

J-Hawks upset No. 6 Lions, 71-70

Written by Mike Condon

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After coming close so many times this season, the Jefferson boys basketball team simply found a way Friday night.

Valentino Green grabbed a rebound off a missed Dennis McKinney free throw and banked it home just before the final horn to give the J-Hawks a stunning 71-70 Mississippi Valley Conference win over No. 6 Linn-Mar at the Jefferson gym.

Green's winning basket set off a wild celebration as players and fans mobbed the 6-foot-2 senior while the Lions stood near their bench in stunned silence.

"We didn't have a play on," Green said. "We wanted to make the shot, but I knew if he missed it I was going to get the rebound. I battled for it and I knew I had to go up strong."

"This win shows just how hard we've been working," he continued. "Since Christmas break, we've been getting a lot better and it showed tonight."

Jefferson coach Brandon Horman just stood back and watched the celebration unfold. The J-Hawks dropped a 3-point decision on Tuesday at Dubuque Wahlert and refused to back down against the highly-regarded Lions.

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"There's not a group of boys in the state I would rather coach," Horman said. "They bring it every single day. They're in it for the right reasons.

"They just work their tails off, I'm so proud of them," he continued. "They've been battling and fighting and the improvement they have made since the beginning of the season, it's remarkable and they're not finished yet."

Horman had special praise for Green's effort.

"Valentino has been through a lot," the Jefferson coach said. "He's a fighter and he fought until the clock ticked off. He's kind of the epitome of the team. His effort is contagious and it rubs off on all the guys."



Green's game-winner negated a brilliant fourth-quarter effort from Linn-Mar's Jordan Bohannon. He scored 16 of his game-high 29 points in the final eight minutes, including the go-ahead jumper with 14 seconds remaining.

"Jordan is so talented," Horman said. "We knew he was going to get his points. Royshawn Webb did a phenomenal job guarding him."

Webb did a solid job of running Bohannon off the 3-point line. Only two of his 12 field goals

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came from beyond the arc as the University of Iowa recruit worked his way into the lane for many of his baskets.

Linn-Mar led for most of the contest. The Lions' biggest lead of the game was the 29-22 advantage they held at halftime. Jefferson, behind strong inside play from McKinney and Adam Van Oort, closed the gap. A Van Oort 3-point basket with 2:15 left in the third quarter tied the game at 41-41.

To their credit, the Lions never surrendered the lead until a short shot from Van Oort with 1:10 remaining put Jefferson up 67-66. Bohannon and Van Oort traded lay-ins over the next 30 seconds before Bohannon was off on a long trey with 33 seconds left.

McKinney was fouled on the rebound, but he missed the front end of the 1-and-1. The Lions worked the ball to Bohannon and his driving basket set the stage for a wild finish.

Jefferson came down and missed a shot. Van Oort retrieved the ball and flipped it to McKinney, who was fouled with 2.8 seconds remaining. He missed both free throws, with the second landing in Green's hands and he took it up for the game-winner.

"This is seven games in a row since we came out of break that we've won three and lost four by a total of seven points," Horman said. "They continue to fight and I expect them to keep doing it the rest of the way."

Van Oort and McKinney led Jefferson (6-10, 2-8) with 19 points each. Webb finished with 12. Beau Klostermann and Riley Murphy both had 11 points for the Lions (9-5, 7-3).

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LINN-MAR (70): Printy 2 4-4 8, Murphy 4 0-1 11, Phillips 1 0-0 2, Bohannon 12 3-4 29, Klostermann 4 0-0 11, Voves 0 1-2 1, Brandt 4 0-0 8. Totals 27 8-9 70.

JEFFERSON (71): Webb 6 0-0 12, Green 4 0-0 8, Kramer 3 0-0 8, Brown 1 0-1 2, McCauley 1 0-0 3, Van Oort 8 1-3 19, McKinney 9 1-4 19. Totals 32 2-8 71.

Halftime - Linn-Mar 29, Jefferson 22. 3-point goals - Linn-Mar 8 (Bohannon 2, Murphy 3, Klostermann 3), Jefferson 5 (Kramer 2, Van Oort 2, McCauley). Total fouls - Linn-Mar 12, Jefferson 12. Fouled out - none. Technical fouls - none.