

Marion drubbed by No. 4 Panthers

Written by Jim Ecker

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All Marion High School boys basketball coach Mike Manderscheid wants for Christmas is a fresh start and more home games.

The Indians finished the 2011 part of their schedule Thursday night with a 3-and-5 record after losing to No. 4 Mount Pleasant, 61-39, in a Class 3A game at Marion.

Manderscheid had to deal with several disciplinary problems in November and December, but he's looking forward to being at full strength after Christmas with six home games in January.

"You want to come out of Christmas break with a much improved team. We'll have to work hard," he said.

The Indians played five of their first seven games of the season on the road, and Thursday night's game was their first at home in 16 days. The schedule will flip in January, with six of nine games in the Marion High School gym.

Mitch Wagner and Mark Stone made their initial appearances of the season for Marion

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Thursday after missing the first seven games of the campaign for a violation of school rules. Manderscheid gave them a few token minutes at the end of the contest.

"They've got to play their way in," Manderscheid remarked. "At least it gives us some options now."

In addition, Isaac Frazier was not allowed to play in the first half against Mount Pleasant for disciplinary reasons. Manderscheid hopes to leave all the disciplinary issues behind when the calendar turns to 2012.

"It's all part of the game," he said.

Mount Pleasant (8-1) broke quickly to a 15-6 lead in the first quarter and held a commanding 34-16 bulge at halftime. The Panthers opened a pair of 22-point leads in the third period, expanded the margin to 58-33 in the fourth stanza and coasted home.

Jordan Ashton, a smooth 6-foot-3 point guard, led Mount Pleasant with 19 points. The Panthers also feature a pair of rugged 6-foot-7 post players and complimentary wing performers.

Ashton is being recruited by Iowa Conference and NAIA schools and his stock appears to be rising.

"He's just continuing to get better," said Mount Pleasant Coach Paul Rundquist. "He's a very smart player, and he's the best shooter I've ever coached.

"He doesn't look like he's that strong, but he's very deceptive. He's a strong kid, he's worked

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hard. If he continues to work hard - which he will - he'll end up at a nice school."

Thursday's game was a homecoming of sorts for Rundquist. His father, Hall of Fame coach Gordon Rundquist, is a Marion High School graduate and there were family members in the crowd Thursday. Paul Rundquist grew up in Delhi during his father's successful tenure at Maquoketa Valley.

Jared Huhndorf led Marion with 14 points. Brenden Landuyt scored 10 points for the Indians.

Marion committed a series of costly turnovers against Mount Pleasant and had trouble penetrating the Panthers' 1-3-1 and 2-3 zone defenses.

"We've got to learn some things," Manderscheid said. "We keep making some of the same mistakes over and over and over. That's my frustration."

MOUNT PLEASANT (61): Dalton Conrad 4 0-0 10, Cameron Frank 3 1-2 7, Jordan Ashton 7 5-7 19, Blake Vandenberg 5 2-4 12, Nick Lyon 4 0-1 8, Connor Shull 1 0-0 2, Ryan Hanna 0 0-0 0, Logan Mulford 1 0-0 2, Aaron Kelly 0 1-2 1, Liam Clancy 0 0-0 0. Totals 25 9-16 61.

MARION (39): Tyler Gunderson 2 1-2 5, Brenden Landuyt 4 0-0 10, Jared Huhndorf 6 2-5 14, Andrew Davis 3 0-0 6, Jake McDonald 0 0-0 0, Cale Cannoy 0 0-0 0, Ben Buckley 0 0-0 0, Isaac Frazier 0 0-0 0, Mitch Wagner 1 2-4 4, Mark Stone 0 0-0 0, Tyler Hedtke 0 0-0 0, Colton Storla 0 0-0 0, Chayse Wheeler 0 0-0 0. Totals 16 5-11 39.

Halftime - Mount Pleasant 34, Marion 16. 3-point goals - Mount Pleasant 2 (Conrad 2), Marion 2 (Landuyt 2).