

Stingy Christian hands CG-B boys first league loss

Written by Steve Ostermann
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The Cedar Grove-Belgium boys' basketball team has been able to crack opposing defenses with regularity this season — until Monday, that is.

Sheboygan Christian hung with the host Rockets throughout a Central Lakeshore Conference game, allowed only four points in the fourth quarter and escaped with a 44-38 win.

"We had our chances in the closing minutes and couldn't convert," said Cedar Grove-Belgium coach Jim Meinen, whose team suffered its first league loss and fell into a second-place tie with Christian at 4-1.

"We really played well for 90% of the game but couldn't take advantage of our opportunities at the end."

The Rockets trailed by one point in the final minute but after failing to score on two possessions ended up fouling Christian. The Eagles responded by converting at the free-throw line, where they were 11-for-14 for the game.

Cedar Grove-Belgium was coming off a season-high scoring output in a road win the previous Friday but couldn't stay on track offensively against Christian.

Center Jesse Anderson and guard Nic Vruble, the Rockets' top two players, managed just five points between them.

Anderson, a 6-foot-8-inch senior, spent the third quarter on the bench with foul trouble and finished with two points.

Vruble's scoring came on a lone three-pointer.

"Christian did a nice job of slowing the game, but we need to find ways to get the ball to both Jesse and Nic in close games like this," Meinen said.

Despite their problems, the Rockets were poised to take control early. They trailed, 10-9, after one quarter but used a 13-4 run in the second period to build a 22-14 lead by halftime.

However, Christian quickly rallied, outscoring the Rockets, 19-12, in the third quarter behind the work of Andrew Stecker and Lee Veldkamp.

Stecker finished with a team-high 13 points, and Veldkamp had 12.

With Anderson and Vruble held in check, Cedar Grove-Belgium needed other players to step up. The Rockets' top scorers were Kyle Bruggink and Josh Mulloy with eight points apiece.

Monday's game was the Rockets' last one before the holiday break. They will resume play at home Jan. 5 with a 7:30 p.m. conference game against Ozaukee.

CG-Belgium 80, Random Lake 62

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A 28-point second quarter propelled the Rockets to an easy league win on the road Dec. 18.

Vruble scored a game-high 20 points, including an 11-for-11 effort at the free-throw line, to lead the rout. He also had 11 rebounds and four steals.

Anderson led his team's front-line attack with 18 points, 10 rebounds and four blocks.

After holding a 17-12 lead in the first quarter, the Rockets outscored the Rams by 18 points in the second period and held a 45-22 edge at halftime.

The lead ballooned to 30 points after three periods before Random Lake trimmed the final margin with a 27-15 run in the final period.

J.T. Navarro paced the Rams (1-4) with 19 points.