

## Prairie ends season with loss at City High

Written by Jim Ecker

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IOWA CITY - They weren't exactly the hard-luck Hawks, but Cedar Rapids Prairie probably deserved a better fate this season in Year 2 under James Moses.

The Hawks led Linn-Mar by 20 points last month, only to lose by one point at the buzzer. They also dropped games by 2, 3 and 4 points and lost a total of eight games by single digits.

It happened again Monday night in a Class 4A substate game, and now the season is over.

Jerel Moore scored 16 points and made several pretty passes as Iowa City High trimmed Prairie, 50-42, in a substate quarterfinal in the Iowa City gymnasium.

Prairie ended its season with a 9-13 record, a marked improvement over last year's 3-19 campaign.

"We're happy with the direction we're headed, but we want a little more," said Moses, the former Iowa Hawkeye who coaches with great passion and emotion.

Moses said he's proud of his seniors and proud of his team.

"We always got everybody's best," he remarked. "Everybody played hard when they played us. You didn't see anybody - no team - take any possessions off or a lack of effort against our team.

"We weren't even ranked all season, so that says a lot about our respect and our growth. Teams can't automatically say, like they used to, that Prairie is an automatic win."

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Matt MacDougall gave Prairie a 29-28 lead with a bucket late in the third quarter. As it turned out, that was Prairie's final lead of the season.

Lonnie Chester hit a step-back jumper in the final second of the third period to give Iowa City High a 30-29 edge, igniting a 10-2 spurt that gave the Little Hawks a 38-31 advantage.

The Prairie Hawks pulled within three points at 40-37 on a driving basket by Jace Hanna, but they never got any closer than that. Both teams finished the game with 17 field goals, but the Little Hawks cashed 15 of 19 free throws compared to 6 of 8 for Prairie.

"They hit free throws, and those free throws turned out to be key," said Moses.

Moses had no problems with a veteran officiating crew and was not complaining about the calls. Rather, he noted that Iowa City High had struggled at the free-throw line much of the season before getting hot against his team.

Moses was suspended for the final game of the regular season against Jefferson last Thursday after being ejected from the previous contest against Cedar Falls for arguing with officials. He returned to the bench Monday and was a model of decorum.

MacDougall, Jacob Aune and Brooks Kehoe played their final games for Prairie Monday night. They were naturally disappointed with the setback, but proud they helped the Hawks triple their victory total from a year ago and got the program moving in the right direction again after some lean years.

"I think we grew tired of having the title of being a team that just gets walked over. We weren't going to have that," said Aune, who will play basketball at Coe next season.

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"As a senior class we had to go through all kinds of stuff, with players leaving and switching coaches halfway through our career. But we just decided we're going to give it everything we've got. We played as a team and fought as a team, more than we did in past years."

Ironically, the player who helped defeat the Hawks Monday night used to attend school in the Prairie district before moving to Iowa City with his family in the sixth grade. Moore is a smooth 6-foot-6 senior who was the difference in the game with his 16 points and slick passes for easy baskets.

"My all-time favorite player is Magic Johnson," said Moore. "I've watched a lot about him. I like to pass."

Kennedy High School seniors Josiah Coleman, Darius Fuller and Trevor Heitland also attended school in the Prairie district before moving away. Add Moore to that group and Prairie could have had a powerful team this season if everybody had stayed put.

As it turned out, the players who stayed at Prairie helped turn the program around this year.

"I think it's more attitude than anything," said MacDougall, a talented 6-foot-4 guard who is being recruited by several colleges. "It's knowing that every night you have to come out and play. Coach instilled the thought in us that we can play with anybody."

"That's part of it," he said. "That was the big thing. It's a different mindset."

Eilers and Aune led Prairie with 10 points. Hanna scored nine points and MacDougall finished with eight. The Hawks used 10 players Monday, including seven underclassmen who will form the nucleus of next year's ballclub.

Chester chipped in 12 points for Iowa City High and Ronald Thompson scored 11 points. The Little Hawks (9-13) play at Linn-Mar (17-4) in the substate semifinals Friday night.

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PRAIRIE (42): Aune 5 0-0 10, Kehoe 1 0-0 2, Hanna 4 1-2 9, MacDougall 4 0-0 8, Eilers 2 4-4 10, Harper 1 1-2 3, Meeker 0 0-0 0, Smith 0 0-0 0, Mouglin 0 0-0 0, Simpson 0 0-0 0. Totals 17 6-8 42.

IOWA CITY HIGH (50): A. Perry 1 0-0 3, Hein 0 0-0 0, Moore 7 2-3 16, T. Perry 1 0-0 2, Barfield 1 0-0 2, Chester 3 6-8 12, Johnson 1 2-2 4, Thompson 3 5-6 11. Totals 17 15-19 50.

Halftime - Prairie 18, Iowa City High 18. 3-point goals - Prairie 2 (Eilers 2), Iowa City High 1 (A. Perry 1). Fouled out - Kehoe.