A second-half surge propelled Lassen College's men's basketball team past Solano in the first round of the California Community College Northern Regional Playoffs Friday, Feb. 23. Leading 28-24 at the half, the No. 14 seed Cougars (18-13) beat No. 19 Solano on the glass and from the free throw line in the second half to post a 71-57 home victory.

The win pushed Lassen into the second round to face No. 3 Santa Rosa on the road or No. 30 College of the Redwoods at home Wednesday, Feb. 28. An opponent could not be determined at press time.

Tip off is set for 7 p.m.

A second-round win would put Lassen up against No. 6 Foothill or No. 11 Reedley this weekend.

Against Solano, the Cougars jumped out to a 12-2 lead before the Falcons fought back to tie the score at 22-22. Lassen then trailed momentarily, but regained the lead and kept Solano at bay until it pulled away late in the game.

Neamoubi Mickle and Dean Browne were too much for Solano to handle. The two enabled Lassen to quickly establish an inside game and retain a lead courtesy of perimeter shooting.

Browne led the way with 21 points and nine rebounds. Caleb Ross hit three treys and finished with 15 points. Dante Ray fueled his 12 points with a pair of three-pointers. Mickle had 10 points and 10 rebounds, while Fred Blue keyed the offense, dishing out nine assists, scoring eight points and ripping down five rebounds.

The Cougars attempted 21 free throws compared to Solano's six.

Lassen, directed by second-year head coach Fred Chmiel who guided the Cougars to a second-place finish in the GVC last year, earned a first-round home game by sharing the Golden Valley Conference crown with Shasta.