

Saints top Indians; No.1 Wahlert next

Written by Tom Fruehling

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The Xavier boys had all they could handle Thursday night with a scrappy Marion squad to make it to next week's substate final.

What the underdog

Indians (10-13) lacked in size they made up for in heart and hustle.

The Saints (15-8) prevailed, 62-49, in the Linn-Mar gym and get to face Class 3A top-ranked Dubuque Wahlert (17-3) next Monday at Epworth for a state tournament berth.

"It was a great game," said a relieved Xavier Coach Ryan Luehrsmann after the district final victory. "We knew we'd be in for a battle. They're a well-coached bunch of kids who understand the fundamentals of the game. They play under control and make it tough on you."

It was a fun game to watch, too.

It featured large and loud student sections on opposite sides of the floor, enthusiastic but polite under the eyes and ears of nearby school administrators.

There were few turnovers (eight on each side), but well-earned fouls galore (36 in all), including a pair of questionable flagrant fouls for players on both teams.

And there was even a technical foul called on the always mild-mannered Luehrsmann for kicking his chair when Calvin Winker was whistled for traveling after being bumped.

"You have to remember, you're dealing with a second-year coach," he joked to the official on his

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next trip down the court.

Although the outcome was never seriously in doubt as the mostly Class 4A MVC-tested Saints used superior size to muscle their way to a 31-18 halftime lead, the Indians never gave in or gave up.

Marion senior Quinn Cannoy drained his second 3-pointer to open the second half, and plucky junior guard Craig Engle followed with one of his own 30 seconds later.

Marion senior guard Daly Quinn took advantage of a flagrant foul by sinking two free throws and a long try.

Suddenly, it was a four-point game at 33-29, and the mighty little Quinn had tied Travis Fuller's Marion school record for career 3-pointers with 57.

"I knew these kids wouldn't quit," said Marion Coach Mike Manderscheid. "We've got a bunch of kids who work hard every day and every game.

"We're small, and it was hard to go up against their length. But we went out after them. There aren't any of our kids who will back down."

In the end, however, size mattered for the Saints. Along with some sharp shooters.

The 6-foot-4 Winker scored six straight points in a little over a minute to give Xavier a 10-point cushion. And then speed-demon junior guard Mitchell Burger drove the lane for a couple of baskets and paired them with a 3-pointer to put the game out of reach.

"I usually try to drive and kick out for 3-pointers," said Burger, tabbed by his coach as "always

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the fastest on the floor.”

“But if the lane's open, I'll go for it.”

He finished with 16 points, while Winker had 20.

Junior Adam McDermott, who got the Saints off to a fast start with 13 first-half points, led the scoring with 21.

No one else scored more than two for Xavier. Six-foot-8 center Matt Nelson, who towered over everyone else on the court, was held scoreless.

For the Indians, guards Engle and Daly Quinn topped the scoring with 21 and 10 points, respectively.

“We knew they had two terrific guards,” said Luehrsmann. “At this time of the season, great guard play makes the difference. So it was a good test for us tonight.

“Now, for Wahlert, we'll be the underdog. But I can promise that we'll be competitive.”

MARION (49): Quinn Cannoy 3 1-3 9, Daly Quinn 3 2-3 10, Craig Engle 5 1-2 12, Trevor Hardman 0 2-2 2, Derek Smith 2 0-0 4, Jeremy Schneiders 0 0-0 0, Jason Manderscheid 2 0-0 4, Terrence Williams 1 0-0 2, Devin Quinn 3 0-1 6. Totals 19 6-11 49.

XAVIER (62): Adam McDermott 4 12-14 21, Mitchell Burger 6 3-4 16, Calvin Winker 7 6-6 20, Matt Nelson 0 0-0 0, Andrew Bisenius 1 0-0 2, Connor Ramlo 0 1-3 1, Joe Welch 0 0-0 0, Frank Hill 1 0-0 2. Totals 19 22-27 62.

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Halftime – Xavier 31, Marion 18. 3-point goals Marion 5 (Da.Quinn 2, Cannoy 2, Engle 1), Xavier 2 (McDermott 1, Burger 1). Total fouls – Marion 20, Xavier 16. Fouled out – Hardman, Manderscheid.