

Salem stays close for half in loss to Pershing

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A strong first half allowed Plymouth Salem's basketball team to retain a measure of pride despite a 16-point loss Tuesday in a Class A boys regional game. The Rocks can take comfort in knowing they forced heavily-favored Detroit Pershing to play the second half to beat them. Pershing was only up four points at halftime but distanced itself from Salem in the third quarter and eventually won 84-68 at Southfield-Lathrup.

The Doughboys (20-2) increased their defensive pressure in the second half, caused Salem to make more turnovers and scored a bunch of points in transition.

"We picked them up full court and went to a zone press and a half-court trap," Pershing coach Arnold Nevels said. "We thought, if we picked them out deeper and kept the game in the back court more, we could disrupt their offense."

After Salem's Matt McCaffrey scored the first basket of the third quarter to put the Rocks within two, 41-39, the Doughboys went on a 16-2 run that

BASKETBALL

extended in the fourth quarter, 18 of 25. The Doughboys' lead was 80-57 at that point. Johnson and guard Karl Duckett contributed 14 points apiece to the Pershing effort, and Mancel added 10. The Doughboys made 36 of 76 shots overall for 47 percent.

McCaffrey, a 6-foot-7 senior, scored a game-high 28 points for the Rocks. Senior Andy Kocloski tossed in nine, senior Ryan Nimmerguth and junior Jeff Hunt eight apiece.

Salem (13-10) matched Pershing point for point in the first half. The Rocks advanced the ball with authority against light pressure and got the ball in the low post to McCaffrey, who had 17 points in the first half, including eight of 10 free throws in the second quarter.

"We were playing more their way (in the first half)," Nevels said. "We were trying to double, and they were getting the ball to the open man."

In the second half, we turned up the defense and took away their second shots. They ran those back cuts, and we took them out of court. Turning up the defense was the most important thing."

"If you don't, then you're taking three and, if you don't make them, they're going to be slapping at the other end, which is what happened."

After missing its first three shots of the second half, Pershing made its next seven in a row and, during a stretch that

thanks to Kip Stozek's basket at the third-quarter buzzer. The Warriors owned the fourth quarter. Dawood, who sank five 3-pointers for the second straight game, scored eight points and Western made all 10 of its free-throw attempts.

Chris Howder scored 18 points for Western and Brandon Routhier added six points.

Robert Banks paced Port Huron with 20 points.

Salem made 12 of 31 shots in the second half and shot .376 for the game (24-of-64). The Rocks made seven of 19 three's, including three by Kocloski, and the Doughboys six of 27.

McCaffrey was 12-of-17 at the line and Salem 13-of-19 as a team. Pershing sank six of seven free throws.

"We ran the high-low game and got the ball inside in the first half," Brodie said. "We didn't have that in the second half."

"We were taking the 10-foot jumper instead of taking it to the basket. Their big guys had something to do with that, however."

"Late in the game we had to come out of our offense. You can't do what you want and then you're rushing shots. Once they had the third-quarter run, then it was hard to dictate."

With the season now ended, Brodie expressed great pride in

the 1999-00 Rocks.

"I told the kids I'm more proud of them than any team because of the adversity they came through," he said. "We lost a lot of close games, but they never quit and kept coming back."

"We won three championships (holiday tournament, division and district) and played for four. You can't ask more out of a high school team."



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quarter.

"They really came out and played hard," Stanczak said of the Big Reds. "They attacked our press and they had around a nine-point lead at one point in the second quarter. We were able to cut it two by halftime, but I wasn't real happy. They outscored us 17-10 in the first half."

Western outscored Port Huron 19-16 in the third quarter and managed to take a 51-50 lead

extended in the fourth quarter, 18 of 25. The Doughboys' lead was 80-57 at that point. Johnson and guard Karl Duckett contributed 14 points apiece to the Pershing effort, and Mancel added 10. The Doughboys made 36 of 76 shots overall for 47 percent.

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