

## J-Hawks snap drought against Linn-Mar

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 08 December 2012 00:18 -

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It's been a long time since the Jefferson J-Hawks defeated the Linn-Mar Lions in a boys basketball game.

"Yeah, it was 1896," Jefferson Coach Stu Ordman quipped before the teams tangled Friday night at the Linn-Mar gym.

It wasn't quite that long, but it may have seemed that way to J-Hawk fans.

The drought is over.

Jefferson defeated Linn-Mar for the first time in nine seasons with a tense 46-44 verdict in a Mississippi Valley Conference game.

"It feels wonderful," Jefferson senior Ky Kramer exclaimed, "and to beat them here is even better."

"The crowd was going and we were all in it," said J-Hawk point guard Jacob Olson. "I haven't beaten them ever. No. Never."

"We wanted it for four years and finally got one," echoed senior Creighton Robinson, who joined Kramer and Olson in double figures.

The J-Hawks jumped in each other's arms after the buzzer sounded. Ordman hugged his players and wore a big smile, but claimed the nine-year drought had little to do with his elation.

"Honestly that doesn't play into this year," he said. "Every team is like a different child. Each

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year is different."

Jefferson's last victory against the Lions came during the 2003-04 campaign, according to Ordman.

Linn-Mar has beaten lots of teams in the 21st Century, with three state championship banners hanging on the wall since 2004, so the J-Hawks aren't the only club that's looking to even the score a little bit.

"They have a stellar program," Ordman noted. "We always look forward to the challenge of playing them, especially at their place."

Ordman said the J-Hawks had chances to beat Linn-Mar over the years, but injuries and bad luck contributed to the losing streak. The basketball gods smiled on Jefferson this time, because the Lions were missing their head coach and one of their top players.

Linn-Mar Coach Chris Robertson had to serve a one-game suspension Friday after being ejected from last Saturday's game against Bettendorf. And Jimmy Roth, a starting wingman, had to watch the game in street clothes while serving the third game of a four-game suspension for a violation of school rules.

Jefferson jumped to a 13-point lead in the first half, but Linn-Mar chipped away and gave itself a chance to extend its mastery over the J-Hawks with a late surge.

Zach Martins pulled the Lions within 44-42 with a 3-pointer with 43 seconds left. Layne Sullivan made one free throw with 32 seconds remaining to give Jefferson a 45-42 edge.

Freshman Jordan Bohannon hit a long shot for Linn-Mar that initially looked like a 3-pointer, but it was ruled a two-point bucket and the Lions trailed 45-44 with 25 seconds to go.

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Sullivan was fouled with 16 seconds left and went 1-for-2 at the foul line again, giving the J-Hawks a 46-44 lead.

Bohannon was called for traveling with 12 seconds remaining, but Robinson missed two free throws for Jefferson with 11 seconds to go and the Lions had another chance.

Linn-Mar got the ball to 6-foot-8 center Derik Gogg, but he lost the ball under the basket while trying to tie the game and Jefferson had its long-awaited victory.

"Our guys were very scrappy, had a lot of heart," said Ordman.

Kramer helped Jefferson get off to a good start with 13 points in the first half. He finished with a game-high 15 points.

Olson scored 13 points for the J-Hawks (3-0, 1-0) and Robinson netted 11. Olson fouled out with 1:54 left, forcing Robinson to run the club down the stretch.

"I thought Creighton played with tremendous courage," said Ordman.

Matt Lassen led Linn-Mar (1-2, 0-1) with 11 points before fouling out with 1:45 left and his team trailing by five points.

The Lions had trouble scoring against Jefferson's zone defense in the first half and had only three field goals and 14 points at intermission. They warmed up a little in the second half and did a better job of getting the ball inside to Gogg, who scored all of his eight points in the second half.

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Bohannon also finished with eight points.

Jefferson visits Marion Saturday night. Linn-Mar will face North Scott in the Heartland Shootout in Des Moines Saturday afternoon.

Robertson will be able to coach the Lions against North Scott. Roth is eligible to return Tuesday when the Lions visit Dubuque Senior.

JEFFERSON (46): Olson 4 4-4 13, Robinson 1 8-12 11, Kramer 4 4-5 15, Larson 1 1-2 3, Sullivan 0 2-4 2, Jenkins 1 0-0 2. Totals 11 19-28 46.

LINN-MAR (44): Martins 2 0-0 6, Lassen 3 2-3 11, Bohannon 3 0-0 8, Schlotterback 2 0-1 4, Meier 1 4-5 7, Gogg 4 0-2 8, Uhlir 0 0-0 0, Halupnik 0 0-0 0, Nelson 0 0-0 0, Schmidt 0 0-0 0. Totals 15 6-11 44.

Halftime - Jefferson 26, Linn-Mar 14. 3-point goals - Jefferson 5 (Kramer 3, Olson 1, Robinson 1), Linn-Mar 8 (Lassen 3, Bohannon 2, Martins 2, Meier 1). Fouled out - Lassen, Olson.