

No. 6 Lions fall to No. 2 Trojans

Written by Pat Harty

Friday, 15 January 2016 23:39 -



IOWA CITY – Defeating the Iowa City West boys basketball team always presents a difficult challenge, even with two-fifths of its starting lineup missing.

Sixth-ranked Linn-Mar found that out the hard way Friday, losing to a depleted West squad 77-71 at the West High gymnasium.

Senior forward Wali Parks led four West players in double figures with 24 points, including 17 in the second half. Freshman forward Patrick McCaffery moved into the starting lineup for Friday's game and contributed 14 points, while senior Nate Barnes more than doubled his 5.9 scoring average with 13 points.

The 27 points scored by McCaffery and Barnes helped fill the void left by missing starters Connor McCaffery and Tanner Lohaus.

Connor McCaffery, who is Patrick's older brother and the son of Iowa basketball coach Fran McCaffery, missed Friday's game because of a concussion, while Lohaus has been out for a nearly a month with a foot injury.

"Them not having two players obviously hurt them, but they're so good," Linn-Mar coach Chris Robertson said. "I mean they've got guys who can play. So we knew that type of an effort was coming and I thought our guys matched their effort.

"I thought our effort was really good, but we gave up some untimely offensive rebounds. That

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was the tough part for us tonight was on the offensive glass.”

The acrobatic Parks was largely the reason for that. He scored 12 points in the third quarter, including eight of his team’s 10 consecutive points during one pivotal stretch.

“Linn-Mar doesn’t really key in on defense,” Parks said. “I don’t think they had any guys who could guard any of our guys.



"They score a lot of points. But they also give up a lot of points."

West entered Friday’s game with a 107-13 record since 2010 and has won three state titles during that six-year stretch. But the second-ranked Trojans also had lost their most recent game Tuesday against Dubuque Wahlert, so there was extra incentive to win Friday.

“That kind of bummed us out a little bit because we have a loss in conference and that’s one of our goals to win conference,” Parks said. “I think this win is really big right now because I don’t think Linn-Mar had a loss in the conference.”

West improved to 8-3 overall and 6-1 in the Mississippi Valley Conference, while Linn-Mar fell to 7-3 and 6-1 in the conference.

Robertson reminded his players after Friday’s loss that the season still is far from over. He was more concerned about moving on than dwelling on a

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missed opportunity.

"I haven't even thought about that, to be honest," Robertson said. "That's what we just talked about. There are five weeks left. There is a lot of season left.

"They're the favorite. And even without those two guys, I'd still put them as the favorite. They have all the pieces. They have a lot of guys who can chip in.

"They don't take bad shots. They share it and find a way to get it around the basket and exploit some match-ups. And they did that tonight."

All-state guard Jordan Bohannon led Linn-Mar with 22 points, but he had to work hard for open looks against West's pressure defense under coach Steve Bergman.

"The strategy with Bohannon was just to guard him as best you can," West guard Devontae Lane said. "Bergman said before the game, have a hand up at all times, as soon as your hand drops, he's going to shoot. And that's what he did and he made shots. He's a really good player."

Bohannon described Friday's game as being physical. He thinks his team might have rushed a few shots, which helped West score in transition.

Linn-Mar was leading 46-40 when West answered with a 10-0 scoring run, including eight points by Parks.

"We were feeling good and we're moving the ball and then a couple quick shots here and there, that kind of hurt us," said Bohannon, who has signed

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a letter of intent with Iowa for basketball. "And they went on that run and we couldn't really get back."

Robertson seemed less than pleased with the officiating, which he described as being inconsistent from one half to the other.

Starters Beau Klostermann and Jordan Brandt both fouled out for Linn-Mar in the fourth quarter. Brandt scored all 14 of his points in the first half.

"Apparently, they did a better job of not fouling in the second half than they did in the first half," Robertson said of West. "It's just hard to get to get to the rim on them. And if the officials aren't blowing the whistle, then you're not going to get to the rim and that makes it a tough night.

"I mean they guard, there is no doubt about it. They guard you hard. But it just seemed like it was different in the second half than it was in the first half. So they must have stepped it up."

LINN-MAR (71): Jordan Bohannon 8-18 0-0 22, Jared Printy 4-10 1-2 13, Beau Klostermann 3-5 1-2 7, Jordan Brandt 5-9 2-2 14, Riley Murphy 3-5 4-4 11, Reese Phillips 0-1 1-2 1, Tyler Voves 1 1-2 3. Totals 24-48 10-14 71.

WEST (77): Devontae Lane 5-9 5-12 16, Wali Parks 10-14 3-4 24, Alex Henderson 1-5 3-4, 5, Nate Barnes 4-5 4-5 13, Patrick McCaffery 5-9 3-6 14, Dallas Majors 0-0 0-0 0, Nate Disterhoft 2-4 0-0 5. Totals 27-46 18-31 77.

Halftime - Linn-Mar 38, Iowa City West 37. 3-point goals – Linn-Mar 10 (Printy 4, Bohannon 3, Brandt 2, Murphy 1), West 5 (Lane 1, Parks 1, Barnes 1, McCaffery 1, Disterhoft 1). Fouls – Linn-Mar 21, West 16. Fouled

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out - Klostermann, Brandt.