

## Prairie boys come up short against North Scott

Written by Tom Fruehling

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If the game could have ended Thursday night right after the second half started, Prairie boys basketball fans would have gone home delirious.

The Hawks had taken their first lead over visiting North Scott with a minute to go in the first half when Jace Hanna stole the ball and hit Demetrius Harper for a driving lay-up.

Soon after, Hanna dribbled the length of the floor to score as the horn went off.

With a three-point cushion, Prairie came back from halftime with a set play going back to Coach James Moses' own playing days as an Iowa Hawkeye.

Jacob Aune lobbed an alley-oop pass from the far left wing and 6-foot-4 jumping jack Matt MacDougall jammed home a thunder dunk to extend the lead to 24-19.

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North Scott super freshman Cortez Seales quieted the crowd, however, with one of his silky smooth drives to the basket. His overall play plus a rash of 3-pointers by his teammates and some clutch free throws at the end finally did in Prairie, 49-45, in what was a well-played defensive struggle.

“That’s how the cookie crumbles,” said Moses afterward. “I liked our effort, and we were just a couple of possessions away from winning. An offensive rebound here or creating a foul there, and it might have been different.

“But we’re definitely learning how to win.”

Considering that the Hawks lost to North Scott by more than 30 points at Eldridge last season, they’re fast learners.

“James is doing a good job with his team,” said fourth-year Lancer Coach Shamus Budde. “He lets his kids play. It’s a fun style, and we play the same way.

“Prairie is only going to get better. I think James is really turning the program around.”

Budde’s young team with two freshman and three junior starters is now 2-0 with a previous 12-point win over Dubuque Wahlert. The Hawks are 1-1 going into Saturday’s first road game at Muscatine.

Though disappointed with the loss, MacDougall said his team played well.

“We played ‘em tough the whole way. We just couldn’t pull it out at the end.”

Although he again led the Hawks in scoring with 13 points, MacDougall had a quiet first half.

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His first basket of the night (and his team's only three-pointer) came midway through the second quarter when North Scott had pulled away by eight.

His crowd-pleasing dunk, though, seemed to give Prairie some extra juice.

"Coach just put the play in yesterday," he explained. "And it worked perfect."

North Scott, which had four 3s in the first half, hit three more in the second to keep the game close. The sleek left-handed 6-foot-1 Seales, who led all scorers with 17, hit his only triple of the evening to begin the fourth quarter to put the Lancers up by four.

MacDougall knotted it up at 42-42 on turnaround jumper with two minutes to go. Prairie came as close as 46-45 with 40 seconds left. But, in the end, they lost on free throws.

North Scott scored its last nine points from the line - missing just one - to eke out the win.

"They're the kind of team that plays very fundamental basketball," said Aune. "They make you make mistakes.

"We had the right plays drawn up. We just didn't execute them a couple of times when we needed to."

Moses thinks better execution will come from his relatively inexperienced club.

"It's a journey," he said, "and we're continuing to grow on our journey."

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NORTH SCOTT (49): Ben Wilson 4 0-0 10, Eric Huber 2 5-6 11, Cortez Seales 8 0-0 17, Noah Gumpert 0 1-2 1, Grant Graham 0 4-5 4, Mitchell Gorsh 0 0-0 0, Brandon Fleetwood 0 0-0 0, Creighton Claussen 0 0-0 0, Jordan Arp 2 0-0 6. Totals 16 10-13 49.

PRAIRIE (45): Jacob Aune 3 2-2 8, Brooks Kehoe 0 0-0 0, Jace Hanna 4 2-2 10, Matt MacDougall 6 0-0 13, Tom Eilers 1 0-0 2, DeMetrius Harper 3 0-0 6, Kentrel Smith 1 0-0 2, Tyler Mouglin 1 0-0 2, Bryce Meeker 1 0-0 2. Totals 20 4-4 45.

Halftime – Prairie 22, North Scott 19. 3-point goals – North Scott 7 (Wilson 2, Huber 2, Arp 2, Seales), Prairie 1 (MacDougall). Total fouls – North Scott 11, Prairie 18. Fouled out – Eilers.