

Halupnik sparks Lions by Prairie

Written by Mike Condon

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There were a lot of smiles on the faces of Linn-Mar's players and coaches as they came out of the locker room Friday night at Prairie.

None were bigger or brighter than the one on the face of senior Lane Halupnik. On a team where guards Jordan Bohannon and Nic Uhlir do the bulk of the scoring, Halupnik is the guy who does the little things.

Against the Hawks, Halupnik did some of the big things as well. He scored 14 points, including a pair of 3-point baskets as part of 14-2 run in the third quarter, and the Lions went on to post a 66-54 win before a near-capacity crowd in the Prairie gym.

"Lane really buys in defensively, he knows that is his role," said Linn-Mar Coach Chris Robertson. "He always guards the best player on the other team.

"It was nice to see tonight that he got a little offense going," added the Lion coach. "We needed that because we weren't moving the ball that well in the first half."

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Halupnik was happy to see his offense come around.

"It was nice to finally get some points on the board," he said. "It's all about the drive and kick for us. We have so many shooters so once we get in the lane, you just have to get to an open spot and tonight I was able to find those spots."

The extra production was needed. The Lions led 17-10 after one quarter thanks to a half-court buzzer-beater from Bohannon.

But Prairie turned things up in the second quarter behind Austin Fisher. He nailed a pair of 3-point baskets and his lay-in with 1:20 left gave the Hawks a 24-22 lead.

"We settled too much and we just stopped guarding," Robertson said. "Prairie took advantage of that and hit some shots. It was a bad combination of things for us the last minute of the half. Fortunately we were able to correct it in the second half."

The game was tied 26-26 at halftime. Uhlir hit a 3-pointer to start the second half. Ben Boldt countered for Prairie, cutting the gap to one.

Then it was Halupnik's time. He hit a 3-point basket, converted a single foul shot, then came back with another three. Boldt cut the lead to 36-30, but a trey from Uhlir and lay-ins from Trevor Noble and Jason Tichy pushed the margin to 13. Prairie got no closer than eight the rest of the way.

Bohannon led the Lions with 18 points while Uhlir added 16. Fisher led Prairie (3-3) with 15. Jalen Rima finished with 10 for Prairie.

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"This group is very capable," Robertson said. "We've got the pieces (to compliment Bohannon and Uhlir). Tonight Lane was the guy and he came through when we really needed it."



Halupnik wasn't surprised by how tough Prairie made it on the Lions.

"They had a lot of energy," he said of the Hawks. "It's always like this every time you go on the road in the (Mississippi Valley Conference). Getting a win on the road, no matter where it happens, is really big."

LINN-MAR (66): Uhlir 5 3-5 16, Noble 2 1-2 5, Bohannon 4 6-6 18, Halupnik 4 3-4 14, Schmidt 1 0-0 2, Brandt 0 0-0 0, Tichy 2 0-0 4, Klostermann 2 0-0 5, Murphy 1 0-1 2. Totals: 21 13-18 66.

PRAIRIE (54): Havel-Pisarik 2 1-2 6, Drahos 2 0-0 4, Rima 3 4-6 10, Boldt 3 0-0 6, Schrader 2 0-0 5, Fisher 5 2-2 15, Brown 1 0-0 3, Meeker 0 0-0 0, Lorenz 2 0-0 5. Totals: 20 7-10 54.

Halftime: Linn-Mar 26, Prairie 26. 3-point goals: Linn-Mar 11 (Bohannon 4, Uhlir 3, Halupnik 3,

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Klostermann 1), Prairie 7 (Havel-Pisarik 1,
Schrader 1, Fisher 3, Brown 1, Lorenz 1). Total fouls: Linn-Mar 14,

Prairie 16. Fouled out: none. Technical fouls: none.