

Cougars top Wash; No.3 Lancers next

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 February 2014 22:18 - Last Updated Friday, 28 February 2014 23:06



Drew Heitland knows he'll become a full-time football player the next time Kennedy loses a basketball game, so he's determined to keep his roundball career going as long as possible.

He played like it Friday night.

Heitland scored 10 points, grabbed nine rebounds and provided some muscle as the Cougars topped Washington, 55-47, in the Class 4A substate semifinals at the Kennedy gym.

The Cougars (17-5) will face No.3 North Scott (21-1) in the substate finals Tuesday night at Clinton for a berth in the state tournament.

Heitland will play football at Coe College next season, but he enjoys basketball and is not ready to see the season end before he's ready to call it quits.

"I went through that once before with football (in the playoffs with Kennedy) and it's not fun," he said. "You might as well keep the journey going as long as you can."

There was more to it than that, however.

Cougars top Wash; No.3 Lancers next

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 February 2014 22:18 - Last Updated Friday, 28 February 2014 23:06

"It's Wash. It's substate. It's all of that," said Heitland. "Everything is going through your mind, knowing you don't want it to end."

A.J. Carter had the same point of view. The Kennedy senior wants to end the season at the state tournament in Des Moines.

"It burns really bad, because we had a shot my sophomore year and we came up short against Marcus Paige and Linn-Mar in that game," he said. "I hope we make it. It's my last year, my last shot."



Carter collected 16 points, six rebounds and four assists for Kennedy. Zach Daniels scored 12 points as the Cougars withstood a serious challenge from Washington and beat the Warriors (6-17) for the third straight time this season.

"It was a war. It always is with Wash," said Kennedy Coach Jon McKowen. "It's something you come in expecting, but you're never quite ready for."

The Cougars did not play their best game of the season, but McKowen was not particularly concerned about that.

"The really good teams win when they play bad," he said. "We didn't feel great about the way we played, but at this point it doesn't matter. This game is in the past. There's not a better feeling in the world than moving on at tournament time."

Cougars top Wash; No.3 Lancers next

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 February 2014 22:18 - Last Updated Friday, 28 February 2014 23:06

Heitland, a 6-foot-3 center, dropped 50 pounds prior to the football season and now weighs about 225, making him more mobile on the basketball floor.

"I like to think I'm a little more athletic. Maybe I gained another inch in my vertical," he joked. "Hopefully it got me faster and able to get in position to take a charge and get rebounds and stuff like that."

Kennedy jumped to a 16-4 lead early in the second quarter on a 3-pointer by Carter, but Washington refused to go away. The Warriors drew within 37-36 on consecutive baskets by Montaves Anderson early in the fourth quarter to make it interesting.

Carter scored inside, then Heitland beat a double-team to make it 41-36. Carter drove into the lane and pulled up for an 8-footer, giving the Cougars a 43-36 advantage with 4 1/2 minutes left.

Washington got within three points at 50-47 on a spin move by Keegan Moore with 1:20 left, but the Warriors did not score again. Kennedy tallied the last five points at the foul line, including three by Heitland in the final 39 seconds that sealed the victory.

The Cougars are looking forward to facing North Scott in the substate finals, knowing they'll face a big challenge against a team that has lost only once all season.

"I believe our conference is one of the best, so that will get us prepared for them," said Heitland. "I know they have a lot of size and a lot of talent, but a lot of teams do. We'll give it our best shot. Hopefully we can come out with a win."

McKowen has seen tape of the Lancers and is impressed.

Cougars top Wash; No.3 Lancers next

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 28 February 2014 22:18 - Last Updated Friday, 28 February 2014 23:06

"They're a lot like us. They spread it out," he said. "They're not overly big. They like to play in space and they're really good defensively."

Both teams like to play an up-tempo game, so it could be a shootout.

"It might be," said McKowen. "It might be the last team with the ball."

Moore led Washington with nine points. Maurice Arrington scored eight points, all in the second half.

The Warriors had a string of single-digit losses this season with a fairly inexperienced club. Coach Adam Sanchez is hoping for better days ahead.

"It just comes with experience," he said. "It's all part of the process. I just think it takes some growing pains once in awhile."

WASHINGTON (47): Anderson 3 0-1 6, Hoeger 1 0-0 2, Taylor 2 0-0 4, Snitker 0 0-0 0, J.Kramer 1 3-4 5, Arrington 4 0-0 8, Printy 1 2-2 5, S.Kramer 2 0-0 6, Soenksen 0 0-0 0, Jenkins 1 0-0 2, Moore 4 1-2 9. Totals 19 6-9 47.

KENNEDY (55): Daniels 5 0-0 12, Carter 5 4-6 16, Jacobus 2 3-4 8, Bil 0 0-0 0, Bardsley 1 2-4 4, Murdock 1 2-2 5, Heisler 0 0-0 0, Holzer 0 0-2 0, Heitland 2 6-9 10. Totals 16 17-27 55.

Halftime - Kennedy 27, Washington 19. 3-point goals - Washington 3 (S.Kramer 2, Printy 1), Kennedy 6 (Daniels 2, Carter 2, Jacobus 1, Murdock 1). Fouled out - Anderson.