

Bobcats edge Falcons for berth in final

By KYLE KOTECKI

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS ADVOCATE

CUSTER — The Brethren Bobcats basketball team survived a six-point fourth quarter to edge the Pentwater Falcons 50-48 in their Class D district semifinal matchup Friday night at Mason County Eastern.

After Bobcats' senior Michael Pettinato split a pair of free throws to give Brethren a two-point lead with 7.3 seconds remaining in the game, Pentwater guard Sam Wagner raced down the court and launched a 35-footer which clanged off the rim as the buzzer sounded, ending the Falcons' season and punching the

Bobcats' ticket to the district final.

"Pentwater came at us ready to play, that's for sure," Brethren head coach Jen Wojciechowski said. "They're a team that always makes me nervous because they always got some guys that are capable of doing really good things.

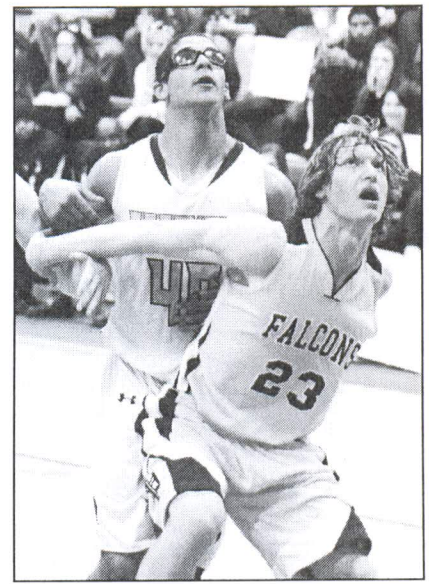
"Sam Wagner was our concern at the beginning, he was a concern at the middle and he was a concern at the end," she continued. "I told that boy he has nothing to hang his head down for because we didn't have an answer for him."

Wagner finished the night with a game-high 22 points, 18 of which came in the second half.

Brethren senior James Connolly was able to come up with some timely rebounds in the final stanza, and put in the go-ahead layup with 38 seconds left in the game. He finished the night with 14 points and nine boards.

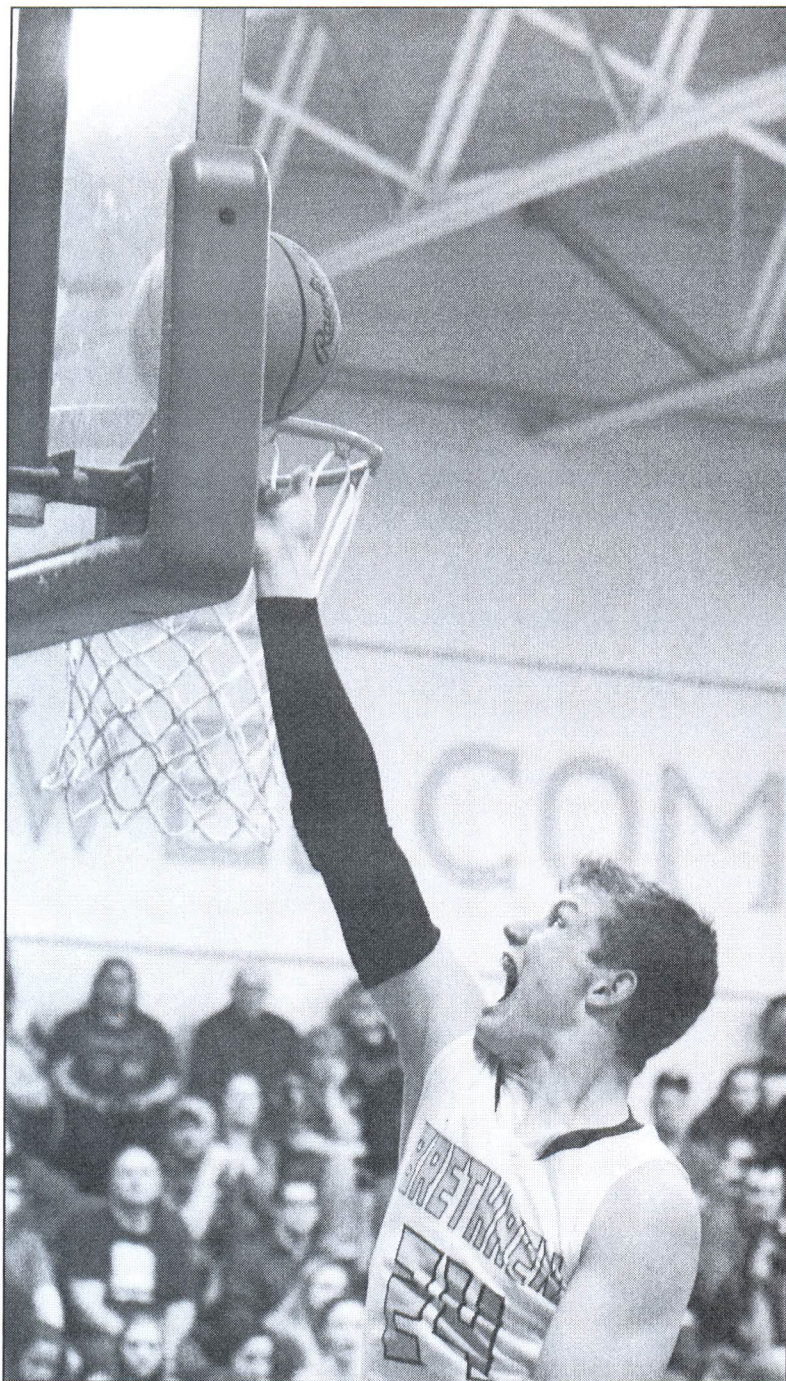
"We looked tired out there at times," Wojciechowski said. "We haven't played with a lot of energy our last couple of games. Hopefully the wind isn't out of our sails. Hopefully we're going to come back with a really solid performance (in the district final against Baldwin on Friday)."

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Brethren's James Connolly battles a rebound Wednesday night against Pentwater's Michael Pettinato. Brethren won the district semifinal.

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Brethren's Josh Riggs lays it in on Wednesday during the Bobcats' Class D district semifinal victory over Pentwater in Mason County Eastern.

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The Bobcats (15-7) came out of the locker room at halftime enjoying a 29-18 lead before the Falcons (7-14) went off for a 19-point third quarter, hitting five three-point shots.

"I thought we were very fortunate to get out of the situation we were in to-night," Wojciechowski said. "We didn't always use our heads to play basketball but when it's tournament time a win is a win and that's what I'm going to take it as."

Pettinato led the Bobcats in scoring with 16, while junior Josh Riggs had eight points to go with his eight boards and three blocks.

The start of the game saw both teams playing fairly even, with Breth-

ren holding a 15-12 lead after the first quarter.

The win will have the Bobcats returning to Mason County Eastern for a Class D district final matchup against the defending district champion Baldwin Panthers Friday night at 7 p.m. The Panthers beat Brethren by two and 10 points in their two regular season games this year.

"We played Baldwin really well both times that we played them," Wojciechowski said. "It's been close. That's what our guys really wanted: a third chance at them, because it's hard to beat a team three times in a row as (the close game against Pentwater) showed tonight."