

Saints pull away late, beat No. 3 Knights

Written by Jake Koolbeck

Wednesday, 21 December 2011 00:11 - Last Updated Wednesday, 21 December 2011 03:18



The Xavier boys kept making runs, but they just couldn't shake Davenport Assumption.

The Saints would get a lead, the Knights would catch back up.

That was the way it went until about 4 1/2 minutes were left in Tuesday night's basketball game at Xavier.

But that's when senior Ben McDermott hit a 3-pointer with a hand in his face to give the Saints the lead for good. And then he added another 3.

"I just got open, got good passes ahead from teammates, and thought I'd shoot," McDermott said.

McDermott, fellow senior Carter Valentine, and the rest of the Saints knocked down their free throws and a few easy layups to extend the lead and pull away from the Class 3A third-ranked Knights for a 63-52 win.

"We made plays down the stretch with big 3's and free throws," Xavier Coach Matt Jenkins said. "It put the pressure on them to score."

The Saints jumped out to an early 5-0 lead in the first before the Knights went on an 8-2 run of

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their own to take the lead.

Assumption shot well against the Saints zone early going 7 for 11 in the first quarter to take a 16-13 lead after the first quarter.

The second quarter was a battle of benches as the Saints sat four of five starters with foul trouble and the Knights sat their two leading scorers who were also in foul trouble.

The Saints' bench showed the team's depth and solid defense as they were able to outscore the Knights 16-7 in the quarter.

"It shows we have good depth and can trust other guys to set up," McDermott said of the second quarter.

Coach Jenkins was also pleased with his non-starters saying, "The bench did a great job defensively."

The combination of a solid second quarter defense and five 3-pointers carried the Saints to a 29-23 halftime lead.

The Knights made a comeback again in the third quarter cutting the Saint lead to two going in to the final quarter.

Despite the comeback, the Knights ran into some problems. The Saints got Knight's leading scorer Billy Daniel into foul trouble. He picked up his third and fourth fouls in the third quarter and fouled out early in the fourth with nine points.

"Anytime you can get an all state caliber player out of the game it gives you an advantage,"

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Jenkins said.

After Assumption tied the game at 39 McDermott hit the key 3-pointers and the Saints took control from the free throw line.

McDermott paced the Saints with 15, Valentine added 14. Knight's senior guard Peter Finn led all scorers with 21.

DAVENPORT ASSUMPTION (51): Nick Schebler 2 0-0 6, Matt Vonderhaar 3 0-0 6, Peter Finn 9 0-1 21, Derek Fulton 1 1-3 3, Bill Daniel 4 1-2 9, Tim Kilfoy 0 0-0 0, Peter Doyle 1 3-3 5, Michael Knouse 0 1-4 1, Colin Gould 0 0-0 0. Team 20 6-13 51.

XAVIER (63): Ben McDermott 4 4-6 15, Kevin Hosch 2 3-5 7, Carter Valentine 4 6-8 14, Mack Mattke 2 2-4 8, Matt Nelson 4 3-4 11, Alec Clasen 0 0-0 0, Trey Sampson 2 0-1 6, Brian Ropp 0 2-2 2, Tanner Frazier 0 0-0 0, Reggie Schulte 0 0-0 0. Team 18 20-30 63.

Halftime – Xavier 29, Assumption 23. 3-point goals – Assumption 5 (Schebler 2, Finn 3), Xavier 7 (McDermott 3, Mattke 2, Sampson 2) Total Fouls – Assumption 24, Xavier 17. Fouled out -- Daniel.