

Hanna's heroic shots lift Prairie

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 12 January 2013 00:27 -

He's the King of Clutch. Captain Courageous. Mister Everything. And a hero.

That's Jace Hanna, the pride and joy of Prairie High School.

Hanna hit two phenomenal shots Friday night to give the Hawks a dramatic 61-59 overtime victory against Washington in a dramatic Mississippi Valley Conference duel at Prairie.

First he coolly tossed in a 3-pointer to tie the game with 4.6 seconds left in regulation, then he sunk a remarkable 3-pointer from nearly 30 feet to win the game at the buzzer in OT.

"Crazy," he agreed, all smiles after being mobbed by Prairie students after the game.

First he ties it, then he wins it. Two pressure-cookers in one night.

"Jace is our leader," said Prairie Coach James Moses, wiping a stream of perspiration off his head. "He's proven it time after time.

"He did it in football, he did it in basketball. He would do it with anything you give him."

Prairie's quarterback finished the football season with a badly sprained left ankle and a stress fracture in his left foot, yet courageously led the Hawks to upset victories in the playoffs over Dubuque Senior and top-ranked Iowa City West.

He missed the first four games of the basketball season while finally tending to his wounds and said he's almost full recovered. "98 percent, I would say."

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The Washington Warriors, a dangerous and vastly improved club despite their 1-9 record, took a 55-52 lead with 12.3 seconds left in the fourth quarter when Peter Holmes hit one free throw but missed another, keeping it a one-possession game.

That final possession belonged to Hanna, who got free at the top of the key and hit nothing but net with his first 3-pointer of the night. "The guy didn't hedge out enough and I just had an open shot," he explained.

The game was tied 58-58 in overtime Washington senior Brock Butterfield was fouled on a drive with 4.7 seconds remaining. The southpaw made his first throw and missed the second, giving the Warriors a 59-58 edge.

Tom Eilers grabbed the defensive rebound when Butterfield missed his second foul shot and quickly fed Hanna, a long way from the basket with just 4-3-2-1 seconds left to play.

Could lightning strike twice in one night?

Hanna could hear the clock ticking in his head.

"A little bit," he said. "About three or four dribbles and try to shoot it."

Hanna was a little off-balance on the shot, but knocked it home. "It was a college 3," he guessed, selling himself short by several colleges.

"He had that adrenaline pumping. He had ice in his veins," said Moses. "He knew he didn't want to let his teammates down. He gave us a chance and he made a remarkable shot."

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"He's pretty darn good," agreed Washington Coach Adam Sanchez, the hard-luck loser.

The Warriors (1-9, 1-6) did everything they could to win the game. Twice.

"I'm at a loss for words," said Sanchez, in his first year at Washington. "That's the hardest thing in the world to do, to go in the locker room and tell those kids how awesome they're playing and praise the effort they're giving you."

He'd like that effort to result in some victories so the Warriors can put these tough lessons in the rear-view mirror.

The Prairie students, perhaps several hundred strong, politely waited for the Warriors and Hawks to shake hands before rushing onto the court and celebrating with Hanna and his happy mates.

Later, the Hawks sat at tables in the hallway and signed autographs for their fans. Hanna had the final seat at the end of the row of tables, and his signature was worth waiting for. It might turn up on E-Bay.

"He's a remarkable individual," said Moses. "Words can't express what he really does with his leadership. I'm absolutely impressed with him."

Eilers drilled five 3-pointers in the first half for Prairie and hit another in overtime. He finished with a game-high 19 points for the Hawks (4-7, 3-4). Hanna scored 17 and Tyler Butz had 10.

Peter Holmes notched 17 points for Washington.

WASHINGTON (59): Anderson 1 0-0 3, Bergstrom 1 5-6 7, Butterfield 2 3-4 8, Taylor 3 0-0 6,

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Rosenthal 2 1-2 5, Holmes 4 8-11 17, Newman 3 0-0 9, Clark 2 0-0 4. Totals 18 17-23 59.

PRAIRIE (61): Mims 0 0-0 0, Mougins 0 1-2 1, Kuchemann 0 0-0 0, Harper 1 0-0 2, Hanna 5 5-7 17, Smith 1 1-2 3, Butz 5 0-0 10, Meeker 1 0-0 2, Bechtel 0 0-0 0, Eilers 6 1-2 19, Simpson 3 0-0 7. Totals 22 8-13 61.

Halftime - Washington 32, Prairie 29. Regulation - Washington 55, Prairie 55. 3-point goals - Washington 6 (Newman 3, Anderson 1, Butterfield 1, Holmes 1), Prairie 9 (Eilers 6, Hanna 2, Simpson 1).