Unsung heroes lift Jeff by Wash

Written by Tom Fruehling
Friday, 12 February 2016 23:57

The Jefferson boys got good games from their go-to guys Friday night at Washington.

But it may have been the play of some unsung role players that made the difference in a come-from-behind 62-58 victory.

Stalwarts Royshawn Webb, Dennis McKinney and Adam Van Oort all scored in double figures for the J-Hawks. But it was senior reserve Treyton McCauley
who gave them their first lead of the game on a looping 3-pointer with a
minute to go in the third quarter.

And when leading scorer McKinney was forced to sit for over six minutes in the second half with foul trouble, it was senior Zachariah Szabo who came
off the bench to provide a much-needed spark.

Senior defensive specialist Valentino (Tino) Green was all over the floor (literally) all night. He took four charges in the game to prevent
would-be baskets by the Warriors.

And he made a clean sweep of the ball on what looked to be an easy layup in the last minute with Washington trying to make a comeback.

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"I'm so proud of those seniors," Jefferson coach Brandon Horman said. "They really stepped up for us.

"McCauley's shot started our run, and Szabo had some huge minutes. He had several heads-up offensive plays and a couple of key baskets. And he really rebounded well.

"And Tino, I thought, was the difference-maker. Besides those charges, he made a lot of hustle plays. He covers a lot of floor."

With explosive seniors Keion Wills and Laveechie Williams providing most of the offensive punch, Washington jumped out early and retained a 31-27 lead at halftime.

"We just didn't seem to have the type of energy we needed to get us going," Jefferson point guard Webb said. "We came out kind of flat and weren't communicating on defense. But Coach told us halftime it was still our game to win if we just picked it up."

Three straight 3-pointers at the end of the third quarter seemed to do the trick.

After a quiet first half, senior swingman Van Oort swished a bomb tie the game at 39-all. McCauley's long one came next, then Van Oort hit another at the buzzer. The J-Hawks held on the rest of the way.

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McKinney, who led Jefferson with 16 points despite being saddled by fouls, credited the bench players with preserving the victory.

"Those guys really helped us," he said. "This was a great team win, from top to bottom."

Van Oort finished with 12 points and Webb had 11.

Washington coach Justin Decker said Jefferson did a good job on the boards and pounding the ball inside.

"Our goal on defense," he said, "was to keep them out of the paint. Instead, they just lived in the paint.

"They got too many offensive rebounds. And when we did get some rebounds on offense, we couldn't finish. Our shots went off the rim.

"We also made way too many turnovers, just empty possessions. We had stretches when we didn't get anything offensively.

Williams scored 20 points for the Warriors and Wills had 19.

The J-Hawks (8-12, 4-10) swept the regular-season series with the Warriors (6-12, 3-10). But the two will meet up again for the third time in the
opening round of the substate tournament on Monday, Feb. 22, at Prairie.

JEFFERSON (62): Webb 5 1-3 11, Green 1 1-3 3, Kramer 2 1-2 7, Van Oort 5 0-0 12,

McKinney 8 0-0 16, Szabo 2 0-0 4, Brown 2 0-0 4, McCauley 2 0-0 5,
Larsen 0 0-0 0. Totals 27 3-8 62.

WASHINGTON (58): Strait 4 0-0 8, Thomas 0 2-2 2, Williams 8 4-7 20, Potter 0 0-0 0, Beard 0 0-0 0, Wills 4 8-8 19, Dawson 1 1-2 3, Hobbs 1 2-7 4,
Jackson 0 0-0 0, Westmoreland 1 0-0 2. Totals 19 17-26 58.

Halftime – Washington 31, Jefferson 27. 3-point goals – Jefferson 5 (Van Oort 2, Kramer 2, McCauley 1), Washington 3 (Wills 3). Fouled out – Wills.