

Webb, Guy spark J-Hawks by Saints

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 17 December 2016 08:09



Matt Mims hobbled out of the trainer's room at Xavier High School Friday night on crutches and with a big bag of ice attached to his sore right ankle.

It was that kind of a night for Mims and the Xavier Saints in their Mississippi Valley Conference game against Jefferson.

Royshawn Webb and Willie Guy III scored 18 points apiece as the J-Hawks trimmed the Saints, 61-58, in a spirited game at Ron Thillen Gymnasium.

The Saints roared back from a 15-point deficit in the fourth quarter and had two chances to tie the game in the final seconds, but Spencer Dempewolf and Jackson Joens missed 3-pointers.

Xavier got off to a good start and led 15-8 when Mims got hurt. He kept playing for awhile and was in-and-out of the lineup the rest of the night, but the junior point guard missed all six of his shots from the field and scored only two points.

"We started out really good," said Xavier Coach Ryan Luehrsmann. "Then I thought when Mims turned his ankle all the momentum swung their way. And for whatever reason the rest of the guys were shaken a little bit by seeing him go down.

"We were tentative from that point on against the zone, until the end when we were down and it was an uphill battle."

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Jefferson spanked the Saints, 20-5, in the second quarter with a 13-0 run and led 30-23 at the break. The J-Hawks extended their lead to 49-34 on a bucket by Webb with about 5 1/2 minutes left in the game and still owned that 15-point bulge at 51-36.

The Saints came to life after that and ended up scoring 26 points in the fourth period, but they never got back on top.

Webb, a 6-foot-1 senior with an extremely quick first step, hurt the Saints with his drives and hanging field goals near the rim.

"He's a phenomenal talent," said Jefferson Coach Brandon Horman. "He's a relentless worker. He's spent more time in the gym these last three years than anybody else that I've been around.

"He's a student of the game," said Horman. "He's got a drive to be great. His best days are ahead of him. As hard as he works, he's going to be able to do something special."

Willie Guy III, the son of former Iowa football player Willie Guy Jr., also played a strong game for Jefferson. And Kane Kramer gave Jefferson a big lift by nailing four 3-pointers and scoring 13 points.

Nolan Butkowski tossed in 21 points for Xavier with four triples, but the Saints shot poorly in the second and third quarters while digging themselves a big hole. Max Techau finished with 13 points for the Saints (2-3) and Jackson Joens netted 12.

The Saints scored only 14 points in the second and third periods combined before going into scramble mode in the final stanza.

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Butkowski pulled Xavier within 55-52 with a free throw with 1:37 left and he pulled the Saints within 58-55 with another foul shot with 50.8 seconds remaining.

Dempewolf made it a three-point game at 61-58 with a free throw and then a layup in the final minute.

Webb missed both of his free throws with 12.3 seconds remaining, giving the Saints a chance to force overtime, but Dempewolf missed a 3-pointer with about four seconds left and Joens missed his 3-pointer at the buzzer.

"Our best player had an injury and a bad shooting night, and yet we had a chance to tie it with a 3 at the buzzer and go to overtime," said Luehrsmann. "It just wasn't meant to be tonight."

The Saints fell to 2-3 for the campaign.

Jefferson raised its record to 5-2, matching its best start since the 2012-13 campaign.

"I thought our guys really responded after the first quarter," said Horman. "We got off to a slow start again, unfortunately.

"We went on a 20-to-5 run in that second quarter and that really catapulted us back into the game. It wasn't pretty, but pretty doesn't always matter."

JEFFERSON (61): Webb 8 2-5 18, Shaw 2 1-4 5, Bell 1 4-7 6, Shockley 0 0-0 0, Kramer 4 1-2 13, Guy 5 6-6 18, Kuennen 0 1-2 1. Totals 20 15-26 61.

XAVIER (58): Mims 0 2-2 2, Butkowski 6 5-8 21, Joens 3 4-4 12, Dempewolf 1 1-2 3, Q.Schulte 3 0-0 7, Techau 5 3-4 13, B.Schulte 0 0-1 0. Totals 18 15-21 58.

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Halftime - Jefferson 30, Xavier 23. 3-point goals - Jefferson 6 (Kramer 4, Guy 2), Xavier 7 (Butkowski 4, Joens 2, Q.Schulte 1).