

Press Clippings 12/28/2017

SPORTS SECTION

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Sluggish Larkin gets past Kenwood 47-40

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK

Shots weren't falling early for the Larkin boys basketball team, but the Royals made sure even fewer shots dropped for Kenwood throughout Wednesday's 47-40 opening-round victory at the Proviso West Tournament.

Larkin shot 21.4 percent from the field in the first half but held the Broncos to 28.6 percent from the floor overall (16 of 56) and 3 of 12 from 3-point range to advance in the championship bracket for the third consecutive year.

"I think we did a good job of not letting our offense affect the defensive side," said Larkin senior Anthony Lynch, who led all scorers with 20 points on 9-of-14 shooting. "As long as we're playing defense, defense wins championships so I think we just kept the defense up and kept playing. That's all that mattered."

Larkin (8-2) advances to face Uplift (7-4) Thursday at 7 p.m. The same teams met in the second round last year with Uplift winning 90-74. No other opponent scored more than 80 points against Larkin last season.

"Kenwood is tough and I think the next game we have coming up is just as good a matchup," Larkin coach Deryn Carter said. "Seeding a tournament like this is tough. Kenwood, we're two ranked teams in the top 20 in the area so it's unfortunate that one of us had to go to the left side of the bracket. But you take a win like that any way you can get it."

The Royals trailed 28-27 at halftime after shooting 1 of 12 from beyond the arc. They were far better in the second half, making 12 of 22 from the field (65 percent) and 3 of 9 from distance.

Larkin 6-foot-10 senior Jalen Shaw was limited to 8 points on 2-of-8 shooting with 7 turnovers by Kenwood 6-foot-5 defenders Naseer Turner and Robert McGee. "I was horrible," Shaw said, despite finishing with 12 rebounds and a blocked shot.

Nevertheless, Larkin used a 12-2 fourth-quarter run to transform a 1-point lead into an 11-point cushion. The surge was ignited by senior guard Jackson Reuter, who came off the bench to hit a pair of fourth-quarter 3-pointers.

"It was huge to just help out when my number was called," Reuter said, "especially with my role being to provide a spark when I can."

Lynch scored the next 6 points of the run via drives and free throws. His free throw with 1:10 remaining put the Royals ahead 46-36.

Larkin turned the ball over 19 times compared to 13 miscues for Kenwood (5-3), but the Royals won the rebounding battle 42-28 and limited the Broncos to 8 second-half field goals in 30 attempts.

"They're a good offensive team and we held them to 40 with a last-second bucket they got," Carter said. "Real proud of the defensive effort. If we continue to play defense like that all week and we shoot it a little better, we've got a chance to be playing Saturday night."

Larkin junior guard Pierre Black had 8 points and Reuter finished with 6.

Turner led the Broncos with 17 points and 5 rebounds before he fouled out and McGee added 7.

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Bartlett falls to Broncos

BY SCOTT MILLER

The Barrington boys basketball team has the luxury of having multiple weapons on offense to turn to on any given night and usually one or two will be on target to lead the attack.

However, when all those weapons are clicking like a well-oiled machine the Broncos can become an indestructible force. That was certainly the case in the second half of Wednesday night's semifinal game against Bartlett at the Jacobs' Hinkle Holiday Classic.

The Broncos (8-2) shot a blistering 17 of 22 (77 percent) from the field in the second half as they pulled away to 12-point lead in the fourth quarter and then hung for a 76-70 win to advance to Thursday's title game against Jacobs. It's the fourth time since 2000 that Barrington will be playing for the tournament championship. The Broncos won it back in 2009.

Junior Jason Boock came off the bench to lead the Broncos in scoring with 21 points. Point guard Anthony Spann added 17 points and Will Raider finished with 14 points.

"Well it's always good to make some shots," Barrington coach Bryan Tucker said. "We saw some things in the first half that we felt we could take more advantage of in the second half. The big thing was picking up the pace and getting the ball down the court quicker. That created some fastbreak buckets for us. Then when we were in the half-court we focused on being more patient and moving the ball around for open shots."

The game was tied at 38-38 when Boock hit a 3-pointer with 3:45 left in the third quarter to put Barrington on top for good 41-38. Later in the third quarter Boock added a 3-point play on a reverse layup to start a 7-0 run that stretched the Broncos' lead to 52-44.

Boock went on to score 15 of his points in the second half, including a 3-pointer, a layup, and 4 of 4 free throws in the fourth quarter to help seal the win. A pair of Boock free throws with 4:55 play gave Barrington its biggest lead of the game 62-50.

"That's my role is to come in and score," Boock said. "And that's fine by me. My teammates do a great job of getting me opportunities. I think as a team in the second half we were much more focused on moving the ball around and getting open shots."

The Hawks' (6-7) loss came despite another outstanding effort by Ben Fisher, who had a game-high 27 points. He had 25 points the night before.

Bartlett battled back from a 22-13 deficit after the first quarter with a 12-2 run to start the second quarter to take a 25-24 lead. Tomas Vikonis, who had 20 points, started the run with back-to-back 3-pointers. The lead exchanged hands 5 more times. Fisher gave Bartlett its final lead 36-35 on a 3-point play with 4:43 left in the third quarter. The Hawks shot the ball well in the second half, connecting on 13 of 23 shots from the field, but just couldn't keep pace with the Broncos.

"They are a fundamentally sound team," Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith said. "And tonight they beat us on fundamentals. I was a little disappointed with our inconsistency tonight, but overall I am very pleased with the growth we have made during the tournament."

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South Elgin rolls easily

BY KEN TILLOTSON

South Elgin wants to play its brand of basketball no matter who the opponent is.

The top-seeded Storm ambushed Chicago ACE Tech with an impressive 18-2 run in the opening four minutes and cruised to a 75-46 opening round victory Wednesday night in the 90th Annual Chuck Dayton Holiday Classic hosted by DeKalb.

Six-foot-6 junior Vince Miskiewicz and 6-foot-4 senior Noah Rohr paced South Elgin (7-2) with 13 points each while Christopher Hankins and Latrell Lamarca contributed 8 points apiece as part of a balanced offensive effort.

"I didn't know what we were going up against, so we just had to do what we do best and push the ball," said Storm coach Brett Johnson. "We started the game just like that and that got us in the flow we wanted to be in."

"That's our motto all the time. If we can outrun teams and beat them down the court that's how we succeed," said Miskiewicz, who also grabbed a game-high 8 rebounds.

South Elgin was a model of efficiency on offense, shooting 58 percent from the field overall (30-for-52) while hitting 8-of-18 attempts from 3-point range. The Storm racked up 19 assists while 11 players found their way onto the score sheet.

Drake Montgomery and Jace Warrick both finished with 7 points. David Binion and Mohammed Rahman chipped in 6 points each.

"It was nice to get other people the opportunity to score tonight and 19 assists is really good for us," Johnson said.

South Elgin led 43-19 at halftime behind 13 points and a pair of slam dunks from Miskiewicz. The Bobcats (2-2) managed to pull to within 51-31 before the Storm rattled off the final 9 points of the third quarter, highlighted by consecutive baskets from Hankins and a Rahman trifecta.

The Storm's only shortcoming on the night was committing 19 turnovers, with 14 of those coming during a disjointed second half.

"We have to clean that up because our game against Lemont is going to be very tough," Johnson said.

Lemont advanced to Wednesday's 8 p.m. quarterfinal against the Storm with a 61-55 victory over Chicago Vocational.

The Indians (7-4) feature an impressive front line with 6-foot-9 senior center Paul O'Leary and 6-foot-7 junior Nate Ferguson, who combined for 43 points and 17 rebounds in their opening round victory.

"We made have to double front and give them different defensive looks to see if we can contain," Johnson said. "It will come down to who will execute on offense and who gets stops on defense."

"We just have to play hard, play good solid defense and contest everything," Miskiewicz added. "We have a big responsibility as the number one seed. We want to own up to own to that and show everyone that we're deserving of that seed."