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**[Banker, GI dish out another title](#)**

By Doug Smith Niagara Gazette

SANBORN — Kallie Banker, duchess of dealers, slipped Cassie Oursler a deuce from the bottom of the deck and Grand Island's defending Section VI Class A girls champions raked in the jackpot, a 44-43 victory over valiant Hamburg in the Class A-1 championship at Niagara County Community College Saturday.

A big, enthusiastic crowd equally divided among Banker-Thankers and Hamburg Helpers saw a breathtaking battle, the lead changing hands twice in the last eight seconds. It was by no means artistic, but a masterpiece nonetheless.

In a more pedestrian "daycap," Pioneer rounded up East Aurora 40-22 for the Class A-2 title. Pioneer and the Vikings collide at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at NCCC for the overall A title.

Only once, briefly, did as many as seven points separate the Bulldogs and Vikings, who led 42-40 after Stephanie Knight's free throw with 37 seconds remaining.

Hamburg's Joelle Kadi missed on a drive but as they so often did, the shorter Bulldogs recovered a long rebound. They worked it around to it to 5-foot-4 Sam Villarini, just across the 3-point border. Swish. Hamburg, behind since the opening seconds, now led 43-42, 8.6 seconds left.

With a foul to give, Hamburg went after Banker, knocking her down, not flagrantly, but hard. After several seconds she arose, uncharacteristically sobbing.

Time remaining, 5.1 seconds. Banker inbounded to Oursler. As two Bulldogs rushed to defend Banker, Oursler turned and scored, drawing a foul, besides.

Oursler didn't complete the three-point play, probably a blessing for the Vikings, as with three seconds remaining, Hamburg couldn't organize a play off the rebound scramble and Grand Island walked off a winner.

"I was the diversion on that play," said Kallie Banker, still choked up 15 minutes after being felled.

"We haven't run that play all year," said coach Jenepher Banker. "Last year, with the experienced team we had, they'd have run that without looking to the bench. This year, we had to draw it up."

While all contributed to the Viking victory — Megan Karpie had two slick assists to hold off the 'Dogs halfway through the fourth and Grace Olzewski two key baskets in the early going — Kallie Banker's performance begged description.

Said East Aurora Coach Gary Schuturm, "We would have to get her out of sync somehow, but I haven't a clue how we would do that."

Banker scored 15 and dealt nine assists, including the finale, but that didn't even begin to define her impact. One pass for a third-quarter basket seemed to penetrate the Hamburg defense like a slalom skier. Many of her missed shots were designed to hang on the rim to be plucked like fresh apples by the 6-3 Oursler. In foul trouble, she managed an all-ball block in the third, and a flip to Knight late in the game seemed like two for sure until the basket itself spat it back out.

Coach Banker didn't want to puff her up, but had to admit:

"She was in refuse-to-lose mode today."

TOSS-UPS: N-Trip did itself proud in its debut as host, Athletic Director Rob McKeown himself stepping in at the microphone "due to circumstances beyond our control" ... The gym, though, seems to be in two different time zones, with clocks on opposite walls at least 12 minutes apart ... While recorded, the National Anthem was impressive with plenty of drumrolls ... Hamburg was called for only one foul in the first 15 minutes as the officials, generally, let the girls play the game.