

Jacob Olson sparks J-Hawks by No. 10 Saints

Written by Jim Ecker

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Taylor Olson's little brother is all grown up.

Jacob Olson poured in 22 points Tuesday night and made several clutch plays as Jefferson defeated 10th-ranked Xavier, 64-55, in a Mississippi Valley Conference game at Jefferson.

Taylor Olson, now a freshman at Kirkwood Community College, was an all-state guard for the J-Hawks last season when he averaged 18.4 points and led Jefferson to the Class 4A state tournament for the third straight year.

Jacob Olson, Taylor's kid brother, averaged just 1.4 points for the J-Hawks last year as a sophomore, but there's no stopping him now at 19.4 points per outing.

"As you can tell tonight, I don't think anybody can really guard him," said Jefferson senior Ky Kramer, who had a big game himself with 18 points. "Sometimes in tough situations, he's our best one-on-one guy and you just let him go for it."

Olson finished with a slight upper hand against Xavier senior Trey Sampson in a battle of two of the premier point guards in the league. Sampson hit five 3-pointers and scored 18 points.

Sampson hit a 3-pointer to pull the Saints within 54-52, but he was playing with four personal fouls at the time and had to be careful on defense. Olson knew it and promptly drove to the basket against his counterpart, sensing Sampson would have to back away.

Olson scored to make it 56-52, then scored again after the Saints missed at the other end to make it 58-52 with 1:11 left.

"He's very savvy," said Jefferson Coach Stu Ordman. "It probably didn't matter who it was. If he had a chance to take him, he'd take him."

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Ordman reminded Olson what to do against Sampson with the game hanging in the balance, but it wasn't necessary.

"He told me, but I already knew," Olson said. "We wanted him out of the game, obviously, because he was lighting us up at the end."

The Olson brothers were teammates last year on the Jefferson varsity. Jacob was Taylor's understudy at point guard and learned his lessons well.

"I've matured a lot," he said. "Last year, I learned from my brother by watching him. He also gave me tips. I just look up to him and do what he does, really."

The biggest tip was simple.

"Just to look for my teammates and just worry about winning and nothing else," said Olson. "He always looks for his teammates first, and that's what I try to do."

Taylor Olson stands 6-foot-1 and is stronger than Jacob, who is a slender 5-foot-11. Jacob may have a quicker first step than Taylor, which makes him hard to guard.

Olson scored 13 of his game-high 22 points in the second half, even though he played the last 16 minutes with three fouls.

"I thought his second half was phenomenal. Just phenomenal," said Ordman.

Creighton Robinson pitched in 14 points for Jefferson (4-1), which rebounded after being

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stunned by the Marion Indians Saturday night. Olson, Kramer and Robinson combined for 54 of Jefferson's 64 points.

"They've got arguably the finest guard court, in terms of their three guards, in the league," said Xavier Coach Ryan Luehrsmann. "They really got it going with the 3-pointer. Jacob was phenomenal.

"They're going to beat a lot of teams this year. They've got a heckuva trio of guards."

Olson nailed a 3-pointer and made several pretty "tear-drops" when he drove to the basket and hit soft floaters against bigger guys. He looked cool, calm and collected.

"I thought he was a little nervous last year," said Ordman. "Now he's very confident and he's improved his repertoire of offensive moves. He's learning to trust his teammates a little more."

Olson has escaped his brother's shadow, but misses him nonetheless.

"It's not as good playing without him," he said. "Now I have to step up, obviously, and take over leading the team."

Luehrsmann tasted defeat for the first time as Xavier's head coach as the Saints fell to 5-1. Matt Nelson led the Saints with 19 points, but the big center got bottled up at key times in the second half.

"We forgot we have a big guy inside that's capable of being an all-state performer," said Luehrsmann. "That's what we talked about - keeping your composure, finding Matt, giving him an opportunity to create high-percentage shots."

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Nelson pulled Xavier within 58-55 with a three-point play with one minute remaining, but the Saints did not score again. Robinson hit two free throws to make it 60-55 with 31.7 seconds left.

Kramer swished four straight free throws with 10.4 seconds to go after he was fouled and Luehrsmann was called for a technical foul. Kramer went 11 for 11 at the foul line.

The game was spiced with three technical fouls. Both coaches were slapped with a technical, as was Xavier senior Corbin Woods.

XAVIER (55): Winker 1 2-2 4, Sampson 6 1-2 18, McDermott 1 2-2 5, Nelson 8 3-3 19, Woods 0 5-5 5, Schulte 2 0-0 4, Biermann 0 0-0 0. Totals 18 13-14 55.

JEFFERSON (64): Olson 9 3-5 22, Robinson 4 3-4 14, Kramer 3 11-11 18, Wiederin 0 0-0 0, Larson 3 0-0 8, Floyd 1 0-0 2, Jenkins 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 17-20 64.

Halftime - Xavier 30, Jefferson 28. 3-point goals - Xavier 6 (Sampson 5, McDermott 1), Jefferson 7 (Robinson 3, Larson 2, Olson 1, Kramer 1). Fouled out - Jenkins. Technical fouls - Ordman, Woods, Luehrsmann.