

Clarenceville ousted by ranked Spartans

By Mike Stewart
staff writer

Step right up, folks. For his next act, Redford Bishop Borges coach Mike Fusco and his band of high-ranked Spartans will repeat the success of guard Shawn Respect, attempt to make Detroit Benedictine disappear from post-season play.

The 18-3 Spartans beat Livonia Clarenceville soundly in the first round of the state tournament, 72-54, on Saturday, March 10. But in tonight's second round, also at Borges, the Spartans face a much tougher test in a 7:30 p.m. matchup against 12-7 Benedictine.

The leaped, 24-point win over the 7-11 Trojans was not easily coming. One can only wonder just how many rats the Respective Spartans can pull out of their collective hats.

For one night, anyway, it didn't matter. The Spartans put an end to Clarenceville's season by simply wearing down the outmanned, and outlasted, Trojan squad.

CLARENCEVILLE tried to keep the pace slow at the outset and did an admirable job of it. The Trojans scored 10 points at the end of the first quarter, 18-8, the Trojans climbed to within one, 14-13, halfway through the second period.

The Spartans, however, finished the quarter on a 12-1 run, and that pretty much put the Trojans to sleep.

The Spartans increased their 23-11 half-time lead to 23 points at the end of three quarters, 46-23, after the Trojans converted just one third-quarter field goal. Guard Artie Brown earned 12 seconds of personal time and finished with 14.

In the third quarter, Borges forward duo comprised of Lamar Westbrook and Randy White played well, hitting six of their nine attempts from the field and adding 11 rebounds. White finished with game-high 23 points (17) and rebound (12). And strong inside play is just what Fusco needs.

"We're concentrating on our inside game a little more now. We're trying to collectively pick up our game to compensate for Shawn's absence," Fusco

basketball

said. "We're still trying to figure out our new roles a little bit."

FUSCO noted that a mishap such as Respect's knee injury is hard to take at any time during the season, but at this late date it becomes a toughie.

"It's difficult after playing with him for 18 games than not having him in the lineup," he said. "It's going to take a little time to adjust to that. The problem is that the environment and we don't have time to adjust."

Respect was due to have his knee diagnosed on Wednesday. Fusco wasn't setting his hopes high for Respect's return this year.

First-year Trojan coach Rob White, meanwhile, could only look to next year.

"I was pleased with the kids' effort this year," he said. "They never gave up. I know that's a cliché, but it's true."

Clarenceville didn't have a player score in double figures. Senior Derrick Herr led with eight points and six rebounds.

WHITE SAID a new mindset takes place before Clarenceville can turn its program around. "We lacked a little bit of toughness. The kids don't believe the team can win because they've come out on the short end so often."

White said that plan is on correcting that. "We're going to develop a good, solid foundation — a lot of leagues and camps — that will prepare the junior high kids, teach them fundamentals. In the past they haven't had that. If you're teaching them the basics at this level, you're in trouble."

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