

# Flaming Arrows Take New York State 'AA' Title

Monday, March 22 By ADAM RONIS, NEWSDAY/MSG VARSITY



TROY, N.Y. - Meagan Doherty has played most of the season in pain. And after coming back from a partially torn left MCL on Jan. 5, the sophomore saved one of her best performances for the biggest game of the season.

Doherty scored 18 points and her senior sister, Kristen, had 22 to lead Sachem East to a 50-44 win over Clifton Park Shenendehowa last night in the state Class AA girls basketball championship game at Hudson Valley CC.

"I battled the injury and was always in pain," Meagan Doherty said. "I just fought through it, and look where it got us."

The Flaming Arrows have a bye into the state Federation Class AA final and will play the Christ the King-Bergtraum winner a week from Sunday.

"To come up here and not finish it off didn't feel right to me," said Kristen Doherty, who scored on a runner in the lane with 1:25 left to give the Arrows a 46-42 lead. "I knew in my head we had the best team."

Said Sachem East coach Matt Brisson, "All those Dohertys have a gene. When it's crunch time, they make big plays."

The Flaming Arrows shot 4-for-8 from the free-throw line to extend their lead to 50-42.

Sachem East (22-3) won despite falling behind by 10 points in the second quarter and shooting 8-for-24 from the foul line.

After Sachem East took a 12-3 lead, Shenendehowa went on a 25-6 run for a 28-18 halftime lead.

"We've been down before," Kristen Doherty said. "We're very good at staying relaxed and composed. That's really a key factor for us."

"We were playing a little nervous in the first half," Meagan Doherty said. "We put it behind us and knew we had 16 minutes to win a state championship."

"It was a larger deficit than we're used to," Kelsey Ferguson said. "We all pulled together and realized there's a whole other half to be played. We had a nice lead in the beginning and they came back, so there was no reason why we couldn't do the same."

She was right. Sachem East began the second half with a 13-2 run to go ahead 31-30.

Kristen Doherty hit a three-pointer with 6:13 left to give the Flaming Arrows a 38-36 lead. Meagan Doherty also made a three-pointer, but Emily Weber's three-pointer brought the Plainsmen (22-3) within 41-39.

Kristen Doherty made two free throws, but Weber sank another three-pointer. Caitlin Hopkins' free throw gave Sachem East a 44-42 lead with 3:31 left.

Sachem East shot 7-for-29 in the first half. The Flaming Arrows went 1-for-7 from the free-throw line in the second quarter and were outscored 14-4.

"They closed out on Kristen well," Brisson said. "They were basically giving up the middle and we didn't take advantage of it. We didn't shoot the ball well. There was a lot of frustration. They shot the ball very well. At halftime we said stay the course. The defensive end is where we dug in and took away easy looks from them."

After Sachem East got no points from anyone aside from the Doherty sisters in the first half, each starter scored in the first 3:54 of the second.

Sachem East opened the second half with a 6-0 run. Meagan Doherty hit a jumper, Ferguson scored on a drive and Caitlin Hopkins hit a layup to bring the Arrows within 28-24. After Weber scored, Meagan Doherty hit a three-pointer and Kristen Doherty fed Stephanie Burrow for a layup. Sachem East took the lead at 31-30 on Kristen Doherty's jumper with 3:22 left.

## **Doherty Sisters Spark Sachem East to LI 'AA' Title**

Saturday, March 13 By MARK MACYK, NEWSDAY/MSG VARSITY

Kristen Doherty had carried Sachem East for 31/2 quarters, but late in Friday night's Long Island Class AA girls basketball championship / state Southeast Regional final, she got a little help from her little sister.

Kristen Doherty scored 28 points and Meagan Doherty had all eight of her points in the fourth quarter as Sachem East held on to defeat Baldwin, 57-44, at Farmingdale State.

Sachem East will play Kingston or Mount Vernon in a state semifinal at 6:15 p.m. Friday at Hudson Valley CC in Troy.

"The whole game, I really wasn't getting looks, and I missed two big threes," Meagan Doherty said. "I knew eventually I just had to step up."

Baldwin's Shayna Gatling (19 points) completed a three-point play with six minutes remaining to cut her team's deficit to 45-40.

"Shayna came out and played great," Kristen Doherty said. "She wasn't going to lose by a lot. Last game as a senior, that's what you expect. You expect players to not want to leave anything behind."

But Meagan Doherty buried a three on the ensuing possession to put Sachem East up by eight again.

Two minutes later, a jumper by Baldwin's Katie Greene made it 50-44. Again it was Meagan Doherty who answered, this time with a long two-pointer. The sophomore drilled another three-pointer with 1:21 left to extend Sachem's lead to 55-44.

"That's what you can expect from Meagan," Kristen Doherty said. "She can be cold the entire game, but when you need her to step up and hit those shots, she'll always do it. I think she's the best spot-up three-point shooter on the Island."

Said Sachem East coach Matt Brisson: "That's our mode of operation. Whether it's Stephanie [Burrow] or Meagan, somebody always steps up. Kristen is a constant, Hops is a constant, but we're very fortunate to have several weapons that can come out when you need it most."

Burrow added 10 points and Hopkins had seven points and several big steals and blocks.

Baldwin kept it close with a fast-paced, balanced scoring attack and tenacious defense. Gatling, Courtney Jackson and Alex Hampton all provided tough defense on Kristen Doherty in the fourth quarter.

Said Baldwin coach Tom Catapano: "They played their hearts out and the better team won. They've got some special players over there. And I'm real proud of the kids on this team. They shouldn't hold their heads down. They played their hearts out."

Said Brisson, "They're outstanding. Our kids got tested early on. It's like being punched in the face early on in a fight and you gotta recover and come back. It doesn't surprise me. He's a great coach and he had his team prepared."

## Sachem East Wins Suffolk Class AA Title

FARMINGDALE, NY -- Every time Sachem East was hit with a potential knockout blow from North Babylon's Bria Hartley, someone had an answer. Hartley had a Suffolk championship game record and a career-high 51 points, but Sachem East got a balanced attack to stave off a phenomenal performance from the UConn-bound Hartley.

Boston College-bound Kristen Doherty had 24 points, 18 rebounds and eight assists, Caitlin Hopkins had 20 points and 12 rebounds and Kelsey Ferguson added 11 points and five steals for No. 2 Sachem East in a 72-69 win over top-seeded North Babylon in the Suffolk Class AA championship game last night before a crowd of 2,300 at Farmingdale State.

It was the third consecutive trip to the championship game for Sachem East and its first win in that span. Sachem East (18-3) will play Center Moriches at 1 p.m. tomorrow at Farmingdale State for the Suffolk overall championship and then play Baldwin for the Long Island Class AA championship at 7:30 p.m. next Friday at Farmingdale State.

"It feels better than I expected," Doherty said. "Bria played a phenomenal game. My team really stepped up."

Said Ferguson: "We just had to keep our composure. It was a huge team effort."

The game was billed as Doherty against Hartley; both were selected to be one of the 20 players for the Nike WBCA All-Star Game. But Doherty had more help, although Hartley did all she could to carry her team to victory. She surpassed her previous high of 43 points, which she did Monday in the semifinals. She finished with 1,978 career points.

Hartley hit a three-pointer with 1:10 left in the game to give North Babylon (18-3) a 68-67 lead. Sachem East

answered as Stephanie Burrow scored off a pass from Hopkins to give the Flaming Arrows a 69-68 lead with 52 seconds left.

Hartley hit 1 of 2 shots from the foul line with 47 seconds left to tie the score at 69. Doherty hit two free throws with 45 seconds left to give the Flaming Arrows a 71-69 lead. Hartley had the ball in her hands when the shot clock expired with 14 seconds left. Burrow went 1-for-2 from the foul line with nine seconds left to make it 72-69.

Sachem East led by 14 at 26-12 midway through the second quarter on a basket by Hopkins. But North Babylon closed the half on an 18-5 run to pull within 31-30. Hartley scored 14 points in the spurt and had 16 points in the quarter.

Sachem East went on an 11-2 run to take a 43-34 lead with 4:11 left in the third quarter. Sachem East led 51-41 going into the fourth quarter, but Hartley had 17 points in the final quarter.

"It's a magnificent performance by Bria," North Babylon coach Mike Petre said. "I feel bad for her. Her teammates didn't help her out enough."

It was the opposite for Sachem East. "The support on my team has been great," Doherty said. "If they play good defense on me, I trust that my teammate will hit a big shot. We just had to make sure when Hartley made a basket that we did."

Said Hopkins: "It took three years. It was an amazing game and it feels great to be one of the best teams on Long Island."



Kristen Doherty blocks a 3-point shot attempt by North Babylon's Bria Hartley