

Prairie pounds Mount Pleasant, 60-32

Written by Ryan Suchomel

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Cedar Rapids Prairie enjoys its status as the Forrest Gump-style "box of chocolates" of the Mississippi Valley Conference.

On Tuesday, the Prairie Hawks beat Mount Pleasant, 60-32, in a boys basketball game at Prairie High School.

Eleven different Prairie Hawks scored, led by Michael Mims with 13 points. Bryce Meeker added eight points.

"You can't think of who was our leading scorer," Prairie Coach James Moses said. "We did it as a team. Together everyone achieves more. That's the whole premise of what we operate from."

Moses used his fourth different starting lineup in four games this season.

"It doesn't allow us to get complacent and it gives other players a chance to get opportunities," Moses said. "We are a team by committee."

"It's nice when you're getting scouted. You can't pick one player. Anyone can go off any given night."

Mims, a junior guard, has been the only player to start all four games for Prairie (2-2).

"We haven't had a consistent starting five yet; we're still trying to find the right fit," Mims said. "Coach is working on that. We trust him."

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Moses, a former Iowa player, uses some of the same tactics of his former coach, Tom Davis. He substitutes freely, and often five players at a time.

"As coaches, we're always learning," Moses said. "The biggest thing is how we can adjust. When the players buy in, it becomes an enjoyable experience."

On Tuesday both the starters and bench were fierce defensively, limiting the Panthers to just 3-of-18 shooting (16.7 percent) in the first half.

"We were just playing hard man (defense) and turned it up with our press," Mims said. "We played solid, good help defense. We do what we were supposed to do."

"We closed out really hard. We've been working on that in practice. Chop our feet and stay low."

Prairie opened the second quarter with a driving lay-up by Austin Fisher and a 3-pointer by Mims to go ahead 17-4. The Prairie Hawks led 25-11 at half.

"We've got 11 guys strong," said junior forward JoJo Simpson, who has come off the bench the last two games after starting the first two. "We just have to come together and figure it out."

"We love playing together. We don't mind who's starting. We just come in and play for each other."

Prairie worked the paint in the third quarter, with Jalen Rima, Bryce Meeker and Simpson all scoring buckets on offensive rebounds. The Prairie Hawks outrebounded the Panthers 36 to 21.

"We need to establish an inside-outside game," Moses said. "We like to shoot threes, so it

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becomes more difficult (on the defense) to close out if we're inside finishing."

Prairie went on a 9-0 run to start the fourth quarter, building its lead up to 49-22 before closing it out.

Dustin Amos and Zachary Mulford led Mount Pleasant (0-4) with six points apiece.

It was an important bounce-back for Prairie after losing 67-64 at Muscatine on Saturday.

"We've gained confidence in ourselves, and we trust each other now," Mims said. "We're trusting each other, coming together."

The Prairie Hawks have to come together in a hurry. They open MVC play Friday at No. 3 Dubuque Senior. Prairie senior Kentrel Smith, who has missed the last three games with an ankle injury, remains questionable.

"We're looking forward to that challenge," Moses said. "They have a nice front line and from a size standpoint, we've got to make an adjustment."

"We're looking forward to a big-time team," Simpson said. "But we have to be ready."

You never know what you're going to get.

MOUNT PLEASANT (32): Brandon Sanchez 1-5 0-0 3, Trey Magnani 2-9 0-0 5, Dustin Amos 3-6 0-1 6, Zachary Mulford 2-9 1-2 6, Patrick Canby 0-3 2-2 2, Spencer White 1-1 0-0 2, Beau Parkevich 0-3 1-4 1, Benjamin Canby 0-0 0-0 0, Koby Raymond 2-3 0-0 5, Nathan McConnell 0-0 0-0 0, Garrett Carlston 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 12-40 4-9 32.

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PRAIRIE (60): Coen Brown 1-3 2-2 5, Michael Mims 5-9 0-0 13, Austin Fisher 2-5 0-0 4, Jalen Rima 2-4 0-0 4, Bryce Meeker 4-5 0-0 8, Cal Clark 1-1 0-0 3, JoJo Simpson 3-7 0-1 6, Dylan Kuchemann 2-3 0-0 4, Drew Yanecek 1-2 1-2 3, Mitchell Lorenz 2-6 0-0 6, Austin Schrader 1-1 0-0 2, Brody Albert 0-1 0-0 0, Andrew Denney-Bechtel 0-0 0-0 0, Zachary Moyer 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 24-57 3-6 60.

Mount Pleasant 4 7 11 10 -- 32

Prairie 12 13 15 20 -- 60

3-point goals - MtP 4-20 (Sanchez 1-5, Magnai 1-4, Amos 0-1, Mulford 1-5, Canby 0-1, Parkevich 0-3, Raymond 1-1), CRP 7-17 (Brown 1-3, Mims 3-5, Fisher 0-1, Clark 1-1, Simpson 0-2, Yanecek 0-1, Lorenz 2-3, Alberts 0-1). Rebounds - MtP 21 (Canby 4), CRP 36 (Fisher 8, Rima 7). Turnovers - MtP 16, CRP 13. Total fouls - MtP 9, CRP 17. Fouled out - none.