

Saints drop season finale

Written by Randy Krejci

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A chance to build some momentum for the substate boys basketball tournament slipped out of Xavier's grasp Thursday night.

Sophomore Josh Weeber scored 19 points and Dubuque Senior snapped a four-game losing streak by beating the Saints, 55-51, in the regular season finale for Xavier. The Saints (6-15, 5-11 Mississippi Valley Conference) play at Ottumwa in a substate first round game Monday.

Senior (10-10, 7-8) has a makeup game Saturday at home against Iowa City West. The Rams are the No. 2 seed in their substate and will start tournament play Feb. 25 against the winner of Cedar Rapids Washington and Clinton.

Weeber is the third leading scorer in the MVC, averaging 21.4 points per game. Kyle Haber chipped in with 17 points. Junior Connor Grant scored eight points, nailing six free throws in the intense defensive contest.

Xavier actually started strong with an initial 4-1 lead that ballooned to 12-5 at the quarter. But Senior outscored the Saints 26-9 in the second frame to take control.

Two double figure scorers led Xavier on Senior Night with senior Mitch McLaughlin nailing 11 points and senior Ryan Mains had 10. Nine Saints scored.

"I wanted a good job defensively on their motion offense," stated Senior Coach Wendell Eimers. "We need to be talking on defense and switching on all of the screens that Xavier uses. We did that pretty well.

"I want to play four quarters and emphasize execution."

Though Xavier hit five 3-pointers, Senior countered by making 17 of 24 free throws.

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DUBUQUE SENIOR (55): Kyle Holdridge 1 2-4 4, Connor Weitz 1 2-2 5, Kyle Haber 8 1-2 17, Josh Weeber 6 6-8 19, Connor Grant 1 6-8 8, Mitch Duve 0 0-0 0, Seth Bonifas 1 0-0 2. Totals 18 17-24 55.

XAVIER (51): Mitch McLaughlin 4 1-1 11, Ben McDermott 1 2-2 5, Kevin Hosch 2 2-2 6, Nolan Dunkirk 0 2-2 2, Carter Valentine 1 0-0 2, Brian Ropp 0 0-0 0, Alec Clasen 2 0-0 5, Ryan Mains 5 0-2 10, Mack Mattke 3 1-2 8, Peter Kokontis 1 0-0 2. Totals 19 8-11 51.

Halftime -- Senior 31, Xavier 21. 3-point goals -- Senior 2 (Weitz, Weeber), Xavier 5 (McLaughlin 2, McDermott, Clasen, Mattke). Fouls -- Senior 15, Xavier 20. Fouled out -- None.