

Rice's Arias sinks the shot heard round Rose Hill Gym



Rice Mo Hicks became the first coach in CHSAA history to win six Class AA interesectional titles on Sunday. Photo by Baiju Thakkar

By Dylan Butler March 15, 2009

Durand Scott received all the accolades. The senior guard was named MVP of the CHSAA Class AA interesectional tournament and scored a game-high 27 points to help lead Rice to a 67-58 win over Christ the King in the 82nd annual title game at Fordham University's Rose Hill Gymnasium.

But the biggest shot of the game came from one of the most unknown players on the court Sunday as Scott Arias provided the late long-distance heroics for the Raiders.

"I think the biggest bucket came from a role guy, (Arias) hit the 3," Christ the King coach Joe Arbitello said. "That's the mark of a great team, stepping up and hitting big-time shots."

Ihsaan Davis knocked down a 3-pointer from in front of his own bench, his fourth of the game, and Christ the King, which trailed by as many as 15 in the third quarter, was down by just one, 56-55, with 2:44 left in the fourth.

The partisan Christ the King crowd exploded and the Royals were one defensive stop away from taking over the game.

Arias, though, made sure they didn't get that stop. With Scott at the top of the key, Christ the King sophomore guard Corey Edwards thought the Miami-bound senior would drive through the lane, so he hedged to his right, hoping to draw a charge.

Instead, Scott had the presence of mind to kick the ball out to his right where Edwards had left Arias wide open. The junior guard buried the critical 3-pointer and Rice extended its lead to 59-55 with 2:20 left.

"That really was the backbreaker right there," Edwards said.

Arias said the more attention Scott received, the better it was for him.

"Every team focuses on Durand because they think he's the main player," he said. "I guess they were focusing on him and he made the extra pass and I was open."

It wasn't the only time in the postseason Arias came up with a clutch 3-pointer. Against Molloy, he scored all 15 of his points from downtown as the Raiders cruised to a 96-64 victory in the quarterfinals.

And against All Hallows in the semifinals, Arias knocked down a pair of 3-pointers during a late 12-0 run that helped put the upset-minded Gaels away.

"As a junior I was trying to lead my team, too," he said.

On the biggest stage and in the biggest game of his high-school career, Arias again came up clutch from 3-point range.

"I feel good because we were only up by one and I wanted us to get a bigger lead," Arias said. "I knew if I had an opportunity to get that shot off, I knew I was going to make it."

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