

## 61-58 Victory Gives Smyrna Season Title

Smyrna captured the county single-A season title Friday night at Newport in a 61-58 overtime game that proved more exhausting to most spectators than to the players.

The Hawks lost to Smyrna on the Blue Devils' home court on Jan. 7 by 74-64, and went into Friday's game

determined to make a better showing. They opened with a fast-moving attack to mount a 15-12 lead over Smyrna at the end of the first period.

Both teams scored 18 points in the second quarter. The Hawks increased their lead to 4 points in the third period, outscoring the Devils 12 to 11.

Newport continued its onslaught late into the fourth period. With three minutes remaining, the Hawks led by 7 points. Smyrna recovered from the see-saw battle to tie the Hawks and take a 4-point lead with 28 seconds left.

The game was far from over, however. Sammy Lilly, Newport's scoring ace, with 28 points, was fouled with about 20 seconds to go. He sank both free throws to put the Hawks within 2 points of Smyrna. The Blue Devils gained possession of the ball, but were unable to score. One second remained when forward Ray Avery for Newport sank an outside jump shot to tie the game at 46 all and send the game into overtime.

But the Blue Devils dominated the overtime, scoring 5 points to the Hawks' 2. Smyrna forward Danny Gillikin made the difference. He sank a field goal and two free throws during the overtime period. Forward David Bailey tossed in another free throw for the Devils.

Top man for Smyrna, guard Joe Willis, with 13 points, fouled out early in the overtime. He was joined on the sidelines by David Garner, Newport forward.

Also scoring for Smyrna were Gillikin and Bailey, 13 each; Linwood Parker, 8; and Norris Nelson, 4. Ray Avery got 11 for the Hawks; David Garner, 7; Leon Murdoch, 6; Jimmy Aycock, 4; and Skip Johnson, 2. Smyrna picked up 15 points in 21 shots from the free-throw line for 74 per cent, to Newport's 10 of 21 for 49 per cent.

Although no figures were available, Newport's scoring percentage from the floor was slightly higher than the Blue Devils'.

According to Newport fans, "It's no disgrace for anybody to lose one like that." The Blue Devils were well pleased with the victory, too. It was Newport's best rebounding game of the season, according to coach Eugene Edwards, with Lilly, Avery and Garner doing the honors. Leon Murdoch and Lilly were the home team's outstanding defenders.

Mr. Willis turned in probably his best performance of the season for Smyrna. The stocky guard kept the Devils in the game with a series of deadly jump shots, and scrambled on defense to stop an inspired Newport squad. Gillikin and Bailey were equally tough on defense. Gillikin, who proved his worth as a clutch player, hit 7 for 7 from the charity stripe.

The victory gives Smyrna a 12-3 record and a season title. The Hawks' record to date is 8-5. The teams will meet again in post-season tournament play.