

## **No. 1 Lions flex muscles in Wisconsin**

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 15 January 2011 21:17 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 January 2011 22:31

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LA CROSSE, Wis. -- The best high school basketball team in Iowa might be the best team in Wisconsin, too.

They play for Linn-Mar.

The Lions left Iowa and beat one of the best teams in Wisconsin on Saturday night with a 74-64 victory over Madison Memorial in the Midwest Players Classic at the La Crosse Center.

Linn-Mar (12-0), ranked No. 1 in Iowa, proved to be too polished, too balanced and too good for Madison Memorial, which is ranked No. 3 among the big schools in Wisconsin.

Marcus Paige and Josh Montague scored 21 points apiece, Matt Bohannon collected 16 and Shane Benton added 12 in a wire-to-victory for the Lions, who never trailed.

Montague, a 6-foot-7 senior, poured in 19 points in the first half to help Linn-Mar take control with a string of 12-point leads. Madison Memorial (9-3) pulled within four points, 68-64, in the final minute, but Bohannon and Paige combined to hit six straight free throws in the final seconds to secure the win.

"I thought our guys really performed," Linn-Mar Coach Chris Robertson said. "We got what we wanted and now we can rest a little and get focused for Kennedy on Friday."

The Lions do not play Tuesday night, giving them all week to get ready for the No. 6 Cougars.

Montague tossed in three 3-pointers in the first half. He grabbed his jersey and asked for a rest at one point, but scored another basket before Robertson could send in a sub.

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"I was kind of tired, but I knew I had to go as hard as I could," said Montague, who scored a career high with his 21 markers. "I was really feeling it."

Linn-Mar made a few costly turnovers in the final minutes to let Madison Memorial back in the game, but overall the Lions were the crisper, more efficient ballclub. The Lions made 24 of 27 free throws, including a perfect 10-for-10 showing by Paige.

Linn-Mar beat Apple Valley, Minn., at the Timberwolves Shootout in Minneapolis last Saturday, then hit the road again this weekend for the event in La Crosse.

"Playing in these big arenas and playing against good competition gets you ready for the state tournament," Montague said.

Tre' Burnette led the Spartans with 17 points. Brendan Ortiz and Junior Lomomba scored 13 points apiece for Madison Memorial.

LINN-MAR (74): Paige 5 10-10 21, Bohannon 4 7-8 16, McBrayer 2 0-1 4, Montague 7 4-4 21, Benton 4 3-4 12, Thul 0 0-0 0, Krusie 0 0-0 0, Gogg 0 0-0 0. Totals 22 24-27 74.

MADISON MEMORIAL (64): Ortiz 4 3-3 13, Chamberlain 2 0-0 5, Burnette 7 2-3 17, Songolo 4 0-0 8, Lomomba 5 3-3 13, Weah 2 1-2 5, Parkman 1 0-0 3. Totals 25 9-11 64.

Halftime -- Linn-Mar 36, Madison Memorial 24. 3-point goals -- Linn-Mar 6 (Montague 3, Paige 1, Bohannon 1, Benton 1), Madison Memorial 4 (Ortiz 2, Burnette 1, Parkman 1). Fouled out -- Ortiz, Chamberlain.