)**

**Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

2 p.m. – No. 1 Olpe 51, No. 8 Troy 21

4 p.m. – No. 5 Macksville 45, No. 4 Osborne 41

6 p.m. – No. 7 Solomon 45, No. 2 Norwich 43

8 p.m. – No. 3 Montezuma-South Gray 62, No. 6 Ness City 53

**Friday, March 11, 2022**

**Semifinal Pairings**

2 p.m.—No. 1 Olpe (23-1) vs. No. 5 Macksville (22-2)

6 p.m.—No. 7 Solomon (17-7) vs. No. 3 Montezuma-South Gray (22-2)

**Saturday, March 12, 2022**

**Third Place**

12 p.m.-Friday's losers

## **Championship**

4 p.m.—Friday's winners