

Prairie boys fall in final seconds

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WATERLOO - A loose ball bounded to a wide-open Lincoln Conrey and the Waterloo West junior's layup with two seconds left helped the Wahawks edge Cedar Rapids Prairie, 51-50, Friday at Siddens Gymnasium in a Mississippi Valley Conference game.

Waterloo West (8-10) overcame a poor start and an 18-point first-half deficit to win its third straight game. Prairie led 18-2 after the first quarter.

"It was good basketball in the second half and came down to the end," Conrey said. "I just found the ball and shot it up there. Luckily it went in."

After whittling their huge deficit to just three by halftime, 30-27, the Wahawks claimed their first lead at 38-37 with 4:01 left in the third quarter on a runner in the lane from Alex Landers. From that point on, there were six more lead changes.

"We just stuck to our game plan and kept together as a team ... Kept our heads, which was the most important thing," Conrey said.

West led 44-42 after three quarters and the fourth quarter had a rugged start for both teams. Prairie (5-14, 3-11) missed its first eight shots, while the Wahawks were also spinning their wheels on offense.

The first basket of the final eight minutes didn't come until Mitchell Lorenz hit a 3-pointer from the wing to give the Hawks a 45-42 lead with 2:56 left in the game. Landers pushed West back ahead with a traditional three-point play and an additional two free throws, but Lorenz hit his fourth trey of the game with 16 seconds left to put Prairie ahead, 50-49.

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After the Wahawks took a timeout, Landers drove the lane and tried to score over a host of Prairie defenders. The rebound bounced off several players from both teams before finding Conrey all alone underneath the West basket for an easy lay-in.

"We were lucky to be down three at halftime," West Coach John Curta said. "I think we had nine turnovers at the half. We couldn't buy a shot in the first quarter and to be down by just three at half was good for us."

Landers led the charge in West's comeback as he had 11 of his 13 in the second quarter. Jacob Meyer continued the Wahawks' rally with nine of his 11 in the third. Conrey, West's leading scorer at 17.7 per game, had seven of his game-high 18 in the fourth.

"We looked to get the ball inside (in the second half) and when we get the ball inside we are successful usually, and it is hard to guard us when we can play inside and out," Curta said. "We made some big 3's in the second quarter to get back in the game and the boys stuck with it, which I'm happy with."

JoJo Simpson led Prairie with 14 points.

PRAIRIE (50): Cal Clark 1-7 0-0 3, JoJo Simpson 6-11 1-2 14, Michael Mims 2-10 2-2 7, Mitchell Lorenz 4-8 1-2 13, Austin Schrader 1-1 0-0 2, Bryce Meeker 2-3 1-1 5, Jalen Rima 1-3 0-0 2, Coen Brown 1-6 0-0 3, Austin Fisher 0-1 1-2 1. Totals 18-47 6-9 50.

WATERLOO WEST (51): Lincoln Conrey 6-10 5-6 18, Alex Landers 4-11 4-4 13, Dan Puk 0-3 0-0 0, Jacob Meyer 4-6 3-7 11, Dedric Campbell 0-5 1-2 1, Solomon Funchess 2-4 0-0 6, Nermin Samardzic 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 17-41 13-19 51.

Halftime - Prairie 30, Waterloo West 27. 3-point goals - Prairie 8 (Clark, Simpson, Mims, Lorenz 4, Brown), West 4 (Conrey, Landers Funchess 2). Fouled out - Simpson.