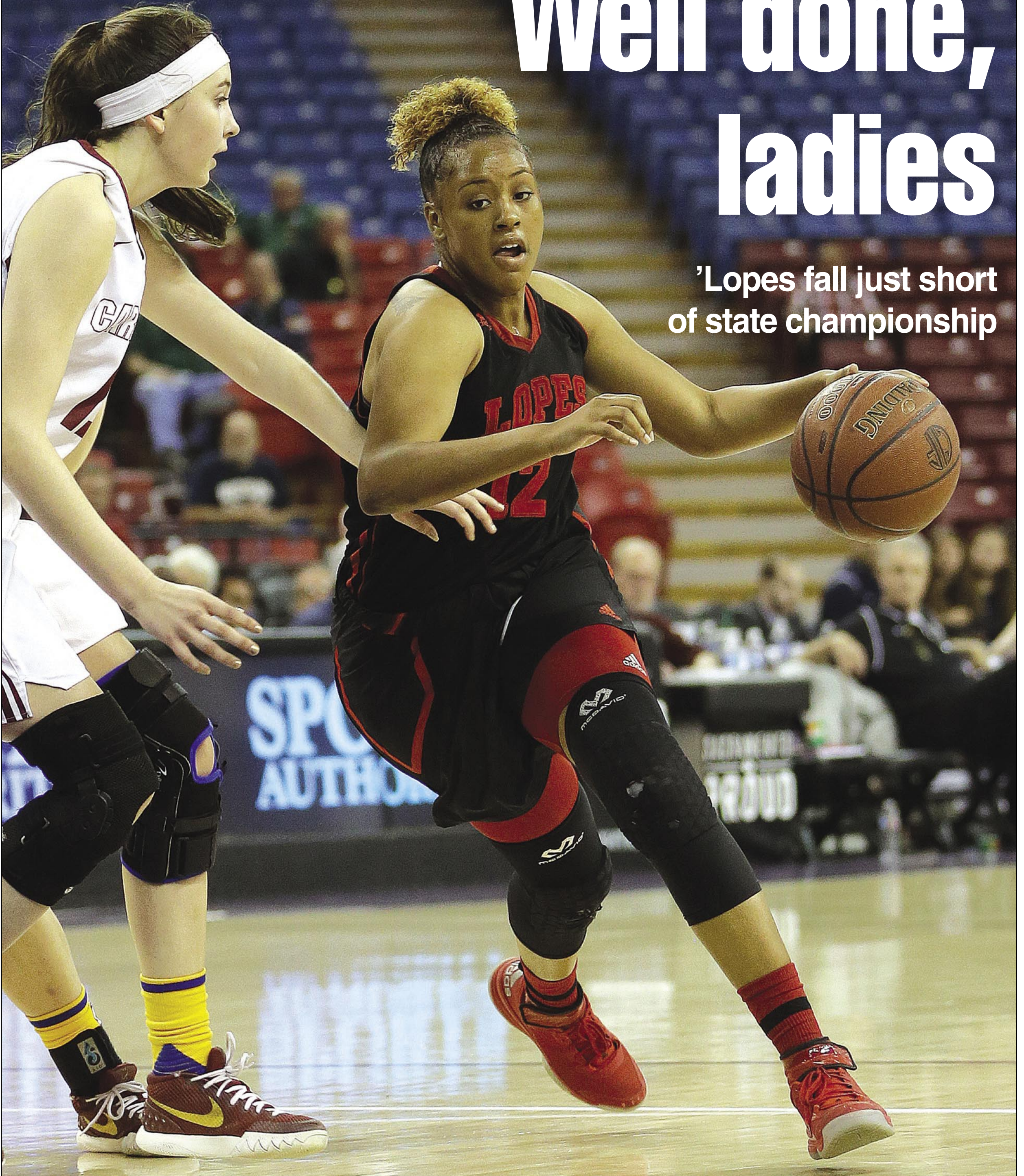




## CIF STATE DIVISION IV TITLE GAME: CARDINAL NEWMAN 39, ANTELOPE VALLEY 37

# Well done, ladies

’Lopes fall just short of state championship



Associated Press

**SO VERY CLOSE** — Antelope Valley’s Tylan Price, right, goes to the basket against Cardinal Newman’s Hailey Vice-Neat during the second half of the CIF State Division IV high school basketball championship game on Saturday at Sleep Train Arena in Sacramento. Down two in the game’s final seconds, the Antelopes had a chance to tie or win the game. They, however, were unable to convert and fell against Cardinal Newman 39-37.

By **MERISA JENSEN**  
 Valley Press Associate Sports Editor

**SACRAMENTO** — The Antelope Valley girls basketball team’s historic run in the CIF State Division IV playoffs came up just short in the championship game with a 39-37 loss to Cardinal Newman at Sleep Train Arena in Sacramento on Saturday morning.

“They did everything I asked,” AV coach Deon Price said. “Of course, we would have liked to finish with a ‘W,’ but just getting here, overcoming a lot of things that we have to just get this far, hat’s off to my girls.”

Price hoisted the runner-up trophy proudly with captains Tylan Price and Morgan Bizzell after the game.

“We’ve done some things this year that have not been done ever, so that in itself is a beautiful feeling,” Deon Price said. “Something to build on for the future.”

The Antelopes (30-3) had opportunities to put the game out of reach, getting stop after stop defensively in the fourth quarter, allowing just three points to the Cardinals (31-5).

But five missed free throws down the stretch and several missed baskets didn’t help their cause.

**“I THINK IT HURTS A LITTLE BIT MORE, BECAUSE JUST TO KNOW THE MINUTE THAT WE HAD, WE COULD HAVE ACTUALLY DONE SOMETHING TO MAKE A CHANGE. WE HAD A CHANCE TO WIN.”**

— Antelope Valley girls basketball senior Morgan Bizzell, following her team’s down-to-the-wire defeat in the CIF State Division IV title game

“We made a few mistakes down the stretch,” Deon Price said. “We missed about six free throws, a couple of layups, a couple of missed assignments on defense.”

After Cardinal Newman missed two free throws with 7.4 seconds remaining, Tyler Smith quickly pushed the ball down the court to try for a game-tying shot. But she was met by the long arms of Cardinal Newman’s 6-foot-5 center Lauren Walker and that was the end.

“I’m a little heartbroken right now,” said Smith, who earned the pursuing excellence award for good sportsmanship after the game. “I was just trying to push the ball up the court and I think I didn’t use my better judgment. I just want to say I’m sorry to my team that I let them down.”

Bizzell replied to Smith: “You didn’t let us down.” Walker had seven blocks in the game, four in the second half, as well as 11 rebounds and four points.

“One of the things (I was thinking) was, ‘Don’t foul,’” Walker said about the final play. “I’m happy that I went straight up. I didn’t think I was actually going to get it, but I tipped it.”

Knowing they were that close to winning hurt, but also helped the Antelopes.

“I think it hurts a little bit more, because just to know the minute that we had, we could have actually done something to make a change,” Bizzell said. “We had a chance to win.”

The Antelopes caused the Cardinals to turn over the

ball 12 times, but they could only muster four points off those opportunities. Cardinal Newman picked up seven points off of AV’s seven turnovers.

“We left a couple of girls wide open and they really took advantage of it,” Deon Price said.

Throughout the playoffs, the Antelopes have had their strongest game in the second half. But on Saturday, they went cold in the second half, shooting 21.7% (5-for-23) from the field. From the third to fourth quarter, they went 9:21 without scoring.

“Those kinds of things hurt you and they were able to capitalize,” Deon Price said. “It seemed like their basket was a little bit bigger on their end than our end for some reason.”

After getting six points off of second-chance shots in the first half, the Antelopes got zero in the second half as Cardinal Newman focused on rebounding.

“One thing that we really did is we focused on getting defensive rebounds and making sure that they did not get any second-chance buckets,” Walker said.

Antelope Valley had a much stronger showing in the first half, taking a 24-19 lead into halftime.

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