

Bulldogs outgun Stoney Creek, 88-70

By Patrick Walters

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ROMEO — Courtesy a barrage of 3-pointers and three momentum-altering dunks in the second quarter, the Bulldogs breezed through Rochester Hills Stoney Creek on Tuesday, earning an 88-70 victory in their district quarterfinal.

Romeo senior forward Doug Sharples

rim-rocked the Cougars in the second quarter, stuffing in three, two-handed

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jams in transition as part of a raucous 13-6 Romeo run that extended the Bulldog lead to 15 points with two minutes remaining in the first half.

The 6-foot-4 Sharples, along with the Romeo starting frontcourt of 6-foot-6 senior center Jake Schirmer and 6-foot-4 junior forward Blake Cushingberry kept Stoney Creek at bay for the duration of the game, relegating the Cougars to a perimeter offense.

Stoney Creek poured in 11 3-point field goals on the night, but the Bulldogs didn't fare badly either from beyond the arc, connecting on nine 3-pointers, five of them from

Cushingberry.

"It's about ball movement and spacing," said Romeo coach Dale Teller on the Bulldogs' long-range game. "As long as you have those two things, your offense will look good and you'll make your shots."

Cushingberry finished with 19 points. Sharples, the high man for the Bulldogs, led with 21 and had 10 rebounds.

Junior guard Nick Kosovich added three 3-pointers of his own to complement a sound floor game with seven assists, one of which was a no-look-flip to Sharples from the Cougars' backcourt to set up his second dunk.

"That's what his job is. I don't care if Nick ever scores," Teller joked. "That's the best part of his game — he sees the floor so well; things that I can't see."

Seniors Brad Rydquist and Philip Swanson turned in excellent offensive performances for Stoney Creek, combining for eight three-pointers. Rydquist scored 22 and Swanson netted 23 in the loss.

But it was the Cougars' lack of interior size and the Bulldogs' aggressive guard play swung the game out of reach for Stoney Creek. The Cougars finish the season 12-9.

"That was a tough draw for us," said Stoney Creek coach Ken Belote. "We're a pretty good team, we just ran into a real good team tonight that was playing well."

With the win - their 20th of the season - the Bulldogs advance to play Troy on Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Teller said that in all likelihood, the Bulldogs will have to do so with Cushingberry. The junior forward was called for a traveling violation with 6:13 remaining in the third, and landed awkwardly on his left ankle after tangling his leg with a Stoney Creek defender. He is not expected to play Thursday against Troy, Teller said after the game.

In the early game at the Romeo district, Rochester Adams notched a come-from-behind overtime win against Rochester, keeping alive the possibility of a Romeo-Rochester Adams rematch in the district final. The Highlanders are the only team to beat Romeo this season.

Romeo 88, Stoney Creek 70

Romeo	19	21	26	22	88
Stoney Creek	12	12	17	29	70

ROMEO (20-1): Doug Sharples 21, Jake Schirmer 11, Nick Kosovich 13, Stephen Malburg 9, Blake Cushingberry 19, Brent Newsom 5, Joseph Wilson 2, Nathan Saliga 4, Tyler Armstrong 2, Ben Hessel 1, Richard Roth 1. Totals: 30 (9) 19-29.

STONEY CREEK (12-9): Brad Rydquist 22, Philip Swanson 23, Brendan Hunt 6, Andrew Schneider 2, Michael Schnurr 5, Griffin Hamood 6, Paul Knapp 3, Stephen Sharp 3. Totals: 23 (11) 13-19 70.