Written by Steve Ostermann
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Comeback is just what doctor ordered for sluggish Port boys, ailing Gasser

Sometimes basketball teams have to find a way to get the job done even when they're under the weather.

Josh Gasser and his Port Washington teammates weren't at their best for much of last Friday's North Shore Conference opener against Germantown, but a gut-check third quarter was just what the doctor ordered.

Riding the hot hand of the ailing senior guard, the host Pirates rallied from a ragged start with a 22-6 run that opened the second half and carried them to a 61-51 win.

Gasser scored a game-high 28 points, but it didn't come easily. In addition to a facing an active Germantown defense, he had to battle through a bad case of food poisoning that left him nauseous and dehydrated.

"I ate some bad Chinese food on Wednesday and got sick that night," said

Gasser, who also had eight rebounds and three assists but often slowed the pace to catch his breath during a 30-minute effort.

“I wanted to play no matter how I felt, but I got a little lazy at times. I’m just glad we won.”

Port, which improved its overall record to 3-0, had its hands full with a young Germantown squad.

The Warhawks started four sophomores and a junior but led most of the first half, thanks mainly to three-point shooting. Cashing in on open looks, they hit five attempts from beyond the arc and owned a 33-28 lead in the final minute.

A buzzer-beating three-pointer by Gasser pulled the Pirates within 33-31 at halftime.

Port wasted little time changing the pace in the third quarter. Extending their defense and controlling the interior, the Pirates quickly took control.

Cory Steinmetz started the rally with two baskets that put Port up for good, 35-33. A short time later, Gasser drilled a pair of three-pointers that gave the Pirates a 43-37 lead.

The margin grew to 53-39 by the end of third period. Although the Warhawks pulled within nine points early in the fourth quarter, they never got any closer.

“We finally started playing some defense,” Port coach John Bunyan said. “In the first half, we were letting them have a lot of open threes.

“We also did a good job of taking the ball strong to the hole.”

Besides Gasser’s total, which included all four of the Pirates’ three-pointers, Port got strong second-half efforts from its front line. Steinmetz and Shane Kennedy, both forwards, finished with 10 and eight points, respectively.

Malcolm Bowers led Germantown with 12 points, and Zak Showalter had 11.

Although the Warhawks finished with seven three-point baskets, they had only two in the second half.

“Germantown has a young team, but they’re always tough,” Bunyan said. “We knew they would be a challenge.

“This was a good game for us, a good win.”

Port took on Nicolet on Tuesday and will continue North Shore play Friday with a 7:30 p.m. game at Whitefish Bay.

The Pirates will then play nonconference games against Waupun at 6:45 p.m. Saturday at the Al McGuire Center in Milwaukee and at home against Brookfield Academy at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 22.

PORT WASHINGTON GUARD Joe McIlree dribbled out of defensive pressure from Alex Lloyd in Friday‘s win over Germantown. Photo by Sam Arendt