

Marion falls short against Solon

Written by Jim Ecker

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Craig Engle sat on a stool after Marion's Class 3A district game against Solon Monday night and slowly unwrapped the brace on his tender left ankle, an ice bag waiting on a table nearby.

The Marion High School star insisted the ankle did not slow him down in the 42-32 loss to the Spartans, but Coach Mike Manderscheid was not entirely sure about that.

"Maybe not quite as explosive, but he hadn't played in two weeks, so that doesn't help," said Manderscheid.

Engle, who averages more than 16 points, was held to only 10 points in the final game of his prep career. He hurt his ankle against Center Point-Urbana and skipped two games before returning against Solon in the postseason tournament.

"It felt great until maybe two minutes left in the game," he said. "I tweaked it or something, but it was fine most of the time.

"I was pretty close to 100 percent. There was a little swelling."

Engle had three fouls and yielded to a substitute for short stretches on defense in the fourth quarter, both to protect him and perhaps not put extra strain on the ankle. He acknowledged that he dragged his left leg at times late in the game.

"It definitely slowed me down a little, but I definitely wasn't thinking about it most of the game," he said. "So that's good."

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Engle popped in a 3-pointer to pull the Indians (14-8) within 35-32 with 2:36 left in the game, but those were the last points Marion scored in the ballgame and the last points Engle scored in his career. The Indians misfired the rest of the game and committed a few turnovers to compound their problems.

It was a tough shooting night for the entire team.

"We couldn't hit shots," said Manderscheid. "I don't know what we shot, but we shot poorly. I thought we got pretty good looks, all night long."



Engle was the only player in double figures for Marion.

Emilio Villagrana and Streeter McIlravy netted 11 points apiece for Solon and Jake Coons had 10. The Spartans (10-12) will meet Xavier (14-8) in the district finals Thursday night at Kennedy.

Marion wasn't the only team with offensive woes Monday. Solon averages 63.6 points and was held more than 21 points under its norm.

"I thought we played really good defense," said Engle. "We just couldn't hit any shots down the stretch. It's tough."

Engle hopes to play college basketball and mentioned Coe and Cornell as two possibilities. He talked to an assistant coach from Loras after Monday's game, but his thoughts were on the final game of his prep career.

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"I'm sad. I'm going to be sad for a week, a month," he said. "Watching Solon move on is going to be tough, knowing that could have been us."

Manderscheid is proud of his club's effort this season.

"The kids played hard," he said. "They tried to defend night-in and night-out."

SOLON (42): Villagrana 4 0-0 11, Rushek 0 0-0 0, Childs 0 0-0 0, McIlravy 3 5-6 11, Black 2 1-1 5, Coons 3 3-4 10, Durr 1 1-2 3, Ira 0 0-0 0, Runyan 1 0-0 2. Totals 14 10-14 42.

MARION (32): Fish 3 0-2 6, Engle 3 3-3 10, Manderscheid 2 2-2 7, Alberts 1 0-0 2, Devin Quinn 0 0-2 0, Smith 1 0-0 2, DeShaun Quinn 0 0-0 0, Williams 1 2-2 5. Totals 11 7-11 32.

Halftime: Solon 15, Marion 14. 3-point goals - Solon 4 (Villagrana 3, Coons 1), Marion 3 (Engle 1, Manderscheid 1, Williams 1).