

OTHER SCHOOLS

## C2D12 championship: Ash Grove falls to Miller in final seconds

*A young Pirates team took district power Cardinals to the brink*



by Mary Ellen Chiles  
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Ash Grove reacts after falling to Miller in the final seconds in Saturday's Class 2 District 12 title game. (Photo by Mary Ellen Chiles)



Ash Grove Head Coach Bryan Dean reacts after his team gave up a foul to give Miller timeout, Ashlynn Helton hit both free throws to clinch the 54-53 win for the Cardinals.

ASH GROVE — With a one-point lead in the closing seconds, Ash Grove was on the edge of advancing to the Class 2 sectional round.

Miller wasn't ready to relinquish the crown.

The Cardinals' Ashlynn Helton drew a foul on the following possession with 4.1 seconds left and hit both free throws.

The Pirates hustled up the court and tossed up a shot from the free-throw line at the buzzer, but it was no good, and the Cardinals (19-7) captured their seventh consecutive district title.

### Difference makers

Ash Grove had three underclassmen in double figures, led by sophomore guard Millison Sapp's 19. Sophomore guard Bristol Lathrop added 13 and freshman guard Brooke Nicholson had 10.

### Play of the game

Lathrop hit two free throws with 4.8 seconds left to put Ash Grove up 53-52, before the Pirates committed a costly foul to send Helton to the line for the clutch free throws and the win.

### Coach's thoughts

**Bryan Dean (on losing close games this year):** "I wish I could have done something a little better to help them get one of these, and especially this one. These moments make the team hungry, but (wins) get you to the mountaintop a lot quicker."

**On the final foul that led to the game-winning free throws by Miller:** "We weren't supposed to foul. I should have called the timeout, but I thought the way (Miller) looked scrambled, I thought we had it."

## Players' thoughts

**Senior Cora Duit, on playing with her sister, freshman Alivia Duit, in her final game:** "It's not an opportunity many people get. We also got to play volleyball together — and now I'm running track."

## What's next?

Ash Grove finishes its season 17-9. Miller (19-7) travels to Marionville (20-7) on Tuesday, March 4, in the sectional round.



## **Mary Ellen Chiles**

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