

Saints gobble up Panthers in opener

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 01 December 2014 21:05 -



The Xavier Saints snacked on some Thanksgiving leftovers in their season opener Monday night, but they know the menu will get a lot tougher from here.

Adam McDermott popped in 20 points as the Saints belted the young Mount Pleasant Panthers, 66-24, on the first day of high school boys basketball at Ron Thillen Gymnasium.

Mount Pleasant, with three freshmen in the starting lineup, was no match for Xavier with its "Big 3" of McDermott, Calvin Winker and transfer Michael Mims on the floor with Mitchell Burger and Connor Ramlo.

The Saints raced to a 25-4 lead in the first six minutes of the game and ignited the continuous clock with a 35-point bulge late in the third quarter.

"I thought we came out and executed our plays like we wanted to, pushed the break like we wanted to," said McDermott, a 6-foot-4 senior who has signed with North Dakota. "I thought we played really well on the defensive end."

Xavier Coach Ryan Luehrsmann liked the way his team performed.

Real pleased, just with the effort and the focus that the guys came out with," he said. "I thought our defense was excellent. It's been a point of emphasis, and hopefully it's a sign of things to come."

Winker scored 11 points and Burger notched 10 points. Mims, a transfer from Cedar Rapids

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Prairie, finished with nine points in his debut with the Saints and displayed his all-around talents on offense and defense at point guard.

Mount Pleasant was no match for Xavier, but the Saints expect to have a tough game Saturday night at Waverly-Shell Rock, which went 22-4 last year and finished third at the Class 3A state tournament.

"They're a good team," said McDermott. "I know they have a great guard in Jake Velky. They're going to come out hungry. I definitely think it will be a good test for us, to see where we're at. It should be a great game."

Luehrsmann welcomes the challenge in Waverly.

"Absolutely," he said. "Our focus is to get as good as we can get by the end of the year, and the best way to do that is to play great competition. Stepping out and playing another 3A power in their gymnasium will be a great test for us."

Burger hit a 3-pointer to begin the game Monday, McDermott hit another triple and Burger made an old-fashioned three-point play as the Saints took a quick 11-1 lead. It was more of the same for the rest of the quarter and Xavier owned a 27-7 advantage after the first eight minutes.

The Saints got a little sloppy in the second period with the big lead, but it hardly mattered.

"We have to fix that in practice and keep the intensity throughout the whole game," said McDermott.

"I think we got complacent and took some quick shots," said Luehrsmann, "instead of being patient and finding the gaps in the zone."

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Freshman Brady Sartorius led Mount Pleasant with eight points. The Panthers had only eight players in uniform and half of them were ninth graders.

MOUNT PLEASANT (24): Raymond 0 0-0 0, Sartorius 3 2-2 8, Magnani 1 0-0 3, Mulford 2 1-2 6, Kohorst 2 0-0 4, White 0 0-0 0, Canby 1 1-1 3, McConnell 0 0-1 0. Totals 9 4-6 24.

XAVIER (66): Mims 4 0-0 9, McDermott 8 1-1 20, Burger 4 1-1 10, Ramlo 2 0-0 4, Klostermann 1 0-0 3, Welch 2 0-0 4, Whitten 0 0-0 0 Joens 0 0-2 0, Brems 1 0-0 2, Winker 4 3-3 11, Stulken 1 0-0 3, Clasen 0 0-0 0. Totals 27 5-7 66.

Halftime - Xavier 38, Mount Pleasant 11. 3-point goals - Mount Pleasant 2 (Magnani 1, Mulford 1), Xavier 7 (McDermott 3, Mims 1, Burger 1, Klosterman 1, Winker 1).