

Clarenceville ousted by ranked Spartans

By Mike Stewart
staff writer

Step right up, folks. For his next act, Redford Bishop Borgess coach Mike Fusco and his band of highly-ranked Spartans will, without the services of guard Shawn Heppert, attempt to make Detroit Benedictine disappear from post-season play.

The 18-3 Spartans beat Livonia Clarenceville soundly in the first round of district play Tuesday at Borgess, 67-43. But in tonight's second round, also at Borgess, the Spartans face a much tougher test in a 7:30 matchup against 12-7 Benedictine.

The lopsided, 24-point win over the 7-14 Trojans was hardly consoling. One can only wonder just how many rabbits the Respect-less 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 so admirably for it. Trailing by just two points at the end of one quarter, 10-8, 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 finished the Trojans for the night. The Spartans increased their 18-14 half-time lead to 23 points at the end of the third quarter, 42-23, after the Trojans converted just one third-quarter field goal.

Guard Artie Brown earned 12 second-half points, and finished with 14. In the first half, the Borgess 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 17 in both points (17) and rebounds (12). And strong inside play is just what Fusco needs.

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

basketball

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

FUSCO NOTED that a mishap such as Heppert's knee injury is hard to take at any time of the season, but at this late stage it becomes even tougher.

"It's difficult after playing with him for 13 games then not having him in the lineup," he said. "It's going to take a little time to adjust to that. The problem is, this is a tournament and we don't have time to adjust."

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

"We're pretty much resigned to the fact that he's not coming back," said the Borgess coach. "But basketball is a team game, and we're still a team. That won't stop us now."

First-year Trojan coach Hob 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 did not have a player score in double figures. Senior Derrick Herd led with eight points and six rebounds.

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

White said that he plans on correcting that. "We're going to develop a good, solid feeder system -- summer 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."

Thurston shocks Hawks, 67-46

By Brad Emons
Staff writer

Redford Thurston put it all together Monday, stunning Farmington Harrison in the first round of the Class B district basketball tournament at Redford Bishop Borgess High, 67-46.

The win by the Eagles (15-6), the third place team in the Tri-River League, may not have surprised some, but the margin of victory certainly had to turn a few heads.

Harrison (15-6), co-champs of the Western Division in the Western Lakes Activities Association, seemed to be the favorite after coming off an impressive 72-54 victory Saturday over rival North Farmington in WLLA consolation playoff final.

"We've had some big wins this season -- Taylor Kennedy and Taylor Truman (Tri-River co-champs) -- both at home," said Thurston sixth-year coach Mike Schuette. "This was a big one no doubt, but really it's been a season of big wins."

Thurston picked the right time and the right place to catch Harrison flat.

The Eagles put on a clinic in running their half-court offense, while minimizing their mistakes.

THURSTON LED from start to finish -- 13-4 after one quarter, 30-21 at intermission and 45-29 after three quarters.

Guard Danny Pertulla, a 5-9 junior, spearheaded the victory, scoring 15 of his game-high 19 points in the



JIM JAGOFF/Staff photographer
Mill Coleman dribbles around Thurston's Justin McEwin in district play.

opening half.

He hit three triples during the first 12 minutes.

"I could just see what was developing on defense," Pertulla said. "When they'd go down and double-team, I just wanted the ball because I felt confident I could shoot it."

Pertulla also said a trip by him and his teammates to Saturday's Harrison-North game proved to be beneficial.

"We didn't know much about them," he said. "But we were able to

pick up some the stuff they run in their offense and see what they'd do with their press. By the time the game was over Coach [McEwin] picked out all the guys we were going to guard. We had a pretty good idea."

One key matchup had Thurston's 6-1 long-armed Justin McEwin checking Harrison's high-scoring junior forward Andy Smith.

"We talked to Justin and we told him it doesn't matter if you score," Schuette said. "His sole job was to keep their scorer from shooting and popping out where he likes to get the ball near the three-point area."

Smith, who averages 20 points per game, was held to just two in the first half.

HE FINISHED with 12, hitting a pair of three-pointers early in the fourth quarter to pull the Hawks to within 14 points, 49-35. But it was not Smith's night (4 of 13 from the field), or the rest of the Hawks for that matter.

Thurston was able to withstand any type of Harrison run by patiently executing its half-court offense.

The Eagles also made 14 of 15 free throws during the final eight minutes.

And while Harrison was at a loss without Smith's scoring, the Eagles countered with a balanced attack.

Senior center D.J. Kellough and senior point-guard Jason Muller, added 12 and 11 points, respectively. McEwin and forward Jeremy Courval contributed 10 and nine, respectively. Guard Jamie Zaleski added

six off the bench.

"Thurston found the open man and controlled the basketball," said Harrison coach Mike Teachman. "Their guards are not what you call expert ball-handlers, but they don't make mistakes."

"They deserved everything they did."

HARRISON shot only 27 percent from the floor (15 of 54) and committed 15 turnovers, to Thurston's 10.

"We did not play with much vim and vigor," Teachman said. "And otherwise we stood around. Just not intensely around the basket. And when we tried to make a run (in the third quarter), Kellough comes up, three big baskets in a row."

Pertulla said rebounding and defense were major factors in the win.

"The key was to play good defense," Pertulla said. "And by taking their big guys off the boards, that helped us a lot."

The first half we did not do quite as well on the boards as we wanted to," Schuette said. "At halftime, we talked about concentrating on boxing out better."

Despite the size disadvantage, the Eagles snared and now find themselves one win away from a berth in the district championship.

The Eagles will try and guard against a letdown when they face winless Detroit Renaissance (0-17) at 6 p.m. The second game of the double-header (7:30 p.m.) pits host Borgess (18-3) against Detroit Benedictine (12-7).

Kummer paces CC to opening-round win

By Ray Setlock
staff writer

Redford Catholic Central's Bobby Kummer tossed his fist in the air and sprinted to the locker room Monday, savoring the Shamrocks' 75-55 victory over Detroit Henry Ford in the first round of the Class A basketball districts at Catholic Central.

Kummer, a 6-foot-6 sophomore center, sparked the Shamrocks with 23 points and 11 rebounds. He also dished off three assists.

"This is a big win for our team," Kummer said.

"It was a matter of pride. Too many people were getting down on us and we had to go out and prove to them that we could put together a good game and we did it tonight."

The Shamrocks improve their record to 5-16, while Henry Ford concludes its season at 6-8.

We wanted to slow the tempo down against CC," Henry Ford coach Gerald Weatherspoon said. "We just couldn't do it. That Kummer kept getting rebounds and controlling the glass."

CC JUMPED to leads of 15-6 and 20-10 in the first quarter, but the Trojans narrowed the margin to 22-15 in the second quarter and 26-25 at halftime.

"I think when they took those large leads early in the game, we had a little trouble getting things back together," Weatherspoon said. "But I think we did a nice job coming back in the second quarter."

Just two minutes into the third quarter, Henry Ford took a 27-26 lead, its first of the game.

"When the game got close, our guys stayed tough and made the best of their opportunities," CC coach Bernie Holowicki said.

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