

J-Hawks down City High at the stripe, 59-55

Written by Guy Martino

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IOWA CITY -- The varsity game between Cedar Rapids Jefferson and Iowa City High Friday night had a lot to live up to after the double-overtime thriller played in the sophomore game.

The J-Hawk sophomores lost by three and the upperclassmen wanted to reverse course. But it took an intense game as well. The varsity contest didn't quite go to bonus periods, but it proved to keep the crowd buzzing.

Jefferson took its first lead of the game with five minutes left and won a tight contest, 59-55, in an early season MVC matchup at the Iowa City High gym.

Led by senior guard Taylor Olson, with a game-high 19 points, the J-Hawks owned the last half of the fourth quarter and iced away the win at free throw line.

"I thought we settled down a bit in the second half and were able to work the ball and get better shots," said Jefferson Coach Stu Ordman. "We also toughened up a little bit on the defensive end."

Jefferson (3-0, 1-0) trailed 28-20 at the half, and couldn't find rhythm on the offensive end. A stout City High player rotation contributed to the J-Hawks' first half struggles. City High set the tempo physically, with the likes of Ronald Washington, Cortez Barfield, Jasper Washington, Jeremy Johnson and Tony Perry (all Little Hawk football talents).

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"They were killing us on the boards and with their penetration and they were kind of throwing us around like rag dolls," said Ordman. "They are a really strong, athletic team, and I thought we lost our cool a bit and ended up turning the ball over and rushed our offense."

But the J-Hawks came out in the second half and found their groove, and so did Olson.

"I thought he had a really good second half, the first half he was off his game a little bit. I would attribute that to City High's defense," said Ordman. "But I thought he was able to understand a little better what he needed to do and let the game come to him. But he sure is competitive."

Jefferson remained close throughout the second half, going back and forth with City High. Then, with 4:21 remaining in the game, Jefferson's Alec Saunders hit a 3-pointer to knot the game at 50. After a defensive stop, Olson tipped in a missed shot to give the J-Hawks their first lead, 52-50.

City High (0-1, 2-1) knotted the score again at 52 when Barfield barreled through the lane for a layup.

Jefferson won the game at the stripe. Saunders and Olson went a combined 7-of-8 at the line in the final two minutes to put the game out of reach.

"I thought we got into a lot of scoring situations, some we handled better than others, but the guys never quit and played hard and made some key plays," said Ordman.

Jefferson hosts Marion Saturday evening at 6:30.

JEFFERSON (59): Taylor Olson 6 7-12 19, Tyler Hemphill 2 1-2 5, Alec Sanuders 4 4-4 13, Ky Kramer 3 2-2 10, Justin Underwood 2 3-7 7, Creighton Robinson 2 0-0 5, Austin Goodell 0 0-0 0. Totals 19 17-27 59.

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IOWA CITY HIGH (55): Tony Perry 4 0-0 10, Cortez Barfield 3 0-0 6, Andrew Hein 0 0-0 0, Ronald Thompson 4 2-4 10, Alex Perry 4 0-0 8, Jerel Moore 7 0-2 18, Jasper Washington 1 0-0 2, Jeremy Johnson 0 1-2 1. Totals 17 3-7 55.

Halftime- City High 28, Jefferson 20. 3-point goals- Jefferson 4 (Kramer 2, Saunders 1, Robinson 1) ICH 6 (Moore 4, T. Perry 2).