

## **Prairie rides balanced scoring to victory**

Written by Don Taylor

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Cedar Rapids Prairie hosted Dubuque Hempstead on Friday night in Mississippi Valley Conference basketball and defeated the Mustangs in a defensive struggle, 47-42.

The Hawks took the lead in the first quarter and never gave it up. Prairie welcomed back seniors Tom Eilers and Ty Mougin from inactivity and they gave the Hawks some needed experience, depth and punch.

"It felt so good to be back in the game and helping my teammates," said Eilers, who scored 10 points. "Coach (James Moses) says I am a hybrid. I can play inside and I can play on the perimeter. I think I prefer the outside, though."

Eilers shared scoring honors with Kentrel Smith, who also scored 10 points. None of those points were more important than the four key free throws he dropped in down the stretch to preserve the Prairie lead.

Jace Hanna and JoJo Simpson chipped in nine points apiece to create a very balanced offensive attack for the Hawks.

"I missed the front end of a one-and-one but I didn't let it bother me," said Smith. "I just knew I had to let it go and concentrate on the next one. Just like practice."

"Depth is a beautiful thing," said Moses. "Depth makes you compete and makes everybody play at a higher level. It causes players to take advantage of their opportunities."

"We had to learn at Kennedy how important it is to finish and tonight we proved that we learned that lesson."

Joshua Dolson led all scores for Hempstead with 14 points while Christopher Francis scored 10.

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Prairie is off until next Friday when it plays Linn-Mar in the last game before the holiday break.

HEMPSTEAD (42): Thurmon 1 3-4 5, Weber 1 0-0 2, Carter 1 0-0 2, Dolson 4 4-4 14, Putchio 2 2-2 6, Francis 5 0-1 10, Wilson 0 0-0 0, Arnold 0 0-0 0, Newkirk 1 0-0 3. Totals 15 9-11 42.

PRAIRIE (47): Hanna 2 4-6 9, Smith 2 5-7 10, Butz 0 0-0 0, Meeker 0 0-0 0, Simpson 3 2-3 9, Eilers 3 2-2 10, Bechtel 1 0-0 2, Mims 0 0-0 0, Kuchemann 1 1-2 4, Mouglin 1 1-1 3. Totals 13 15-21 47.

Halftime – Prairie 18, Hempstead 15. 3-point goals – Hempstead 3 (Dolson 2, Newkirk 1), Prairie 6 (Eilers 2, Hanna 1, Smith 1, Simpson 1, Kuchemann 1). Technical foul - Weber.