

Heartfelt win for Marion boys

Written by Tom Fruehling

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It was all about heart for the Marion boys Tuesday night.

Greg Van Gorp, a fixture at the scorer's table who finds it hard to stifle cheering for the home team, was rushed to the hospital early Tuesday morning after suffering a heart attack at home.

As he was recovering from surgery last night, the Indians rallied from a slim halftime lead to roll over Maquoketa, 70-55.

No one played with more heart than Van Gorp's son Dan, one of seven players honored on Senior Night before the final regular season game.

And his dad got to see and hear it all from start to finish, with television monitors hooked up in the gym and his St. Luke's room and connected by computer.

The team even gathered around the set before tip-off to offer get well greetings.

"I was really, really touched," Van Gorp, 52, an executive with Aegon and a member of the Marion Independent school board, said afterward.

"I hated to miss the game, especially with Dan and the others on Senior Night. It meant a lot for me to be part of it. I want to thank the whole Marion family."

As for Dan, a steady but relatively unsung starter for the Indians, he said he's sure he played his best game of the season, despite getting no sleep the night before after his dad was taken by ambulance to the hospital at about 2 a.m.

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He went to school Tuesday so he wouldn't have to miss the game, then he and senior teammate Tyler Fisher paid a hospital visit after the apparently successful surgery to clear a heart blockage.

"It was a pretty stressful day," Dan said. "But I think we all played kind of inspired tonight. I know I did. We all wanted to do our best."

In addition to scoring 10 points, he played pretty much the entire game and was relentless on the boards and on defense against a tough and scrappy Maquoketa bunch.

The Cardinals (7-13, 5-12 Wamac) made a game of it for more than a half. They trailed the Indians (14-7, 13-5 Wamac) by only 24-22 at halftime and even took a short-lived one-point lead on their first possession after intermission.

Then Marion senior sensation Kasey Semler, who had been held to just six points in the first, took the team in his hands and spearheaded a torrid third quarter pace. He scored 12 of the Indians' 21 points in the stanza as they went ahead by seven.

"The faster tempo in the third quarter was definitely in our favor," said Marion Coach Mike Manderscheid. "We like to get up and down the floor and move the ball in transition."

A 9-0 run by the Indians early in the fourth quarter, capped by a Van Gorp driving lay-up and free throw, stretched the Marion margin to 14.

The Cardinals cut the deficit in half with three minutes to go, but Marion quickly picked up the slack and coasted in for the victory.

Semler, who made six 3-pointers for the evening, said it was a special night.

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"It was awesome. We had kind of a rough first half, but we really came out strong after halftime. All of us wanted to have a good performance for Dan's dad, but for Dan, too."

Greg Van Gorp said it was just what the doctor ordered.

"I'm not missing any more basketball. Darned right I'll be in the gym Monday night for the tournament game."

Marion hosts Center Point-Urbana in a Class 3A substate quarterfinal on Feb. 21.

MAQUOKETA (55): Chase Coakley 1 2-3 4, Jon Bopes 6 5-7 17, Craig Johnson 0 3-3 3, Peyton River 4 0-0 12, Spencer Bronson 1 0-0 2, Eric Callahan 1 0-0 3, Bradley Waller 0 0-0 0, Nick Clasen 0 1-2 1, Derek Hopson 4 0-0 7, Perry Hawks 1 0-0 2, Blaise Waller 2 0-0 4. Totals 20 11-15 55.

MARION (70): Dusty Albaugh 1 6-8 8, Tyler Fisher 2 0-1 4, Kasey Semler 7 3-6 23, Dan Van Gorp 3 4-5 10, Dylan Cronk 3 0-0 6, Austin Hardman 4 2-5 10, Cale Cannoy 1 0-0 2, Tre Kinney 0 2-2 2, Tyler Hedtke 0 0-0 0, Jake McDonald 0 0-0 0, Mitch Wagner 0 0-0 0, Mark Stone 1 0-0 3. Totals 22 18-26 70.

Halftime – Marion 24 , Maquoketa 22. 3-point goals - Maquoketa 7 (River 4, Hopson 2, Callahan), Marion 7 (Semler 6, Stone).