

McDermott's prayer answered

Written by Mike Condon

Tuesday, 17 December 2013 23:01 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 December 2013 00:30



Adam McDermott proved himself to be a clutch performer when he got his opportunities last season as a sophomore.

But nothing he did as a 10th grader could match what the Xavier guard pulled off to win Tuesday night's game against Jefferson at the Ron Thillen Gymnasium.

Jefferson's Brandon Wiederin split a pair of free throws with 2.3 seconds remaining that gave the J-Hawks a two-point lead.

Xavier got the ball in to McDermott, who weaved through a wave of Jefferson defenders to let a shot go at half court, just ahead of the final buzzer. It banked in off the glass, lifting the Saints to a 36-35 victory.

"We had two seconds left and I just wanted to get it off," McDermott said. "I just put it up and luckily it went in. I kinda bobbled the ball and had three guys around me. I just had to shoot it."

Did McDermott think the ball was going in?

"No way," he said.

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McDermott's miracle shot put was a great finish to a night that had been anything but great for Coach Ryan Luehrsmann's team, now 4-1. Jefferson was again playing without senior point guard Jacob Olson, who warmed up, but wasn't able to go because of an injured ankle.

Luehrsmann had a timeout to use, but said he decided to let McDermott attempt to make a play.

"That was simply a talented player that didn't want to lose making a play," he said. "He did stuff like that last year when given the opportunity and did stuff like that for us this summer. I am just happy he was able to come through for us."

The heroics from McDermott left the J-Hawks defeated, but far from deflated. With Olson watching from the bench, the eight players who saw action for Jefferson put up a pesky zone defense that had the Saints befuddled at times.

Jefferson Coach Stu Ordman felt his team, once it adjusted to not having Olson on the floor, played an outstanding game, especially on defense.

"I thought after we settled down late in the first quarter, we played really well," Ordman said. "Defensively we played much better. We just have to learn to manage the time and score situations a little better."

Xavier built a 12-4 lead midway through the second quarter, but the Saints offense went dry for nearly eight minutes as Jefferson rallied to take its first lead midway through the third quarter.

Jefferson took a 20-18 advantage into the final eight minutes. A 7-0 run to start the fourth gave Xavier a 25-20 lead. The J-Hawks, behind the strong play of junior Tyler Konigsmark, who scored all 12 of his points in the final period, fought back again.

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"He really reached down and came through for us," Ordman said of Konigsmark's effort.

Jefferson went on a 12-2 run, capped by a Wiederin lay-in after wild scramble for the ball with 1:10 remaining to take a 32-27 lead.

Jefferson was hurt by missed foul shots in the final minute and Xavier did itself no favors with three turnovers when it had chances to tie or take the lead.

Still it appeared Jefferson would hold on. Wiederin was fouled in the backcourt with 2.3 left. He missed the first and made the second, setting the stage for McDermott, who led all scorers with 13 points, 11 coming in the fourth quarter.

"We need to get our offense going a little better," McDermott said. "Our defense was pretty good tonight. My shot wasn't going down and we couldn't get our offense going."

Ordman said the J-Hawks (1-4) had plenty of good things to build on.

"With Olson out, it is a very inexperienced team," Ordman said. "Hopefully they grew up a lot tonight. There were a lot more positives than negatives to take away from tonight. I was proud of the boys and their effort."

Xavier faces a big task on Friday, hitting the road to play Class 4A No. 1 Iowa City West.

"We'll just have to go in there with a lot of intensity and try to knock off the No. 1 team," McDermott said.

JEFFERSON (35): Davis Hall 0 0-0 0, Bryce Cardis 0 0-0 0, Jake Van Oort 1 0-0 2, Brandon Wiederin 3 1-3 7, Lucas Larson 2 0-0 4, Adam Van Oort 4 0-0 8, Tyler Konigsmark 4 4-8 12,

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Kevonte Jones 1 0-0 2. Totals 15 5-11 35.

XAVIER (36): Matt Downey 0 0-0 0, Adam McDermott 4 3-3 13, Connor Ramlo 0 0-0 0, Calvin Winker 2 1-2 5, Matt Nelson 1 2-2 4, Andrew Bisenius 4 0-0 8, Frank Hill 3 0-0 6. Totals 14 6-7 36.

Jefferson 2 10 8 15 - 35

Xavier 6 6 6 18 - 36

3-point goals - Xavier 2 (McDermott 2). Total fouls - Jefferson 15, Xavier 15. Fouled out - None. Turnovers - Jefferson 13, Xavier 15.