

Kennedy boys outlast Prairie in OT

Written by Don Taylor

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Prairie scored 24 points in the fourth quarter to tie the game, but managed only three in overtime, and was beaten by Kennedy, 58-53, Tuesday night in a Mississippi Valley Conference boys basketball game at Kennedy.

Kennedy (3-1, 2-0) enjoyed a 12-point lead three times in the second half, but the Hawks (1-5, 0-2) came roaring back in the fourth quarter. Jace Hanna scored on a driving layup with 1.6 seconds left in regulation to tie the game, 50-50.

Hanna, Prairie's senior point guard, seemed to take the game into his own hands in the second half and willed the Hawks into overtime. Hanna led all scorers with 17 points, all in the second half and overtime. Sophomore Jo Jo Simpson chipped in 13 points for the Hawks.

"We weren't hitting our shots in the first half and at halftime coach told us to take the ball to the basket and draw fouls in the second half and that worked out really well for us," explained Hanna. "We knew we could catch them but we seemed to run out of gas in the overtime."

Prairie Coach James Moses said it was nice to finally have Hanna, who has been battling a stress fracture in his leg, out on the court. Hanna signed last month to play college basketball at Upper Iowa.

"We are in a situation at Prairie right now where we really only have one experienced player participating and we are giving a lot of young inexperienced men an opportunity to show what they can do," Moses said. "We just can't wait to warm up to the game like we did tonight."

Kennedy Coach Bob Fontana said he was pleased with the outcome.

"We need to strive for consistency at both ends of the court," he said. "We persevered and finished strong. It was a good win for us early in the season."

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Anthony Carter led the Cougars in scoring with 15 points and played a solid floor game at point guard. Benjamin Struss and Patrick Martin scored 12 and 10 points, respectively.

"It was important for us to stay focused and keep to the coach's game plan," said Carter. "Tonight that resulted in some scoring opportunities for me."

Carter's biggest play of the night may have been an assist to Martin on the block with 2.8 seconds left in overtime. Martin drop-stepped and took the ball to the hole for the bucket and the foul. With the free throw the Cougars had their victory.

"I posted up and got the ball," said Martin. "I saw that there was hardly anytime left so I went strong to the basket hoping to get fouled. It all worked out perfectly."

"Martin was our third option on that big play," said Coach Fontana. "A. J. (Carter) did an excellent job of reading the progression to get the ball to Martin. It was well executed."

Kennedy hosts Washington on Friday and Prairie hosts Dubuque Hempstead.

PRAIRIE (53): Hanna 5 6-8 17, Smith 1 1-2 3, Butz 2 3-4 7, Meeker 2 0-0 4, Simpson 5 2-2 13, Harper 1 0-0 2, Bechtel 2 0-0 4, Mims 0 0-0 0, Lorenz 0 0-0 0, Kuchemann 1 0-0 3, Brown 0 0-0 0. Totals 19 12-17 53.

KENNEDY (58): Carter 7 0-3 15, Bardsley 2 1-2 5, Martin 3 4-7 10, Koelling 3 0-0 6, Struss 3 6-8 12, Heitland 0 0-0 0, Murdock 1 5-6 7, Johnson 0 0-0 0, Holzer 1 1-2 3, Fergus 0 0-0 0, Fuller 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 17-28 58.

Halftime – Kennedy 22, Prairie 14. End of Regulation -- Kennedy 50, Prairie 50. 3-point goals – Prairie 3 (Hanna 1, Simpson 1, Kuchemann 1), Kennedy 1 (Carter 1). Fouled out – Hanna, Simpson, Murdock.