

## Prairie boys dance past Mount Vernon

Written by Tom Fruehling

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Perhaps the Hawk boys were inspired by the “Interlude Dance,” the UNI hoops student section craze that’s become a YouTube sensation.

Prairie’s own cheerleaders and young fans broke out the jumping routine just before halftime of the home game with Mount Vernon Saturday night. And after a somewhat somnolent first half, their team came out of the locker room smoking hot.

Not only did the Hawks hold the visiting Mustangs to a single basket very early on in the third quarter, they put on their own 15-0 run to take command of what had been a tight contest. Prairie coasted the rest of the way for a 44-34 much-needed win after last week’s 20-point shellacking by Xavier.

“Coach was pretty straightforward at halftime,” said senior Brooks Kehoe, who didn’t start for a change but came off the bench with fire in his belly. “He said we needed to communicate better and to play with energy.

“In the third quarter, we started going after loose balls and making hustle plays.”

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With a lot more intensity of the defensive end, Prairie's offense picked up steam, as well.

"Coach says that good defense leads to good offense," said junior playmaker Jace Hanna, who led his team with 12 points but was also a dynamo on the other end. "We played with more heart in the second half. And we were having more fun."

Kehoe agreed.

"We like playing when we can push the ball and run," he said.

Hawk Coach James Moses credited Kehoe and junior DeMetrius Harper, his replacement in the starting lineup, along with recently-elevated freshman JoJo Simpson for leading the charge in the third quarter surge.

"I thought all three of them really provided some spark," said Moses, whose team started the season at 4-1 but then struggled to 1-5 in mostly close losses. The Hawks evened their record at 6-6 with Saturday's win. "They played with passion. And the others responded by taking advantage of the offensive opportunities their good defense created.

"It was nice to see our defense contain Mount Vernon and shut them down."

He was fully aware, however, that the Class 3A Mustangs were playing short-handed with the loss last week of leading scorer and team sparkplug Jake Timm, the senior son of Mount Vernon Coach Ed Timm.

Young Timm, who averaged 15.3 points over the first 11 games and is headed to Drake on a scholarship, has missed three games after an emergency appendectomy. The Mustangs (10-4) have lost all three after opening the season 10-1.

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Moses said his relatively young squad is going to have to play with all the moxie it can muster as it faces a killer row over the next five days. The Hawks travel to Class 4A top-rated Iowa City West on Monday, play Kennedy at home Tuesday, then go to Linn-Mar Friday.

“Maybe playing the games without much practice or preparation will help them,” Moses said. “As a coach, I’m not so sure. But we’ll see what happens. I’m just happy to get this win.”

MOUNT VERNON (34): Conner Shaffer 2 0-0 4, Will Teubel 2 1-2 5, Micah Russell 1 0-2 3, Jack Kelleher 3 0-0 6, Calvin Kragenbrink 3 0-0 6, Marshall Tuerier 0 0-0 0, Hunter Ruth 0 0-0 0, Garrett Ruth 2 0-2 4, Jake Muller 0 0-0 0, Zach Parker 1 0-0 2, Alex Minor 2 0-0 4. Totals 16 1-5 34.

PRAIRIE (44): Jacob Aune 0 0-0 0, DeMetrius Harper 3 0-0 6, Jace Hanna 5 1-1 12, Matt MacDougall 4 2-2 10, Tom Eilers 1 0-0 3, Ty Kougin 0 0-0 0, Brooks Kehoe 2 0-0 4, Kentrel Smith 0 0-0 0, Garrett Rasmussen 0 0-0 0, Bryce Meeker 1 0-0 2, Mitch Adams 1 0-0 2, JoJo Simpson 2 0-0 5. Totals 19 3-3 44.

Halftime – Prairie 21, Mount Vernon 19. 3-point goals – Mount Vernon 1 (Russell), Prairie 3 (Hanna, Eilers, Simpson). Total fouls – Mount Vernon 10, Prairie 12. Fouled out – none.