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Duening-led Spartans use front-line strength to spoil CG-B boys' opener

An athletic opponent with a strong inside game didn't provide a favorable matchup for the Cedar Grove-Belgium boys' basketball team in its season opener Nov. 15.

Powered by the front-line play of Andrew Duening, West Bend West rolled to a 72-44 nonconference win over the host Rockets.

Duening scored a game-high 30 points for the Spartans, who raced to a 20-7 lead after one quarter and continued to pull away until the final period.

"We've got a ways to go," Cedar Grove-Belgium coach Jim Meinen said.

"West Bend is a very athletic and strong inside. We have an entirely new system, and it's going to take us a little while to learn things."

West took control quickly with the low-post work of Duening, a 6-foot-6 junior. The Spartans also got 12 points from forward Jacob Duening, Andrew's twin brother.

"He is a very nice player with nice moves," Meinen said of Andrew Duening. "We thought he would give us some trouble inside, and he did.

"One of our concerns coming into the season was our interior post presence. It's something we have to work on."

The Rockets, who are rebuilding after losing most their top players from last season to graduation, trailed, 38-18, at halftime.

The deficit grew to 61-24 by the end of three quarters before Cedar Grove-Belgium pared the final margin with a 20-11 run in the final eight minutes.

"At halftime, we talked about the score not being important. We wanted to keep working on things," Meinen said.

"I thought we progressed throughout the game. I was quite pleased with the way we played in the fourth quarter."

The Rockets' young lineup was led by juniors Jacob Winker and Spencer Bares, who each scored 12 points. Winker's total included a pair of three-point baskets.

"They both did some nice things," Meinen said. "We have a lot of juniors, and they're going to get plenty of playing time."

Cedar Grove-Belgium opened Central Lakeshore Conference play against Random Lake on Nov. 20.

The Rockets' next game will be Nov. 27 when they host Ozaukee in a 7:30 p.m. league game.

Image Information: CEDAR GROVE-BELGIUM'S Logan Peterson drove past a West Bend West defender during the teams' season opener Nov. 15. Photo by Sam Arendt