Saints rout Waterloo East boys

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As the postseason nears, the Xavier boys are playing some of their best basketball. The Saints posted back-to-back wins for only the second time this season in a 74-51 rout of Waterloo East Tuesday night at Ron Thillen Gymnasium.

The Saints were able to find their groove early with senior center Ryan Mains dominating in the paint and scoring eight points in the first quarter en route to a game high 17 points.

"Mains, down low, got off to a really fast start," senior Mitch McLaughlin said. "It was really good to have an inside presence. After that we just kind of fed off of him when they started collapsing on him."

McLaughlin was one of the benefactors of that, leading the Saints from the outside with 14 points, including four 3-pointers. Waterloo East was led by senior Demetre Van Arsdale with 12 points.

With Mains going to work in the paint and McLaughlin leading the 3-point barrage, the Saints were able to open up a comfortable lead and went into the half up 37-22.

"We shot the ball well (in the first half)," Xavier Coach Matt Jenkins said. "If we didn't shoot as well as we did in the first half, our lead wouldn't have been extended as much as it was, but it kind of kept us in the game."

Waterloo East fought back hard in the third quarter. The Trojans got some fast breaks and began to heat up from behind the arc, hitting five 3-point shots in the quarter and cutting Xavier's lead to six points.

"We had a little mental collapse, but we had a timeout, picked it up, and got back to the basketball that we know how to play," Mains said.

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The fourth quarter the Saints were able to lock down the Waterloo East offense, keeping them off the scoreboard for the first 4:09 of the final quarter. During that stretch, Xavier built their lead up to 20 points and effectively ended the game.

"They started to press and we handled that really well all night," McLaughlin said. "We hit our free throws which is always a good thing. We kind of put them away and they got frustrated."

The victory was big for the Saints. They will be looking to capture their first three-game winning streak against Dubuque Senior at Xavier on Friday before beginning postseason play.

"These games are very important for us," Jenkins said. "We want to get as many wins as we can. Thursday night's going to be a tough game. They are well coached and disciplined. We've just got to make sure we take care of business and not let it get out of hand."

WATERLOO EAST (51): DaQuan Campbell 3 0-1 7, Demetre Van Arsdale 4 2-2 12, Shane Hodges 3 2-2 8, A'Darrius Riley 2 2-2 6, Arkell Todd 1 2-2 4, LaTray Reed 0 0-0 0, Daeton Hoskins 3 0-1 8, Nick Schutte 1 0-0 2, Martavius Robinson 0 1-2 1, Andrew McGrain 1 0-0 3, Octavius Evans 0 0-0 0, Jamonne Culp 0 0-0 0, Norman Gant 0 0-0 0, Shane Green 0 0-0 0, Tyresse Simmons 0 0-0 0. Totals 18 9-12 51.

XAVIER (74): Mitch McLaughlin 5 0-1 14, Ben McDermott 4 0-0 10, Kevin Hosch 4 1-3 9, Nolan Dunkirk 3 0-0 7, Tanner Frazier 0 0-0 0, Carter Valentine 3 1-3 7, Brian Ropp 1 0-0 2, Alec Clasen 4 0-2 8, Ryan Mains 8 1-2 17, Mack Mattke 0 0-0 0, Peter Kokontis 0 0-0 0, Mitch St. Andrews 0 0-0 0. Totals 32 3-11 74.

Halftime -- Xavier 37, Waterloo East 22. 3-point goals -- Waterloo East 6 (Campbell, Van Arsdale 2, Hoskins 2, McGrain), Xavier 7 (McLaughlin 4, McDermott 2, Dunkirk).