

To say the least, my week has been full of excitement! Have you ever heard the old saying “A game is not won or lost by one person but by the team”? How true that statement has become this week for anyone with ties to Miller Grove.

After winning the Regional Quarter-Finals basketball game against Bellevue last Tuesday night our Hornets traveled to Tyler on Friday and battled it out with Huckaby High School for bragging rights of winning the first game of the Regional Tournament. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the noon-time game that day but everyone told me it was a fight to the finish. The boys came up from behind and won the game by 2 points which caused them to advance one step farther toward the State Tournament. Their second game was slated for Saturday at 10 a.m. against the Roxton Lions. Anyone who has ever played Roxton knows they are one of the toughest teams in our part of the state.

As I drove down winding highway 69 Saturday on my way to the basketball game, I thought how proud everyone should be of our team. Even if they were to lose, this M.G. basketball team has come farther than any in the last 30 some-odd years. That is definitely bragging rights for the team members.

Upon pulling into the Tyler Junior College Campus parking lot, I saw familiar faces scampering into Wagstaff Gymnasium. The game was starting and of course I was late. As I rushed in the building and took my seat I was absolutely astonished at the amount of fans that were there to cheer for our Hornets. There was a plethora of people; young and old, friends and faculty, alumni and past coaches who all traveled to see “their” Hornets in the Regional Tournament. I would definitely say that was some hometown pride right there! Everyone was yelling to encourage our team as they ran up and down the court.

At the end of the first quarter, things looked pretty bleak for our Hornets. We were down by 10 points and it looked like Roxton was going to over throw our boys. Even with the lead that Roxton had, that didn't change the energy of our fans. The cheering section, which consisted of Mrs. Asheley Birchfield and Miss Lindsay Smith, was in rare form. Their efforts had been felt by the team while cheering on Friday, so this was no time for them to slack up on rooting for their home team.

At half-time, the Hornets were trailing by nine points with the score being 21 to 30. During the

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second half of the game it seems like the fans and the players both came alive with an extra surge of energy. Scores were nearly tied several times throughout the third quarter, which ended with a score of Miller Grove 37 and Roxton 41. With four fouls each for Logan Miller and Aaron Smith, the team had to be on their toes. The team's defense was strong and within minutes our Fighting Hornets had tied the game! As the crowd cheered our boys on to victory the score slowly increased in our favor. With virtually split seconds left on the clock Tyler Marler was fouled and made free-throw shots and Nathan George made a basket to end the game. The buzzer sounded and the roaring crowd went completely wild. The final score was Miller Grove 59, Roxton 55.

Never in my life have I seen or heard the amount of cheers, laughter, crying, hugs, congratulations and applause as I did at the finale of this game. Eagerly, a mass of people exited the bleachers and went down onto to the court to congratulate the victors! "OUR boys won! I can't believe it. ... We're going to State!" were the comments that were coming from everyone. Finally, all the months of training and hard work were all worth it to our players. They made it. They are advancing to state! Believe me, you have never seen excitement until you come face-to-face with a six-foot, five-inch junior classman named Patrick Covington who comes up to you drenched with sweat and hugs you so hard that you feel like a mouse that has been squished in a mouse trap! After he released me from the death grip, I thought that I might have a few broken ribs and possibly need crutches to make it off the court. Joking aside, the entire day was all in good fun.

The team received their trophy and one-by-one the young men cut the basketball net down from the goal, amid a frenzy of camera flashes. I felt somewhat like the paparazzi snapping photos of the once-in-a-lifetime event, trying to record some of the M.G. history in the making. The look on the boys' faces was priceless. You would have thought each one of them had won the lottery. Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, were being bombarded with everyone trying to be the first to let the community back home (and the world) know the good news. Everyone was trying to make plans on when and how to get to Austin for the team's next game. The next stop for our hometown heroes will be Friday at the Erwin Center in Austin where they will vie for the coveted rank of being named state champs. Congratulations to our Hornets and best of luck at the upcoming competition!

I'm proud to report that I am an uncle again! Owen Walker Darrow was born at 11:48 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 28, in Hunt Regional Medical Center in Greenville. He weighed 8 pounds, 1 ounce, and was 22 inches long. His parents are Bradley and Madison Darrow, and siblings are Savanna and Brody Darrow. The entire family is happy, healthy and home from the hospital.

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Happy birthday to Jerri (Byrd) Petty and Ruby Ann (Bishop) Ross on March 2, my dad Brett Darrow on March 5, Della (Wheat) Loane and Donna (Vititow) Asbill on March 7, and Heath McCraw on March 8.

As you travel the highways and byways don't forget that all roads lead back home and back to Miller Grove. Please send me any newsworthy information. My email address is brd_2@hotmail.com.