

## Saints earn date with No. 7 Mustangs

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 21 February 2017 05:48 -

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MOUNT VERNON - Bryce Schulte faced an unusual situation last month when he was replaced in Xavier's starting lineup by his younger brother.

Bryce, a senior and star football player, was dispatched to the bench in favor of Quinn, a sophomore and a kid who grew up battling his older brothers in the back yard.

A less confident athlete might have sulked and moped about the situation, but not Bryce Schulte.

Schulte was asked Monday night if there have been any fights in their house about who gets to start.

"No, not over starting," he said, smiling. "Maybe some other things, but not over that."

Both Schultes were in the starting lineup Monday night when the Saints whipped DeWitt Central, 70-30, in the opening round of the Class 3A playoffs at Mount Vernon High School.

Quinn Schulte has started the last 10 games after replacing his brother in the lineup. Bryce Schulte, who started the first 12 games of the season, has returned to the starting lineup the last two games with Jackson Joens sidelined while trying to fully recover from a concussion.

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The Schultes combined for 17 points Monday as Xavier (11-11) earned a date with seventh-ranked Mount Vernon (17-5) in the district finals Thursday at 7 p.m. at Mount Vernon.

"I'll try to do anything for my team," said Bryce Schulte, who will be joining the University of Iowa football team this summer. "Quinn, obviously, has the right to play, even if it means starting over me.

"I don't really care about starting, so it's not a big deal."

Bryce Schulte is a 6-foot-3 power forward who normally plays near the basket and Quinn Schulte is a 6-foot-1 guard who normally plays on the perimeter. When Coach Ryan Luehrsmann changed the starting lineup, he wanted to spread the floor a little more and get another ballhandler on the court to help Matt Mims and Nolan Butkowski.

The Saints got off to a 4-and-9 start this season, but they've played much better with the smaller, quicker lineup on the floor and have raised their record to 11-11.

Luehrsmann said Bryce Schulte responded like a champion when Quinn replaced him in the starting lineup last month.

"You wouldn't expect anything different from a Schulte, just the way they've been raised by their parents. They're exceptional," said Luehrsmann. "If anything, it's made Bryce work harder."

Luehrsmann said the older Schulte has spent even more time in the gym, taking extra shots to get better.

"It's made a difference," the coach said. "When he goes out there now, he's a little bit more assertive, a little more confident."

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Joens, a 6-foot-6 junior who is averaging 11 points, has missed the last two games due to the lingering effects of a concussion suffered against Dubuque Wahlert. Joens will be evaluated again Tuesday with hopes of facing Mount Vernon on Thursday.

"We're optimistic, but we don't know," Luehrsmann said. "It would be big (to have him back). He's a very skilled, high IQ basketball player. He's one of the best shooters in the state. So we're hoping that we get him back.

"We just have to make the best of the situation, whatever it is."

Butkowski popped in four 3-pointers in the first half Monday and led the Saints with 16 points, seven assists and six rebounds. Max Techau finished with 12 points and 11 rebounds. Mims had 11 points, six assists, three steals and two rebounds.

Bryce Schulte made all four of his shots and finished with eight points and four rebounds. Quinn Schulte contributed nine points.

BJ Frick and Matthew Burke scored 11 points apiece for DeWitt Central (5-17).

**DEWITT CENTRAL (30):** Steffens 1 0-0 2, Campbell 0 0-0 0, McNamara 0 0-0 0, Frick 4 3-4 11, Good 0 0-0 0, Burke 5 0-2 11, McAleer 1 0-0 3, Kueter 1 0-1 3, Haack 0 0-0 0, Townsley 0 0-2 0, McDevitt 0 0-0 0, Ketelsen 0 0-0 0. Totals 12 3-9 30.

**XAVIER (70):** Keating 0 0-0 0, Ropp 1 0-0 3, Lux 0 0-0 0, Mims 4 3-4 11, Scott 0 0-0 0, Butkowski 6 0-0 16, Dempewolf 2 1-2 5, Q.Schulte 3 2-2 9, Bartels 1 2-2 4, Hines 0 0-0 0, Moeder 0 0-0 0, Techau 5 2-4 12, Johnson 1 0-0 2, B.Schulte 4 0-0 8. Totals 27 10-14 70.

Halftime - Xavier 33, DeWitt Central 13. 3-point goals - DeWitt Central 3 (Burke 1, McAleer 1,

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Kueter 1), Xavier 6 (Butkowski 4, Ropp 1, Q.Schulte 1).