

Carter lifts Cougars by Warriors

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Washington Warriors made a living against Kennedy last season with three victories against the Cougars, but not this year.

A.J. Carter would not allow it.

Carter pitched in 23 points Tuesday night as Kennedy nudged the Warriors, 59-52, in a Mississippi Valley Conference game at Kennedy to sweep the regular-season series.

Kennedy and Washington could meet again in the Class 4A substate tournament, but for now the Cougars own a 2-0 edge on their cross-town rivals.

Kennedy did not like going 0-for-3 against the Warriors last season.

"Oh yeah, it's been a little chip on our shoulder," said Carter, a slick point guard. "All the guys have been on board. Whenever Wash comes to our house, we want to get the 'W'. Tough win, but a win's a win."

Carter hit a 3-point shot at the halftime buzzer to give Kennedy a 32-23 lead, but the Warriors rallied and tied 39-39 at the end of the third quarter on a 3-pointer by Steven Kramer.

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"We lost a little fight coming out in the second half," said Kennedy Coach Jon McKowen. "Inner-city games are never going to be easy, and they came storming back. We had to turn it up again in the fourth quarter."

Kennedy raised its records to 14-4 overall and 10-3 in the league. Washington fell to 4-14 overall and 4-9, but despite the records it was nip-and-tuck.

"We took a really, really good ballclub on their home floor right down to the end," said Washington Coach Adam Sanchez. "Missed too many free throws, which makes it tough. It's kind of been our M.O. all season."

The Warriors made only 4 of 13 foul shots.

Carter created his own shot and scored to make it 47-43, added two free throws for a 49-43 edge and scored again to make it 51-43 with a nice feed from Drew Heitland.

Washington pulled within 54-51 with one minute remaining on a basket by Keegan Moore, but a free throw by Zach Daniels and two foul shots by Jal Bill gave Kennedy a 57-51 edge with 23.5 seconds left and sealed the victory.

Carter finished the scoring with two free throws in the final seconds.

Carter, a 6-foot senior, is drawing interest from local and area colleges for his services next season. McKowen predicts a bright future for his floor captain, who has a knack for getting to the basket with creative moves.

"He's going to be really good (in college), because he's so versatile that he can play the '1' and play the '2'," said McKowen, referring to the point guard and off-guard positions. "And he's

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sneaky athletic. He jumps up for some of those rebounds and he can play around the rim at 6 foot. Not a lot of guys have that.

"As good as a basketball player he is, he's a better leader for us right now," the coach said. "He gets people in the right spots emotionally, getting them up when they're down, and keeping them down so they don't get too high.

"As coaches we have great confidence in him. When he gets the ball inside 10 feet, it's almost automatic. He almost surprises us when he misses that shot."

Carter is looking forward to playing college basketball after he helps the Cougars get as far as they can this year. He does not have any offers, but he's confident he'll get a chance.

"Whatever happens, I'll just be happy to go onto the next level," he said. "I'm pretty confident next year I'll be playing somewhere. I haven't gotten one yet (an offer), but I know a few will be coming soon, hopefully."

Heitland chipped in 11 points for Kennedy. John Bardsley, who scored 31 points against Jefferson last Friday, did not score against Washington.

Jared Printy hit three 3-pointers and led Washington with 13 points. Jacob Kramer canned four 3-pointers and scored 12 points. Maurice Arrington also netted 12 for Washington.

Sanchez led the Warriors to seven victories last season in his first year as head coach and was hoping to have a better record than 4-14 at this point. He said the Warriors have struggled finding the right mix of players as they worked through personnel issues this year.

"At times that's made it tough for us," he said. "Obviously you'd like to get more wins. The second year around, that's the goal. Ten (wins) was probably a realistic number for us.

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"I like the direction we're going," he said. "I've learned a lot this year, probably more than I did last year as a head coach."

WASHINGTON (52): Anderson 1 2-2 4, Nelson 0 0-0 0, Hoeger 0 0-0 0, Taylor 0 0-0 0, Snitker 0 0-0 0, J.Kramer 4 0-0 12, Arrington 5 2-3 12, Jenkins 1 0-0 2, Printy 5 0-2 13, S.Kramer 1 0-0 3, Soenksen 0 0-2 0, Moore 3 0-2 6. Totals 20 4-13 52.

KENNEDY (59): Daniels 2 2-4 7, Carter 8 5-9 23, Jacobus 1 1-2 3, Bill 1 4-4 7, Bardsley 0 0-0 0, Murdock 0 2-2 2, Buck 0 0-0 0, Heisler 1 0-0 2, Holzer 2 0-0 4, Heitland 4 3-5 11. Totals 19 17-26 59.

Halftime - Kennedy 32, Washington 23. 3-point goals - Washington 8 (J.Kramer 4, Printy 3, S. Kramer 1), Kennedy 3 (Carter 2, Daniels 1).