

4th-quarter charge leads to easy Salem win

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

There's nothing quite like an 18-0 fourth-quarter run to jump-start a basketball team with a dead battery.

That's what Plymouth Salem used Tuesday night to spark its 56-38 victory over Livonia Churchill. The Rocks clung to a narrow 37-34 lead less than two minutes into the fourth quarter before tightening the defensive screws on the outmanned Chargers and outgearing the visitors 19-4 down the stretch.

Salem (2-8 overall, 2-2 in the Western Lakes Activities Association) doubled its season victory total with the win. Churchill dropped to 2-8 overall and 1-3 in the WLA.

"We came out flat tonight," sighed Churchill coach Rick Austin. "Even though we closed to within three

points in the fourth quarter, I never really thought we were in the game. When you come out flat, you don't dive for loose balls, you don't run and you don't see the floor well."

"We're not the kind of team that has a bunch of superstars who are going to win games for us. We have to come out and work hard for four quarters or we're not going to win. My hat is off to Plymouth Salem. They played hard for 32 minutes tonight."

Salem coach Bob Brodie said he was happy with his team's intensity level — at least for three-quarters of Tuesday's game.

"We came out of the blocks well (Salem led 24-5 two minutes into the second quarter), but we panicked a little bit in the second quarter and let them back into the game," Brodie said. "This league is tough in that you have

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to play four quarters most nights to come away with a win.

"Tonight we were fortunate because we only played three decent quarters."

Salem was paced by a trio of players on the offensive end. Nick Tochman topped the scoring ledger with 16 points. Sophomore David Hoeking clipped in with 14 and Jeff Haar added 11.

Tochman played a great game inside for us," Brodie said. "I was also pleased with the way our sophomore point guard, Kevin Savitzkie, played. He doesn't do a lot of things statistically, but he played a steady offensive game and we had him matched up against their top offensive threat on defense."

Senior guard Will Pendergrase was the lone Charger to break into double figures, netting 16.

"Will has really stepped up for us this year," Austin said. "He's been our go-to guy most of the season and he's been solid."

Salem solved Churchill's full-court pressure with ease in the first quarter and exploded to an early 16-2 lead. The Rocks improved their advantage to 24-5 with 6:10 left in the first half on a fast-break lay-up from Haar.

Following a time-out, Churchill mounted a comeback that got it back into the game at halftime. Led by Pendergrase and a smothering defense, the Chargers put together a 15-2 run late in the second quarter to cut their deficit to 28-20 at the intermission.

Salem led 35-28 after three quarters, but saw its tenuous lead shrink to 37-

34 when Pendergrase nailed a twisting jumper in the lane with 6:25 to go.

Unfortunately for Churchill, Pendergrase's bucket was the last one the Chargers would contest for over five minutes as the Rocks put the game away with a series of fast-break lay-ups and inside power moves. Tochman was the top gun during the onslaught, accounting for seven points. Haar dished out three assists and had two steals during the game-deciding 18-0 run that ended with Salem up 55-34.

Salem hit 23-of-54 field goals (42 percent) and nine-of-13 free-throw attempts (69 percent). Churchill was ice cold from the field, sinking just 16-of-53 shots (30 percent), but picked up from the charity stripe (five-for-five).

Led by Tochman's six boards, Salem outrebounded the Chargers, 30-20. Both teams committed 18 turnovers.

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The Hawks, who had four of their nine players foul out, made 22 of 32 free throws. The Vikings were 20-of-29 at the line.

Harrison had a 28-24 halftime lead, but Central (4-0, 10-0) moved in front after three quarters, 39-38. It was 47-47 at the end of regulation and 63-63 following the first overtime.

"Despite two rough games, (the Hawks) played like they believed they could beat this team," Turnquist said.

"To be that close on the road against reportedly the best team in the league, we're moving in the right direction."

After losing its previous three games, including a 10-point loss to Livonia Franklin on Friday, the Hawks re-focused their efforts and recommitted themselves to playing well, according to Turnquist.

"We came in at 8 o'clock Sunday morning and decided we were going to make a run at it," he said. "We had a good week, and now the trick is to sustain it."

"I don't believe in morale victories, because this group deserves to win. We took week off last week, but we put that behind us. We're ready to play hard."

"We're a little undermanned right now. I have a pretty good team in street clothes. Everybody who's healthy and playing has rededicated himself, and we like the direction."

Chiefs rally in 4th to win

Going into the fourth quarter of its game Tuesday at North Farmington, Plymouth Canton found itself trailing by seven.

The Chiefs scored only two baskets in that final period, but they limited the Raiders to one

and nailed 13 of 18 free throws to battle back and win, 49-43.

The victory boosted Canton's record to 3-1 in the Western Lakes Activities Association and 4-6 overall. North fell to 2-2 and 6-5.

The difference came at the line and on the boards. Canton converted 20 of 30 free throws for the game, while the Raiders managed to make just seven of 14. The Chiefs also had a 28-17 rebounding advantage.

"We dealt with their pressure well in the fourth," Canton coach Jeremy Rheault said. "We came back and found a way to win it."

North had the only advantage, building a 21-13 lead after one quarter. The Raiders were up 28-23 at halftime and stretched it to 38-31 after three periods.

"We threw the ball all over the

gym," Rheault said. "They came at us hard on defense. They were very tough."

But the Chiefs hung in there.

"We're continuing to defend; we're continuing to rebound, and we scored a little as well," Rheault said.

Jerry Gaines was again pivotal to Canton's success. He led the Chiefs with 12 points and 11 rebounds. Oliver Wolcott added 11 points.

Marcus McComb topped the Raiders with 13 points. Blair Weiss added 12 and Mike Leach seven.

"We scored the first basket of the second half," North assistant coach Pete Mantyn said. "Then we had all kinds of shots, and we were stuck on 30 for a couple minutes. We had an opportunity to widen the gap and we didn't."

"I don't think we played nearly

as hard in the second half as we did in the first, and they took advantage of that."

"They kept playing hard and they made the shots and free throws when they had to in the fourth quarter."

Warriors nip Shamrocks

Tyrone White's three-point basket at the buzzer Tuesday gave host Birmingham Brother Rice a 74-73 victory over Redford Catholic Central.

The Shamrocks had a two-point lead with 19 seconds remaining. The ball was knocked out of bounds off the leg of a CC player under the Rice basket with 30 on the clock.

Senior Ryan Celestey scored a game-high 23 points for the Shamrocks, who are 3-1 in the Catholic League Central Division and 8-3 overall.

Mark Willoughby netted 19 points. Tom Jakacki 16 and Ryan Murphy 10.

White finished with 19 points for the Warriors, 1-3 and 5-6. Matt Ferrari scored 16, Hayes Grooms 15 and Chris Agnew 13.

It was 18-all after one quarter. Rice pulled ahead at halftime, 40-34, but CC came back to take a 55-50 lead heading into the final period.

W.L. WESTERN 60, JOHN GLENN 62

Jason Clark tallied 13 of his 18 points in the first half Tuesday to lead Walled Lake Western (64, 3-1) past host Westland John Glenn (28, 1-3).

Chris Engle added 10 points for the Warriors, who led 32-28 at halftime and 47-38 after three quarters.

Glenn pulled to within five on a three-pointer by Brent Boggs with 2:42 left in the final period but couldn't get any closer.

Anthony Harrell was Glenn's leading scorer with a game-high 20 points.

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