Written by MARK JAEGER
Wednesday, 16 January 2013 17:18

Determined Grafton boys ride big 2nd quarter to hard-fought win over Port in North Shore showdown

Fortunately for the Grafton boys' basketball team, games are longer than one quarter.

Coach Bob Maronde's squad found itself down early at home in a showdown with North Shore Conference rival Port Washington last Friday.

But teamwork and determination helped Grafton overcome the deficit and score a 55-44 victory.

"I was extremely pleased with the way my team played," Maronde said.

"It seemed like the first time this season, we played together like a team. Port hit some shots early and we missed some shots, putting us down, 9-2, but I wasn't worried.

"I could tell the guys knew what we had to do, and they did it."

Port coach Brian Hebein called the showdown "an extremely physical contest on both sides."

"It was a classic Port-Grafton game where everyone was diving for loose balls."

Port started the game poised and took an 11-6 lead into the second quarter.

But it was then that the host Black Hawks showed signs of embracing the team philosophy Maronde has been emphasizing throughout his first season at the boys'

helm.

“We took command in the second quarter, playing together offensively and defensively. There was good energy, which is something we have been stressing all year,” he said.

“For the past five games, we would be within two points with a minute or so to play, and we could never seem to find a way to win. They found a way to be successful in this game, and hopefully that is something that will carry over for the rest of the year.”

Grafton built a 24-17 lead by halftime and remained in control the rest of the night.

A wild fourth quarter saw the team combine for 43 points. Despite scoring 21 points in the quarter, Port actually lost ground.

“The fourth quarter turned into a free-throw parade for Grafton, and to their credit they converted a lot of their opportunities,” Hebein said.

Grafton’s scoring leader was Caleb Keshemberg, who “had a real nice game offensively,” Maronde said.

Keshemberg’s 16 points included a 9-for-10 effort at the free-throw line.

Grafton’s large advantage in foul shots was a deciding factor in the contest.

The Hawks went to the line 33 times, converting 24 attempts. The Pirates were just 5-for-8 on foul shots.

Maronde also singled out Scotty Tyler for his all-around play.

“He sacrificed some of his usual offense, with just nine points, but he also had five steals, nine rebounds and six assists,” Maronde said.

Port was led by Sam Weiland’s 18 points. Joey Burbach added 13 points.

The win improved Grafton to 4-9 overall and 2-6 in the conference.

Port fell to 4-11 overall, including 1-7 in NSC play.

This week, the Pirates faced Plymouth in a nonconference game Tuesday. Port’s next game will be Jan. 25 when it hosts Homestead at 7:30 p.m.

Grafton will play an NSC contest at Cedarburg on Friday and host West Allis Hale in nonconference play Jan. 22. Both games start at 7:30 p.m.

Image Information: A BATTLE OF WILLS ensued when Grafton's Scotty Tyler tried to drive past Port Washington's Sam Weiland during a North Shore Conference game last Friday. Photo by Sam Arendt