

Lions drubbed by No.3 Rams, 66-41

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 17 December 2013 23:10 -

Linn-Mar Coach Chris Robertson missed Tuesday night's basketball game against Dubuque Senior with the flu, but if he pulled himself together and watched the game on KCRG 9.2 it probably didn't make him feel any better.

The third-ranked Rams, featuring four college-bound athletes in their starting lineup, ripped the Lions 66-41 in a Mississippi Valley Conference game at Linn-Mar.

Linn-Mar did not make a field goal in the entire first quarter and trailed, 20-4, after the initial eight minutes. They never got closer than 13 points the rest of the night.

The Lions reported to the gym Tuesday and were told Robertson would not be able to make it to the game.

"He was bad," said Linn-Mar assistant Joe Nietert, who shared the interim coaching duties with Scott Nelson. "I went and got stuff from him and he answered with a blanket and barely made it to the door. Obviously he would have been here if there was any possibility."

The Lions needed more than their head coach to knock off Dubuque Senior, which finished third at the Class 4A state tournament last year with a 24-2 record. The Lions needed a couple of 6-foot-8 guys to bang heads with Senior's big guys and they needed to shoot the ball a lot better than their 9 for 40 performance from the floor.

Kyle Haber, a smooth 6-foot-7 guard who will play at Brown University in the Ivy League, put on a show Tuesday with 23 points with slick moves around the basket and a trio of 3-pointers.

Luke McDonnell, a lanky 6-foot-9 junior who has committed to the University of Northern Iowa,

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tallied 14 points. Seth Bonifas, a 6-foot-9 senior who will play at Missouri Western, also scored 14 points for the Rams. Lucas LeGrand, a beefy 6-foot-5 senior who will play football at the University of Iowa, gave Dubuque another big body near the basket.

"They are good. They are a good, experienced, senior-dominated basketball team," said Nietert.

Haber was too tall, too quick and too good for the smaller Linn-Mar guards to handle.

"He's a tough matchup, because tonight he made a couple of 3's," said Nelson. "We knew he was good near the rim, and then when he starts shooting from the perimeter he's really hard to guard.

"They have a lot of dimensions and pieces that they can move around and put in the right positions," said Nelson.

Linn-Mar guards Jordan Bohannon and Nic Uhler, normally a pair of good shooters, both struggled against Dubuque Senior. Bohannon, averaging 17.8 points when the game began, was 4 for 18 from the field and finished with 12 points. Uhler, averaging 17 points, was 1 for 8 and scored four points.

The Lions (1-2, 2-3) kept scratching and chopped a 32-13 halftime deficit to 39-25 with a flurry in the third quarter, but pulled no closer. Haber stemmed the tide with two baskets and the Rams (2-0, 4-0) regained control.

Dubuque Senior won the rebounding battle, 38-28, and altered a series of Linn-Mar's shots around the basket with their long arms.

"They're big, they're experienced and they're very good," said Linn-Mar center Jon Schlotterback, who had his hands full against the bigger Rams at 6-foot-4. "We just didn't have what it took tonight.

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"We're going to keep getting better, and by the end of the season when it counts I think we're going to be a lot better than we were tonight."

Linn-Mar has played one of the toughest schedules in the state this year with four games against top-10 teams already. The Lions have lost to No.8 Waukee, No.2 Bettendorf and No.3 Dubuque Senior, and they defeated No.9 Southeast Polk on the road.

"We do this on purpose," said Schlotterback, who scored nine points. "We put ourselves up against this kind of competition and we get a feel for what kind of team we have. We put ourselves against the best early on and we see where we need to be at the end of the season."

Lane Halupnik scored 11 points for Linn-Mar. Griffin Brennecke, who suffered a head injury against Jefferson last Friday night, missed his second straight game.

DUBUQUE SENIOR (66): Holdridge 1 0-0 2, Hermesen 1 0-1 2, Noel 1 2-4 4, Donner 0 2-2 2, Hammel 0 0-0 0, Psihoyos 0 0-0 0, Haber 10 0-0 23, Davis 0 0-0 0, McDonnell 4 6-7 14, Kieffer 0 0-0 0, Bonifas 7 0-0 14, LeGrand 0 5-6 5. Totals 24 15-20 66.

LINN-MAR (41): Uhlir 1 1-2 4, Murphy 0 0-0 0, Vogel 0 0-0 0, Noble 1 1-4 3, Bohannon 4 2-2 12, Larson 0 0-0 0, Schlotterback 3 3-5 9, Tichy 0 0-0 0, Halupnik 3 4-4 11, Eby 0 0-0 0, Schmidt 1 0-2 2, Brandt 0 0-0 0. Totals 13 11-19 41.

Halftime - Dubuque Senior 32, Linn-Mar 13. 3-point goals - Dubuque Senior 3 (Haber 3), Linn-Mar 4 (Bohannon 2, Uhlir 1, Halupnik 1). Fouled out - Schmidt.