

Semler gets 22 in loss to J-Hawks

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 11 December 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 05 January 2011 01:33

Jarrold Uthoff gets straight A's at Jefferson, he's served as class president and he's determined to keep improving as a basketball player.

That's why Coach Stu Ordman left Uthoff in a lopsided game against Marion on Dec. 11. He wanted to give the 6-foot-8 senior a chance to break the school record for most points in a single contest.

The big guy did it.

Uthoff poured in 44 points as the third-ranked J-Hawks topped the Indians, 73-48, at Marion.

Uthoff broke the old Jefferson record of 42 points, set twice by Cam Johnson during the 1988-89 campaign. He snapped Johnson's mark with a three-point play with 2 minutes left, giving him his 42nd, 43rd and 44th marker with a bucket and free throw.

Jefferson's assistant coaches told Ordman that Uthoff was getting close to the record, so Ordman elected to keep him in the game with a big lead.

"He has great character," said Ordman, explaining why he wanted Uthoff to set the mark. "He's an honor student; I don't think he's ever earned less than an A.

"He's one of our Read-Along mentors, he's been class president. He's a very considerate, caring person," said Ordman. "He's worked so hard on his game that I think he's very deserving of the record."

Uthoff tried to thank his teammates in the semi-privacy of the Jefferson locker room, saluting them for being so unselfish and giving him the ball, but it came out funny and made Uthoff sound selfish by saying he appreciated them being unselfish. They had a good laugh about that.

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Uthoff said it better in an interview.

“It’s pretty awesome,” he said, “that my teammates could help me do this by just being unselfish and passing the ball. It’s great.”

Uthoff broke half the record at the foul line, where he went an incredible 22 of 24. His other 22 points came on 11 field goals near the basket.

Uthoff stood at least four inches taller than the tallest Marion defender, and with his 6-foot-11 wingspan the Indians were helpless to stop him. Three Marion players fouled out.

Uthoff hit his first 11 free throws, missed one, hit nine more in a row, missed another, then made two more with a soft, gentle touch.

He constantly practices his foul shooting.

“My dad comes and rebounds for me,” he said. “I shoot a lot of free throws.”

It’s not uncommon for Uthoff to find an empty gym on Sundays, put chairs on the court and also work on his ballhandling, weaving in and out at full speed. He demonstrated his ballhandling skills Saturday with three behind-the-back dribbles to shake defenders.

Jefferson took command in the first half with a 23-3 run, turning a precarious 8-7 lead into a commanding 31-10 bulge. Its biggest margin was 26 points.

Uthoff scored his 44 points in less than 24 minutes of basketball. He missed 6 minutes, 42

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seconds in the first half with foul problems, then sat the final 2 minutes after setting the record. Officially, he scored 44 points in 23 minutes and 18 seconds.

Kasey Semler, one of Uthoff's teammates on the Iowa Barnstormers the last two summers, scored 22 points for Marion and gave Uthoff a warm, friendly handshake before they both left the gym.

"I love the kid," said Semler. "He's a great kid. He deserved every point that he got. He's a great player."

Uthoff will be taking his basketball talents to the University of Wisconsin next season.

"He's everything he's cracked up to be," said Marion Coach Mike Manderscheid.

Semler missed four minutes of the first quarter after getting accidentally hit in the throat in a collision with Jefferson's Taylor Olson under the basket. Olson's head hit Semler's throat, hurting both players and sending Semler to the trainer's room for medical care.

Semler was dazed by the collision.

"I honestly had no idea who I was," he said. "I couldn't really talk. I was going to talk and I couldn't, so that freaked me out a little bit."

A tough kid, Semler returned in the first quarter and had another strong game for Marion (3-2). He's averaging 20.6 points per outing.

Uthoff raised his scoring average to 29.8 points with his 44-point outburst, putting him among the state leaders.

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Jefferson has whipped its four opponents by an average margin of 71-34 with easy wins against Clinton (75-20), Davenport North (66-49), Iowa City High (70-19) and Marion (73-48), an average margin of 37 points.

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JEFFERSON (73): Kramer 3 2-3 8, Meiborg 0 3-5 3, Saunders 3 4-4 10, Uthoff 11 22-24 44, Olson 2 0-0 5, Rooney 0 0-0 0, Larson 0 0-0 0, Mueller 1 0-0 3. Totals 20 31-36 73.

MARION (48): Fisher 4 3-6 11, Allbaugh 2 0-0 5, Cronk 2 0-0 4, Semler 8 5-7 22, Van Gorp 0 0-0 0, Cannoy 0 1-2 1, Kinney 1 1-1 3, Hardman 0 0-0 0, Frazier 1 0-0 2. Totals 17 10-16 48.

Halftime — Jefferson 31, Marion 16. 3-point goals — Jefferson 2 (Olson, Mueller), Marion 2 (Allbaugh, Semler). Fouled out — Cronk, Hardman, Frazier.