

Sluggish Lions down Waterloo East

Written by Jim Sullivan, Waterloo Courier

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WATERLOO -The numbers screamed mismatch.

After all, Linn-Mar walked into Fred J. Miller Gymnasium unbeaten and ranked No. 1 in Class 4A. Waterloo East, conversely, had beaten exactly one team all year.

Tuesday night, though, the Trojans didn't exactly go quietly. Yes, Linn-Mar pulled away and claimed a 76-52 victory, but East stayed close for a good, long time.

"I told our kids in (the locker room) that we got by with one," said Lions Coach Chris Robertson after his team improved to 14-0. "We didn't play our best, but you've gotta give East a lot of credit. They outplayed us tonight in the first half."

Said Trojan Coach Anthony Thomas, "I think that was a very winnable basketball game."

East, now 1-12 overall, was aggressive early in both ends of the court. The Trojans attacked the basket offensively. Defensively, they stuck with Linn-Mar guards Marcus Paige and Matt Bohannon. Paige has committed to North Carolina; Bohannon is a Northern Iowa recruit.

East held a 14-12 lead midway through the first quarter. Linn-Mar took the edge for good in the second, but it was just a 32-25 game at the break.

"The kids gave me great effort," said Thomas. "I can't knock the effort."

But ...

"In the third quarter, we let it slip away once again," Thomas said.

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Linn-Mar had some success pounding the ball inside in the opening half. After the break, Lion big men Ian McBrayer and Josh Montague really went to work.

McBrayer, at 6-foot-6, scored eight of his 17 points in the third quarter and all of them came on layups. Montague, a 6-7 senior, tallied 19 markers, eight in the last two quarters.

"Our coach said to look inside," said McBrayer. "We did that and did what we could in there."

Said Robertson, "We did a lot better once we got the ball inside ... I thought (McBrayer) was really, really good tonight. At times our guards were a little bit antsy. They wanted theirs a little bit, but I thought our bigs were really good tonight."

Linn-Mar held a 52-33 lead late in the third. Once again, East rallied and crept within 12. Paige, though, scored seven quick points to start the fourth quarter, as the Lions grabbed a 60-40 edge and sealed the deal.

Shane Hodges scored all of his 12 points in the final half to lead East.

"My thing is for the kids to be competitive every single night," said Thomas. "We put forth that effort and I'm happy with that. But I want to keep that consistency going. Once we get that, this team is a good basketball team. We just have to compete every single night."

Linn-Mar won the sophomore game, 69-46.

LINN-MAR (76): Shane Benton 2-4 7-11 11, Marcus Paige 5-11 2-2 14, Matt Bohannon 3-9 2-2 9, Ian McBrayer 8-11 1-3 17, Josh Montague 9-10 1-3 19, Michael Thul 1-1 0-0 2, Derik Gogg 2-2 0-1 4, Mason Krusie 0-0 0-0 0, Matthew Lassen 0-0 0-0 0, Nick Soyer 0-2 0-0 0, Braxton Lancial 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 30-50 13-22 76.

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WATERLOO EAST (52): DaQuan Campbell 4-8 0-0 9, Arkell Todd 1-3 0-0 2, Daeton Hoskins 2-3 0-0 4, Shane Hodges 5-12 0-0 12, Nick Schutte 0-3 0-0 0, A'Darrius Riley 1-3 0-0 2, Norman Gant 4-7 0-1 9, Carl Clifton 0-0 0-0 0, Demetre Van Arsdale 3-7 0-0 9, Jamonne Culp 0-0 1-2 1, Martavius Robinson 1-1 0-0 2, Octavius Evans 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 22-48 1-3 52.

Halftime -- Linn-Mar 32, East 25. 3-point goals -- East 7 (Van Arsdale 3, Hodges 2, Campbell 1, Gant 1), Linn-Mar 3 (Paige 2, Bohannon 1). Total fouls -- East 17, Linn-Mar 8. Fouled out -- none.