

## **Red-hot Tolleson shoots past Pinnacle at MLK**

**By Les Willsey, Tribune**

No one expected the newly-instituted, 30-point mercy rule to come into play Monday afternoon when top-ranked Tolleson and No. 2 Pinnacle squared off in a rematch of last year's 5A Division II girls state championship basketball game.

Especially given the tight game the teams played last season for all the marbles (Tolleson won 59-57) and for the most part the same cast of players as last year on both sides.

But Tolleson's torrid shooting, especially from long range, and its overall play early dictated just such an occurrence as the Wolverines punished Pinnacle, 80-50, in one of five high school games played at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Classic at ASU's Wells Fargo Arena.

"That was the best quarter we've played all year," Tolleson coach Todd Nelson said of the Wolverines' opening stanza that saw them outscore Pinnacle, 28-7. "...We thought the first few minutes were going to be critical. We wanted to have focus and intensity."

Tolleson (16-4) was certainly focused shooting. The Wolverines made six 3s in the first period -- at least one by four different players. Tolleson shot 50 percent from the field for the game and 50 percent from 3-point range for the game (11-of-22).

"That was uncharacteristic of them," Pinnacle coach Jackie Clayton said. "They don't usually shoot that well from outside. There's been a lot of hype about this game for quite a long time. They had the adrenaline pumping."

Tolleson standout senior guard Rebecca Woodberry was on her game, scoring her season average of 25, including nine in the first period. Fellow senior Kalasia Green (17 points) and junior Syerra Davis (17 points) made for an uphill climb for Pinnacle.

The Pioneers (13-7) made up a little ground in the second period by turning up the pressure with a trapping defense. They trailed at halftime, 42-26.

A 13-0 run over the first four minutes of the third period by Tolleson and sparked by Davis and Woodberry extinguished any Pinnacle hopes of a rally.

"We didn't have a very good December," Nelson said. "We're playing more team-oriented basketball now. It's making a difference."

Monday's loss was the first this season by Pinnacle to a 5A-II team in Arizona. Tolleson has suffered losses to three out-of-state schools in the Nike Tournament of Champions I.

It's only other loss was to 5A-I Hamilton.

Junior forward Aley Rohde led Pinnacle with 13 points and freshman guard Sydney Wiese added nine points.

In the other girls game played Monday at MLK, St. Mary's used a 21-8 advantage in the second period to knock off Xavier, 70-50, in a battle of 5A-I ranked teams. St. Mary's entered the game ranked No. 3 and Xavier was No. 5.

Shilpa Tummala led St. Mary's with 17 points, Aliyan Dickson added 14 points and Cortnee Walton chipped in 11. Annie Dolan led Xavier with 11 points.