

Balanced Mustangs knock off Luther

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 03 January 2015 18:57 -



The Mount Mercy men's basketball team has a nice melting pot of players on the squad this year.

There are guys from Chicago, a pair from the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul, a shooter from Australia, a versatile player from Brazil and six guys from Iowa, including a quartet from Cedar Rapids Kennedy.

It's an effective mix and they produced an 82-67 victory over Luther in a non-conference game at the Hennessey Recreation Center Saturday afternoon.

Alex Houston, a 6-foot-4 forward from Chicago, led the charge for Mount Mercy (12-3) with 16 points and nine rebounds. James Boonstoppel, the shooter from Australia, popped in two 3-pointers during a 12-0 run as the Mustangs broke things open in the second half.

Kyle Lamaak, one of the Kennedy grads who joined the Mustangs this season after two years as a regular student at Northern Iowa, muscled in 11 points in 16 minutes despite operating with a sore ankle. Matos, a 6-5 senior from Brazil, showed his versatility with 10 points, four rebounds, four assists and three steals.

Dondre Osborne (Zion, Ill.) and Ben Struss (Kennedy) scored eight points apiece.

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"Considering we hadn't played in three weeks and had been practicing for only three or four days, I was pleased," said Mount Mercy Coach Paul Gavin. "I knew it wouldn't be easy."

The Mustangs like to run and play an up-tempo game, but Luther likes to slow it down and look for 3-pointers. "We finally wore them down a little bit," said Gavin.

Mount Mercy had trouble shaking the Norse, who stayed in the game by sinking fifteen 3-pointers in 35 attempts. The Mustangs led 61-52 when Boonstoppel got hot and scored eight points in a 12-0 run, sparking the Mustangs to a 73-52 advantage and sealing the game.

Boonstoppel began the 12-0 surge with a 3-pointer to make it 64-52. Houston made two free throws for a 66-52 lead, then Boonstoppel hit another triple for a 69-52 bulge. Boonstoppel then made a layup on a nice feed from Kennedy grad Jake Misener to make it 71-52, and John Johnson finished the 12-0 run with a layup for the 21-point cushion at 73-52.

Boonstoppel had been quiet until erupting during the pivotal stretch.



"That's what he's capable of doing," said Gavin. "He's really capable of scoring a lot in short bursts. He's got a knack."

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"He can score like nobody else we've coached in quite awhile. He's a nice addition."

The Mustangs have compiled their 12-3 record with a stiff non-conference schedule. They are receiving votes in the NAIA national poll and will open the Midwest Collegiate Conference season at Clarke Wednesday night.

"I'm very pleased," said Gavin. "But I don't want to look backwards, I want to look forward now."

Mount Mercy guard Da'Quan Moore did not play Saturday. He will be sidelined a few weeks with a wrist injury, according to Gavin.

Jake Martin and Cody Kliethermes led Luther (4-7) with 15 points apiece.

LUTHER (67): Huber 0 2-2 2, Woolems 00-2 0, Meyer 3 0-0 9, Matthias 1 0-0 2, Martin 5 2-2 15, Austin 2 0-0 5, Palmer 0 0-0 0, Wilkins 1 2-3 4, Schultz 0 0-1 0, Kliethermes 5 0-0 15, Stafford 1 0-0 2, Lembezeder 2 0-0 5, C. Wright 3 0-1 8, L. Wright 0 0-0 0, Dickey 0 0-0 0. Totals 23 6-11 67.

MOUNT MERCY (82): Houston 5 6-6 16, Osborne 4 0-1 8, Matos 5 0-0 10, Misener 1 0-0 3, Struss 4 0-0 8, Goines Jr. 1 0-0 3, Boonstoppel 4 0-0 11, Murdock 1 0-0 2, Johnson 1 0-0 2, Price-Majors 1 4-6 6, Lamaak 5 1-3 11, Clark 1 0-0 2, Gogg 0 0-0 0. Totals 33 11-16 82.

Halftime - Mount Mercy 35, Luther 26. 3-point goals - Luther 15 (Kliethermes 5, Meyer 3, Martin 3, C. Wright 2, Austin 1, Lembezeder 1), Mount Mercy 5 (Boonstoppel 3, Miseneer 1, Goines Jr. 1).