

Kennedy's former Hawks help beat Prairie

Written by Jim Ecker

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Kennedy seniors Trevor Heitland, Josiah Coleman and Darius Fuller went to school in the College Community district when they were younger and would be playing for the Prairie Hawks these days if they hadn't left and become Cougars.

They returned to Prairie Tuesday night and helped Kennedy trim the Hawks, 60-53, in a friendly Mississippi Valley Conference rivalry that got intense at times and featured three technical fouls against the Cougars.

Heitland, Coleman and Fuller combined for 28 points and made key plays against their old pals.

"Those are my best buddies," Prairie senior Jacob Aune said. "Trevor was my best friend since I was 3. Darius and Joe, we've been playing ball together since the third grade.

"They made the decision to go to Kennedy and they have to do what's best for them at the end of the day," Aune said. "It makes it a little tougher when we play them on the court, but we're still good friends outside of the court."

Heitland, Coleman and Fuller went to grade school and middle school in the College Community district before switching to Kennedy.

"We had differences with the coaching staff and stuff like that," Heitland explained. "We decided to go to Kennedy, because we liked the coaches."

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James Moses became Prairie's head coach last year, well after Heitland, Coleman and Fuller departed. The scrappy Hawks (6-8, 2-7) would have a formidable team with those guys on their side this season.

"You think about that, what kind of team Prairie would be," Moses remarked. "But they made their decision and we're doing the best with what we have and we'll continue to grow."

The Hawks took a 43-41 lead with 5:20 left on a 3-pointer by Thomas Eilers, but Kennedy (10-3, 6-3) scored 12 straight points to grab a 53-43 advantage with 1:34 remaining. That dry spell, which lasted nearly four minutes, doomed Prairie.

Fuller began the decisive 12-0 spurt with two free throws to tie the score, 43-43. Coleman hit a sweet 3-pointer, then Heitland hit a hard-driving layup, got fouled and converted the three-point play for a 49-43 margin.

Cody Bell drilled a 3-pointer to make it 52-43, and Heitland finished the surge with a free throw for the 10-point lead.

The Hawks clawed within 56-53 on another 3-pointer by Eilers with 41 seconds left, but the rally ended there. Kennedy made four free throws in the final 38 seconds, including three by Elliott Christians.

"It's a great road win. We did a good job of being road warriors tonight," said Kennedy Coach Bob Fontana, who was whistled for a technical foul in the third quarter.

Coleman was slapped with a technical for shoving Demetrius Harper in the third period. Coleman had just been called for a common foul against Harper, then compounded the problem by pushing Harper in frustration.

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"That was just a lot of love between two players. It was nothing personal," Coleman said. "Just heat of the moment."

Christians was called for Kennedy's third and final technical foul for swinging his elbow and smacking a Hawk after grabbing a defensive rebound in the final minute.

Fontana and Moses complained about the officiating much of the ballgame, and Moses barked at one of the officials when the game ended. "When the calls are inconsistent, that is a frustration," Moses said.

Matt MacDougall poured in 27 points for Prairie to keep his club in the game. The outburst came a night after he scored only two points in a 69-47 loss at top-ranked Iowa City West.

"I wasn't happy with how I played (against West)," he said. "I told myself I have to play better tonight."

Moses picked MacDougall to shoot all the free throws after Kennedy's three technical fouls and the 6-foot-4 senior went 6-for-6. He also drilled a series of jumpers and scored 17 of his game-high 27 points in the second half.

"Matt is a talent," Moses said. "He's a silent assassin."

Christians led Kennedy with 17 points, with 11 of those markers coming at the foul line. Heitland finished with 14 points. Coleman and Fuller netted seven points apiece.

"It felt real good," Fuller said of the victory. "I know they (the Hawks) really wanted this game. Us being from Prairie, it was definitely important."

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KENNEDY (60): Fuller 1 5-10 7, Heitland 5 2-4 14, Bell 3 0-0 8, Coleman 3 0-0 7, Christians 3 11-14 17, Struss 0 0-0 0, Hayden 2 0-0 5, Jahlas 0 0-0 0, Martin 1 0-0 2. Totals 18 18-28 60.

PRAIRIE (53): Aune 2 0-0 4, Harper 2 0-0 4, Hanna 3 0-0 8, MacDougall 10 7-8 27, Eilers 2 2-2 8, Meeker 0 0-0 0, Smith 1 0-3 2, Kehoe 0 0-0 0, Simpson 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 9-13 53.

Halftime - Kennedy 29, Prairie 23. 3-point goals - Kennedy 6 (Heitland 2, Bell 2, Coleman 1, Hayden 1), Prairie 4 (Hanna 2, Eilers 2). Fouled out - Aune. Technical fouls - Kennedy Coach Bob Fontana, Coleman, Christians.