

Hawks bummed by 4th-quarter blues

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Late scoring drought, defensive breakdowns sting GHS boys in loss to Nicolet

The road through the North Shore Conference continues to be a tough trek for the Grafton boys' basketball team.



Although the Black Hawks have shown improvement this season, they stumbled again on the way to a pair of defeats last week.

On Friday, Grafton saw a fourth-quarter drought take its toll in a 66-48 home loss to Nicolet.

The Hawks held a 29-28 lead at halftime and trailed by only 48-44 entering the final period. However, Nicolet pulled away by outscoring them, 18-4, the rest of the way.

"If we could play a 24 or 25-minute game, we would be great," said Grafton coach Bob Maronde, whose team was handed its fourth straight loss and fell to 3-9 in NSC play and 5-13 overall.

"We play very well for stretches, and then we lose it. We're totally focused and then all of a sudden the game gets out of control."

Against an athletic, opportunistic Nicolet squad, the Hawks had little room for error. The Knights, who improved to 8-4 in the conference, pulled away by cashing in on Grafton miscues.

Eugene Bonner led the assault with a game-high 29 points, including a trio of three-point baskets. Tyler Miller added 11 points.

Although Grafton had nine players score, center Beau Benzschawel's 11 points made him the

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only one to reach double figures.

The Hawks had their lowest-scoring output since a 45-37 loss to Seymour on Dec. 27.

“The biggest problem is that we’re trying to make up for defensive breakdowns on offense, and the game should be played the other way around,” Maronde said. “It all starts on the defensive end.

“It’s still not too late for us to get it together, but we have to find a way to stay focused for four quarters.”

Homestead 68, Grafton 55

The Hawks played hard but were unable to stay with the second-place Highlanders in an NSC road loss Jan. 29.

Homestead held a 19-18 lead after one quarter and steadily pulled away. The margin grew to 32-26 by halftime and to 52-41 entering the fourth period.

Scotty Tyler led Grafton with 14 points, and Caleb Keshenberg added 12.

Homestead had three players score in double figures, paced by Jarrod Walton’s 22 points. Luke Worthington and Jake Laihinen added 14 and 12 points, respectively.

This week, Grafton faced Milwaukee Tenor in a nonconference game Tuesday and will travel to Whitefish Bay for a 7:30 p.m. NSC contest Friday. On Feb. 12, the Hawks will play a 7:30 p.m. nonconference game at Wauwatosa West.

Image Information: GUARD ALEX TEICH slipped past a defender as he went up for a shot in Friday’s game against Nicolet. Photo by Sam Arendt