

Cougars overwhelm Hempstead hoopsters

Written by Randy Krejci

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It's the final week of the regular season in Class 4A boys basketball and Kennedy is in a battle with Dubuque Wahlert for second place in the Mississippi Division of the Mississippi Valley Conference, thanks to a relatively easy 77-60 win over Dubuque Hempstead Tuesday night at Kennedy.

No. 7 Kennedy (16-4, 11-4 MVC) had the lead throughout the Senior Night game. The Cougars are tied with Wahlert for second place, four games behind Linn-Mar, with one game remaining in the regular season.

"I wanted consistency on both ends of the floor tonight," Kennedy Coach Bob Fontana said, "and I think we got that."

The Cougars close out their season Thursday at Valley Division champion Cedar Falls.

Kennedy was paced by Jacob Manning with 20 points. Kyle Lamaak chipped in with 14 and Christian French, the University of Oregon football recruit, had 10. French excited the crowd with a couple of monster dunks as he riddled the Mustang defense.

Josiah Coleman scored seven of Kennedy's first nine points to start the game. He also was part of a staunch Kennedy defense that held Hempstead without a field goal until 38 seconds were left in the first quarter.

Kennedy junior Elliott Christians, in a reserve role, had a hot hand early in the game scoring nine quick points.

"The postseason will need us improving on the consistency level," Fontana said. "And we want to make a game out of making great plays, but minimizing our mistakes."

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The Cougars kept turnovers to a minimum even with intense defensive pressure at times by Hempstead.

Three double figure scorers helped Hempstead on this evening and the only returning first team all-conference player for the Mustangs, Gage Heffernan, scored 14 points and 12 of those came in the first half. The leading scorer who had a very hot second half was

Timothy Johnson led Hempstead (8-11, 6-8) with 18 points, scoring 16 in the second half. Gage Heffernan added 14 and Cody Leach had 10. The Mustangs have two games remaining, Thursday at home against No. 5 Iowa City West and Friday at Prairie.

HEMPSTEAD (60): Cory Crawford 0 0-0 0, Timothy Johnson 8 0-0 18, Bradley Duwe 3 2-4 9, Alex Smith 0 5-5 5, Benjamin Goerdts 0 0-0 0, Joshua Viertel 0 0-0 0, Cody Leach 4 2-4 10, Shawn Breitbach 0 0-0 0, Peter Keleher 0 2-2 2, Connor Sindberg 0 0-0 0, Carson Hillery 0 0-0 0, Gage Heffernan 5 2-2 14, Michael Canfield 1 0-0 2. Totals 21 13-17 60.

KENNEDY (77): Jacob Manning 9 2-2 20, Alex Hayden 0 0-0 0, Darius Fuller 0 0-0 0, Jacob Misener 4 1-1 9, Trevor Heitland 0 0-0 0, Herschel Dixon 1 4-4 6, Josh Jahlas 0 0-0 0, Cody Bell 0 0-0 0, Elliott Christians 4 1-1 9, Kyle Lamaak 6 0-0 14, Josiah Coleman 4 0-0 9, Shane Goodall 0 0-0 0, Christian French 5 0-0 10, Ross Ellsworth 0 0-2 0. Totals 33 8-10 77.

Halftime -- Kennedy 36, Hempstead 24. 3-point goals -- Hempstead 5 (Johnson 2, Heffernan 2, Duwe), Kennedy 3 (Lamaak 2, Coleman). Fouls -- Hempstead 12, Kennedy 12.