

## Runnin' Rebels sprint past Solomon in 1A-I boys semifinal

DODGE CITY – Having graduated four seniors off a state runner-up basketball team is never easy to fill those departed shoes.

Such was the challenge for South Gray veteran coach Mark Applegate when he started his 40<sup>th</sup> season at the helm of the Runnin' Rebels.

But as has been the storyline of a legendary career that now includes 747 victories, Applegate watched his new group run roughshod over the Solomon Gorillas in a 79-46 semifinal victory Friday night at United Wireless Arena at the Class 1A-I State Championship.

In many ways, Applegate watched this edition perform much the way many of his four state championship and five state runner-up teams have in the past.

They shot the ball well (61.1 percent of 33 of 54 attempts), they drained 50 percent of their 3-pointers (7 of 14), forced the Gorillas into 24 turnovers and execute team ball to near perfection by assisting on 20 of the team's 33 field goals.

"We've put two games here that were really good," Applegate said afterward. "Now we need something even better."

That's because the semifinal victory puts the Rebels back into the championship game against Olpe's Eagles, a 68-38 blowout winner over Macksville. The teams met up a year ago with South Gray the favorite only to have the Eagles come away with a 54-47 win for the school's first boys state crown.

"Olpe's so good athletically, and they play well together, so we'll have to do something special to be there with them," Applegate said. "But I couldn't ask more from a group of kids who have been out to prove something all season."

Applegate got his usual output from his two senior standouts – Brady Deges (21) and Brent Penner (15) – but also got another 21 points from junior Jorge Lupercio, who also contributed seven rebounds.

The Rebels blowout came on quarter leads of 20-8, 40-19 and 61-37.

Solomon got 16 points from Makeen Hastings, and 15 points and 11 rebounds from Dylan Hynes. The Gorillas hit 18 of 45 field goals (40.0 percent) but only 4 of 14 from behind the arc.

“We wanted to focus on their outside shooters and I thought for the most part we did a good job taking that away,” Applegate said. “We’re just glad to be playing in another championship. They’re always a lot of fun.”

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### **SOUTH GRAY 79, SOLOMON 46**

**South Gray 20 20 21 18 -- 79**

**Solomon 8 11 18 9 -- 46**

South Gray (23-2) – Penner 6-10 0-1 14, Deges 8-12 1-3 21, Salmans 0-1 1-2 1, Davis 1-3 0-0 2, Jantz 4-4 0-0 8, Winfrey 1-3 0-0 2, Lupercio 10-14 0-0 21, Dyck 3-6 1-2 7, Martin 0-1 1-3 1, Loewen 0-0 2-2 2. Totals 33-54 6-13 79.

Solomon (17-8) – Coup 4-6 0-0 10, Robomspn 0-1 0-0 0, Hastings 5-18 4-6 16, Hynes 7-12 1-2 15, Duryea 0-1 0-0 0, Baxa 1-2 0-0 2, Smith 1-2 1-2 3, Duran 0-3 0-0 0. Totals 18-45 6-10 46.

3-point goals—South Gray 7-14 (Penner 2-3, Deges 4-7, Davis 0-1, Winfrey 0-1, Lupercio 1-01, Martin 0-1), Solomon 4-14 (Coup 2-3, Robomspn 0-1, Hastings 2-7, Baxa 0-1, Duran 0-2). Rebounds—South Gray 28 (Lupercio 7), Solomon 26 (Hynes 11). Assists—South Gray 20 (Deges 5), Solomon 10 (Krause, Coup, Hastings 2 each). Fouls—South Gray 15, Solomon 12. Fouled out—None.