

Warriors drop another heartbreaker

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 09 February 2011 17:28 - Last Updated Wednesday, 09 February 2011 17:29

Frustration, thy name is Washington.

The heartache continued for the Washington Warriors Tuesday night when they dropped their sixth game of the season to a Top 10 opponent in another nip-and-tuck affair.

The seventh-ranked Cedar Falls Tigers denied the Warriors, 50-48, on a basket by Bobby Brummel with two seconds left in a Mississippi Valley Conference game at Washington.

The Warriors, once ranked themselves, have lost six times to ranked opponents this season with setbacks by 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 points (and one by 25).

Washington Coach Brad Metzger beat a hasty retreat after the game and was unavailable for comment. Wes Washpun, who fouled out, and Josh Oglesby, who shot 6 for 19, also were unavailable.

That left the talking to reserve center McCauley Todd, the only Warrior who lingered in the gym after another frustrating loss.

"Yeah, it's tough," said Todd. "I think we're really, really close. These tough losses, I think, will help us in the long run and in the tournament when we get there."

The Warriors have a 2-6 record against top 10 opponents and they're not done yet. Washington visits top-ranked Linn-Mar Friday night, then faces No.5 Sioux City East in Des Moines on Saturday.

"It's tough, but it will be good for us," said Todd.

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There was only a sparse crowd in the Washington gym on a frigid night. They got to see two of the best point guards in Iowa battle during the first half with Washpun facing Cedar Falls junior James Harrington, but Washpun played only 5 1/2 minutes of the second half and fouled out with 44.8 seconds left.

Cedar Falls Coach Tom Bardal was not disappointed to see Washpun sitting on the bench.

"As a coach sitting there, no," he said. "But as a fan I completely understand. You're talking about two tremendous athletes. I think it's too bad the fans did miss out on that opportunity."

Metzger was clearly unhappy with the officiating. At one point he told a ref that he'd called a "ticky tack" foul on Washpun but didn't blow his whistle when a Cedar Falls player knocked Oglesby to the floor on a drive to the basket.

Oglesby struggled against a box-and-one defense, but he tied the game at 48-48 with a long 3-pointer with 23 seconds to go. Then came more trouble for Washington.

The Warriors forced Harrington into a tough shot in the final seconds, but they neglected to box out. Brummel was right there for an easy putback and a 50-48 lead.

Washington called a pair of timeouts with two seconds left. Sean Bredl fired a long pass toward Oglesby, but the pass was a little off-line and Oglesby could not catch the ball.

The final horn sounded on another tough defeat for the Warriors.

Washpun, a 6-foot-1 senior, scored all 11 of his points in the first half and appeared headed for a strong game. He held Harrington to just two points in the first half (both on free throws), but Washpun was called for his third foul with 1:10 left in the second quarter. That changed the complexion of the game.

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Harrington scored 11 points in the second half, mostly with Washpun on the bench or the Warriors in a zone. Harrington, one of the top all-around athletes in the state, said he was disappointed to see Washpun on the bench for 10 minutes.

"He's really fast, he can jump out of the gym. And he's tall and lengthy," said Harrington. "He's a good defender. He's hard to get around because his arms are so long. He's good."

Washpun set a school record Monday night when he blocked nine shots during a 64-44 victory at Waterloo East.

Cedar Falls and Washington finished a rugged stretch Tuesday with four games in five days.

"I honestly felt it looked like two basketball teams that had played Friday, Saturday and Monday," said Bardal. "And we were just fortunate to score two more points than they did tonight."

Cedar Falls played back-to-back games in Cedar Rapids, beating Jefferson on Monday and Washington on Tuesday.

"We're going to take a day off tomorrow from Cedar Rapids," said Bardal. "We love the town, but we're going to take a day off."

Oglesby led Washington with 22 points.

CEDAR FALLS (50): Harrington 4 5-9 13, Konieczny 5 0-0 14, Boettger 0 0-0 0, Brummel 2 0-0 5, Klinehart 2 0-0 4, Allender 1 0-0 2, Kalund Brown 0 0-2 0, Johnson 4 2-4 10, Kalehl Brown 1 0-0 2, Clark 0 0-0 0. Totals 19 7-13 50.

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WASHINGTON (48): Carr 0 0-1 0, Washpun 4 3-4 11, Moa 2 3-4 8, Oglesby 6 6-6 22, Bredl 1 1-2 3, Hoekstra 1 0-0 2, Tann 0 0-0 0, Todd 1 0-0 2. Totals 15 13-17 48.

Halftime -- Washington 28, Cedar Falls 25. 3-point goals -- Cedar Falls 5 (Konieczny 4, Brummel 1), Washington 5 (Oglesby 4, Moa 1). Fouled out -- Washpun.