

**GIRLS' BASKETBALL: FRANKLIN 70, CARLSBAD (CALIF.) 54**

## Franklin girls' basketball coach John Leighton earns

### 300th win, all part of Carlsbad's fulfilling tour to the Northeast

By **Ryan Martin** Globe Correspondent, Updated December 28, 2022, 9:11 p.m.

FRANKLIN — Scheduling a trip for an out-of-state tournament around the holidays is no small task.

That is particularly true for the girls' basketball team from Carlsbad, Calif., which had raised funds to play in a tournament in New Jersey. But in November, the school received a call that the games were canceled.

Coach Donna Huhn and the Lancers shifted their focus to New England and found a connection in Mansfield, with the annual Hearts for Hope Tournament.

“It was crazy and sporadic,” Huhn said. “We were just calling anybody and everybody in the Boston area.”

On Tuesday night, Carlsbad knocked off host Mansfield, 46-37, to earn a trip to Thursday's final against Westwood. But the Lancers were seeking another game. They found one with Franklin, another Hockomock League team.

Carlsbad was impressive in a 21-point second quarter, but the 15th-ranked Panthers pulled away in the second half for a 70-54 victory to give coach John Leighton with his 300th career win.

“[The game] kind of fell into our lap,” said Leighton. “[Carlsbad] set up the tournament with Mike Redding and Mansfield, and since they were looking for another game, I thought it would be a great chance for our girls to go up against this kind of competition.”

Franklin (3-1) sprinted to a 21-10 lead through eight minutes, but Carlsbad rallied behind the sharp shooting of senior Madison Huhn, the coach's daughter.

The Miami of Ohio commit scored 20 of her team's 21 second-quarter points, making six straight 3-pointers. Huhn, who starts along with her younger sister, Abby, finished with 32 points.

With its speed and the play of senior Katie Peterson (12 of her 21 points in the second half), the Franklin outscored Carlsbad, 44-23.

Despite the loss, Donna Huhn acknowledged the value of the experience for her 11-3 team.

“This is about team bonding, this is stuff they'll remember for the rest of their lives.” she said.

The Franklin players, meanwhile, were proud to play a part in their coach's milestone.

“I'm so happy for coach Leighton,” said Peterson. “He works extremely hard and puts so much effort into this team and all of the previous teams he has coached here at Franklin. ”

Leighton said he was honored to reach 300 with this team.

“It's the result of many years of hard work,” he said.