

No. 9 Wahlert escapes Saints boys

Written by Michael Schmidt

Thursday, 03 February 2011 22:46 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 February 2011 22:56

DUBUQUE – The shot was in the air, and Xavier Coach Matt Jenkins thought it was “dead on.”

Instead, Kevin Hosch’s desperation 3-pointer at the buzzer hit off the back iron, and Dubuque Wahlert escaped with a 59-56 victory over the Saints Thursday at Wahlert High School.

The game was moved to Thursday after a blizzard forced its postponement Tuesday night.

Clasen scored 13 of his team-high 18 points in the fourth quarter. Xavier trailed by 11 points, 56-45, with four minutes left in regulation, but nearly rallied to upset the Class 3A No. 9 Golden Eagles.

“Kevin got open, but he just missed,” Jenkins said. “Wahlert is a good team, and this is a tough place to play.

“I thought we played well enough to win.”

Xavier (4-12, 3-8 MVC) went on a 11-3 run late in the fourth to narrow Wahlert’s lead to 59-56. The Saints had one last shot after calling a timeout in front of their bench.

It appeared the Saints were trying to get guard Ben McDermott free for the tying shot. The ball ended up in Hosch’s hands instead, and his long-range 3-point attempt was off.

“We had three or four different options on the play. We put our best guys on the floor,” Jenkins said.

Xavier took advantage of a slow-starting Wahlert squad to take a 29-23 halftime lead. The

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Saints went cold in the third quarter, however, and the Eagles seized control.

Wahlert (11-4, 8-3 MVC) broke Xavier's full-court press and trap and scored easy buckets. The Eagles went on a 11-2 run over the final five minutes of the third quarter to take a two-point lead.

Wahlert extended its lead further in the fourth quarter, thanks to reserve Mike Francis.

Francis, a 6-foot-7 senior, scored eight points in the first 2:30 of the fourth quarter to help the Eagles get out in front.

"(Xavier) is a scrappy team. They're just young and need to get over the hump," Wahlert Coach Tom English said. "We knew we were going to be in for a battle."

Xavier, despite its cold third quarter where it scored only seven points, shot well in streaks. The Saints hit eight 3-pointers, with Clasen accounting for four and McDermott for three.

"It boiled down to Wahlert getting layups while we settled for jump shots," Jenkins said. "Wahlert got the easier shots."

Clasen said the Saints, despite their record, are starting to turn the corner at the end of the season.

"It would have been a big victory," Clasen said. "The coaches had us prepared well to play in a hostile environment.

"In the end, we just couldn't could grab (the victory)."

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XAVIER (56) – Mitch McLaughlin 3 0-0 6, Ben McDermott 3 0-0 9, Kevin Hosch 1 2-2 4, Alec Clasen 6 2-4 18, Ryan Mains 1 0-0 2, Nolan Dunkirk 1 0-0 2, Mack Mattke 3 2-3 9, Carter Valentine 1 2-2 4, Brian Ropp 0 0-0 0, Peter Kokontis 1 0-0 2. Totals 20 8-11 56.

WAHLERT (59) – Aaron Schueller 3 0-0 6, Riley McCarron 3 2-3 10, Jake May 5 2-4 14, Ryan Ernst 2 4-6 8, Dan Sisler 4 1-2 9, Jon Moore 1 0-0 2, Mike Francis 4 2-2 10, Nathan Burks 0 0-0 0. Totals 22 11-17 59.

Halftime – Xavier 29, Wahlert 23. 3-point goals – Xavier 8 (McDermott 3, Clasen 4, Mattke), Wahlert 3 (McCarron, May 2). Total fouls – Xavier 15, Wahlert 14. Fouled out – None.