

## Pleasant Valley ends Linn-Mar hoops streak

Written by Matt Coss, Quad-City Times  
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BETTENDORF - It'll be a difficult feat for any school to match.

For the past nine years, with names such as Jason Bohannon, Jordan Printy, Grant Gibbs and Marcus Paige, Linn-Mar's boys basketball team has been a fixture at the Class 4A state tournament in March. The Lions' state-record streak came to a halt Friday night.

Even with Austin Esters, its second-leading scorer sidelined for the season with a broken right leg, Pleasant Valley stymied Linn-Mar 54-40 in a substate semifinal at PV High School.

"We weren't very good," Linn-Mar head coach Chris Robertson said. "I feel bad for people that paid to watch.

"We weren't sharp all night, and I'm not sure why."

After a 2-6 start to the season, the Lions had won 11 of their last 14 and appeared poised to make another late-season charge.

But Linn-Mar (13-10) was a meager 2-for-24 from the 3-point line, including 16 consecutive misses at one point. Senior Matt Lassen, averaging nearly 11 points a game, was hindered by an ankle injury suffered earlier in the week in practice and mustered only three points.

"This team didn't have a whole lot of margin for error," Robertson said, "and when you have a night like tonight where you aren't making shots, it gets tough."

PV (15-6) advances to Tuesday night's Class 4A substate final against Dubuque Senior (21-1)

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at Clinton High School. The Rams handed the Spartans their most lopsided loss of the year in January, 60-41.

Before it turned its attention to a rematch, PV was savoring its first victory over a plus-.500 team this season.

In five of their six defeats this season to Bettendorf, North Scott and Davenport Assumption, a combined 59-9, the Spartans led, were tied or within a possession with 4 minutes remaining.

This time, PV had an answer in the second half, seizing control with a 12-0 surge late in the third quarter and early in the fourth to snatch a 13-point advantage.

"We couldn't get the stop when we really needed it and couldn't get the big make when we needed it," Robertson said. "And when you get down seven, eight or nine points to them, it is like a 15-point game. It is tough to claw back."

Senior Kain Arthofer drained four 3-pointers and finished with a game-high 22 points for PV, while Noah Bryant was inserted into the starting lineup for the injured Esters and contributed 15 points and seven rebounds. Esters injured his leg in the final week of the regular season.

"We had a choice with Austin out to either take the woe is me, lay down and finish our year off, or decide we're going to bust our butt and relearn roles in a week and go after people," PV head coach Steve Hillman said. "I was really proud of our seniors. They stepped up in their last home game and showed people what kind of team we can be."

Derik Gogg led the Lions with 11 points, while Jimmy Roth finished with eight points and 13 rebounds but was 3-for-12 from the field.

"We really guarded them well tonight," Bryant said. "We had a good scouting report and really locked down on their shooters."

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Offensively, PV controlled the tempo with long possessions.

"It is hard to defend them because you're got to defend for so long," Robertson remarked. "We just weren't sharp tonight, and when you're not sharp this time of year, you're probably going home."

Linn-Mar graduates three of its top four scorers in Lassen, Roth and Gogg.

"I don't know if I've been more proud of a team from where we started to where we finished," Robertson said. "The guys started playing with confidence and the leadership was there."

"It took a while for them to figure out when it says Linn-Mar on your chest, you're going to get everybody's best shot. Once they figured that out, we put some wins together."

LINN-MAR (40): Matt Lassen 1-4 0-0 3, Jordan Bohannon 1-10 0-0 3, Jon Schlotterback 2-3 3-4 7, Jimmy Roth 3-12 2-2 8, Derik Gogg 3-8 5-7 11, Matt Meier 0-4 4-4 4, Nic Uhler 1-4 0-0 2, Zach Martins 0-0 0-0 0, Caleb Nelson 0-1 0-0 0, Nate Dick 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 12-47 14-17 40.

PLEASANT VALLEY (54): AJ Smith 5-7 2-5 13, Conor Bryant 1-2 0-0 2, Matt Witcik 1-3 0-0 2, Kain Arthofer 6-12 6-6 22, Noah Bryant 4-8 7-9 15, Tanner Lafever 0-0 0-0 0, Chase Kipper 0-0 0-0 0, KV Gill 0-0 0-0 0, Dylan French 0-1 0-0 0, Nathaniel Scott 0-0 0-0 0, Ryan Spelhaug 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 17-33 15-20 54.

Halftime - Pleasant Valley 17, Linn-Mar 14. 3-point goals - Linn-Mar 2-24 (Bohannon 1-9, Lassen 1-4, Roth 0-5, Meier 0-3, Uhler 0-3); PV 5-15 (Arthofer 4-7, Smith 1-2, Carius 0-3, N. Bryant 0-2, C. Bryant 0-1). Rebounds - Linn-Mar 26 (Roth 13); PV 35 (C. Bryant 11, N. Bryant 7). Turnovers - Linn-Mar 5, PV 12. Total fouls - Linn-Mar 19, PV 17. Fouled out - none.