

Balanced Lions dunk Cougars by 20

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 05 January 2016 23:06 - Last Updated Tuesday, 05 January 2016 23:26



If you thought the Linn-Mar Lions were a one-man band, take another look and guess again.

The Lions played like a finely tuned orchestra Tuesday night in a 76-56 victory over the Kennedy Cougars in a Mississippi Valley Conference boys basketball game at Linn-Mar.

Linn-Mar star Jordan Bohannon does not have to score 40 points for the Lions to mow down a Metro opponent like he did against Prairie two weeks ago, not when his teammates are hitting all the right notes like they did against Kennedy.

Bohannon had a sub-par shooting night and scored only 17 points -- six points under his average -- but it hardly mattered with a balanced attack that kept Kennedy off-balance much of the night.

Riley Murphy had a hot hand and tossed in 17 points for Linn-Mar, Jared Printy notched 16 points, Jordan Brandt had 12 points and Beau Klostermann nearly made it five guys in double figures with nine points.

"We all got it going," Murphy said. "We all came together. I know Jordan had 40 the other night, but in the first half he wasn't shooting as well as he usually does so I guess I had to step up and other guys made some shots too."

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"I just got open shots. I'm confident taking them and Coach is confident in my shot."

Murphy was averaging only 5.7 points when the night began, so he nearly tripled his normal output. Murphy had a nice flurry and tossed in three 3-pointers against the Cougars. Printy hit four triples.

"It's always good when you can have balance," Printy said. "You never want to rely on one guy. You want a team effort."

"It's definitely something we preach," he said. "We practice ball movement and having all five guys ready to score. When we have to play teams that are like that, we know how tough it is to guard them."

Bohannon shot only 6-for-19 from the floor and was 2-for-9 on 3-pointers, a far cry from his pre-Christmas performance against Prairie when he tossed in nine 3-pointers and barely missed all night. The future Iowa Hawkeye proved he's human against the Cougars, but the 10th-ranked Lions (5-2) won by 20 points anyway.

"It's fun when you see Jordan go off or a guy get a hot hand, but that balance is nice," Linn-Mar coach Chris Robertson said. "Murphy hit some big ones in a big stretch for him. He's such a good leader. He's one of our captains. He knows how to play and understands the game so well."

"It's good to see him get a hot hand."

Printy is averaging 13.6 points at Linn-Mar following his transfer from Cedar Rapids Washington. He may turn out to be the missing link as the Lions compete for an MVC title and a trip to the state tournament.

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Printy has fit comfortably onto his new club.

"It's been unbelievably smooth," he said. "They've welcomed me with open arms and made me feel like I've been here with them all the time."

Kennedy chopped a 17-point deficit down to eight points at 61-53 in the fourth quarter, but the Lions scored 10 straight points for a 71-53 bulge on a bucket by Brandt, a 3-pointer by Printy, three free throws by Brandt and two foul shots by Murphy.

Linn-Mar's biggest lead was 21 points at 76-55.

Kennedy coach Jon McKowen, who juggled his starting lineup, thought his club played well in spurts but not for the entire game.

"We're meshing, but it's a slow process," he said after the Cougars fell to 3-5. "We just have to put it together for 32 minutes. It feels like we played 2 1/2 quarters tonight. That's kind of where we sit.

"We have two months to become a really good basketball team for 32 minutes. We're about 15 minutes away right now, but it's very attainable. Every mistake we made tonight is very fixable."

Michael Bisenius popped in five 3-pointers and led Kennedy with 15 points. Derrick Diggins scored 14 points despite not starting. Drake Brewster had 11 points.

KENNEDY (56): Brewster 4 3-7 11, Gardner 2 0-2 4, Girling 1 0-0 2, Berst 1 0-0 3, Duehr 0 0-0

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0, Krall 0 1-2 1, Jenkins 0 0-0 0, Diggins 5 2-2 14,
Foley 0 0-0 0, Bisenius 5 0-0 15, Harris 0 0-0 0, Beyer 3 0-0 6, Wiebel 0
0-0 0, King 0 0-0 0, Wall 0 0-0 0. Totals 21 6-13 56.

LINN-MAR (76): Mentzer 0 0-0 0, Printy 6 0-0 16, Murphy 6 2-2 17, Towlerton 0 0-0 0, Phillips
1 1-2 3, Werkman 0 0-0 0, Bohannon 6 3-3 17,
Kraus 0 0-0 0, Klostermann 2 5-8 9, Voves 1 0-0 2, Cronin 0 0-0 0, Miller
0 0-0 0, Hand 0 0-0 0, Brandt 2 7-8 12, Kerr 0 0-0 0. Totals 24 18-23 76.

Halftime - Linn-Mar 39, Kennedy 33. 3-point goals - Kennedy 8 (Bisenius 5, Diggins 2, Berst 1),
Linn-Mar 10 (Printy 4, Murphy 3, Bohannon 2, Brandt
1).