

Saints collapse in 2nd half spells defeat

Written by Randy Krejci

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Xavier held a slim one-point lead over Dubuque Hempstead at halftime Tuesday night, but the Saints slipped in the second half and the Mustangs posted a 66-52 victory at Xavier.

"In our huddles in the second half we emphasized the team that could get the most stops will win this ballgame," said Hempstead Coach Curt Deustch. "We got some key stops in the fourth quarter and improved our defensive rebounding to aid in the fourth quarter surge."

The victory kept Hempstead (7-10, 5-7) solidly in fourth place in the Valley Division of the Mississippi Valley Conference. Xavier fell to 3-10 in the MVC and 4-14 overall.

Xavier assistant coach Brad Stovie had a key scouting principle in mind when he stated, "To win this game, we have to shut down Gage Heffernan for Hempstead. If you let him catch and shoot, he's really tough and Hempstead is difficult to stop."

Stovie's words proved prophetic. Heffernan led the visitors with his catch-and-shoot ability and quick drives to score 26 points. Cody Leach scored 16 points and Bradley Duwe chipped in with 12 for Hempstead.

Two Saints were in double figures with Kevin Hosch notching 20 points and Alec Clasen netting 10 points. Mack Mattke, who scored nine points in a reserve role, seemed to spark Xavier in the first half.

"We couldn't get our shots to drop in the second half and down the stretch," said Mattke.

Hempstead outscored Xavier, 22-12, in the fourth quarter to ice the victory.

Hempstead travels to Waterloo East on Friday. Xavier will be involved in a boy-girl doubleheader Friday at Cedar Rapids Prairie.

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HEMPSTEAD (66): Timothy Johnson 0 0-0 0, Bradley Duwe 4 4-5 12, Alex Smith 2 4-6 9, Cody Leach 7 1-1 16, Connor Sindberg 1 0-0 3, Gage Heffernan 12 0-2 26, Michael Canfield 0 0-0 0. Totals 26 9-14 66.

XAVIER (52): Mitch McLaughlin 1 0-0 3, Ben McDermott 0 0-0 0, Kevin Hosch 7 4-6 20, Nolan Dunkirk 2 0-0 4, Carter Valentine 1 0-0 2, Brian Ropp 0 0-0 0, Alec Clasen 4 1-2 10, Ryan Mains 2 0-0 4, Mack Mattke 4 0-0 9. Totals 21 5-8 52.

Halftime -- Xavier 27, Hempstead 26. 3-point goals -- Hempstead 5 (Heffernan 2, Smith 1, Leach 1, Sindberg 1), Xavier 5 (Hosch, 2, McLaughlin 1, Clasen 1, Mattke 1).