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Rockford (/school/rockford-rockford/boysbasketball/) (4-3-0) **69**

Grand Rapids Forest Hills Eastern (/school/ada-grand-rapids-forest-hills-eastern/boysbasketball/) (3-3-0) **60**

1/5/2013 7:30 p.m.

Unsung heroes spark Rockford to 69-60 win over Grand Rapids Forest Hills Eastern in Cornerstone University Holiday Tournament finals

Steve Kaminski | skaminsk@mlive.com, January 05, 2013 10:27 p.m.



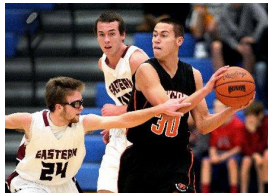
GRAND RAPIDS – Rockford senior Chase Fairchild earned Most Valuable Player honors after leading the Rams to a 69-60 win against Forest Hills Eastern in the finals of Saturday night's Cornerstone University Holiday High School Tournament Gold Division.

What Fairchild wanted to talk about most after the game, however, was the play of his teammates, including Zachary Finkbeiner, who led the Rams with 16 points, and Christopher Sunday, who came off the bench and added 10.

"We had players come in and step up at key times," Fairchild said. "Right when they cut the lead, they scored to extend it back out."

"We have struggled scoring. You look at our scores, and they have been low. If we can get more guys to step up, that's huge."

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Rockford's Robert Holmes puts up a shot over Forest Hills Eastern's Casey Haverkate during Saturday's Cornerstone University Holiday High School Tournament. The Rams won, 69-60. - (Rex Larsen | MLive.com)

Chase Fairchild, of Rockford, looks to pass while pressured by Nate Loree of Forest Hills Eastern during the Cornerstone University High School Holiday Tournament final. Fairchild, a senior, was selected MVP of the tournament, while Loree was named to the all-tournament team.. - (Rex Larsen | MLive.com)

(http://photos.mlive.com/4469/gallery/high_school_holiday_basketball_tournament_final_rockford_vs_forest_hills_eastern/in

Fairchild had a strong tournament, too. He scored 12 points Saturday, including seven in the fourth quarter to help the Rams ice it. Fairchild also had a game-high 19 points in Thursday's **56-41 victory** (http://highschoolsports.mlive.com/news/article/1171342084991331284/rockford-boys-basketball-team-doesnt-miss-in-fourth-quarter-pulls-away-from-byron-center/) against Byron Center in the tournament semifinals.

The win was the third straight for the Rams, who are now 4-3 after a 1-3 start. Rams coach Nick Allen, who guided the team to a runner-up finish in Class A in his first season at the helm a year ago, said he is pleased with the

MLive.com Game of the Week statewide poll: Which Friday night basketball game is the best matchup? (Poll Closed)

Paw Paw at Otsego boys 28.72% (139 votes)

Lansing Eastern at Grand Ledge boys 18.6% (90 votes)

Bay City Central at Pinconning boys 16.53% (80 votes)

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Clarkston at Southfield-Lathrup girls 9% (42 votes)

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Stats Leaders

Points

Austin Johnson
(/player/austin-johnson-4/)

Spring Lake

207

Free Throws Made Austin Johnson (/player/austin-johnson-4/)

Spring Lake

66

Three-Point Shots Made

Tyler Lewis (/player/tyler-lewis-4/)

Leroy Pine River

43

(/boysbasketball-3+boys-)

improvement his squad continues to show.

"We had some guys step up and score, some guys who maybe haven't had the success scoring that they have had in games past," Allen said. "It was a good win. They are a tough, well-coached team, and for us to get a win here is nice. Hopefully, we can use this as a building block in the future."

Rockford junior guard Casey Watters joined Fairchild on the all-tournament team after finishing with 14 points. Watters netted four of Rockford's 10 3-pointers.

The 3-point shot proved to be Rockford's biggest weapon. The Rams opened the game with 3-pointers from Finkbeiner and Watters, giving Rockford a 6-0 lead, and the Rams would never trail.

The Rams opened the second half with a pair of 3-pointers from Watters and Fairchild, which enabled Rockford to extend an 8-point halftime lead to 36-22. The Hawks (3-3) did cut the deficit to 49-42 early in the fourth, but they could get no closer.

"We dug ourselves a little bit of a hole right from the get-go," FHE coach Jason Yelding said. "We worked the entire game to get out of it. Quite honestly, they made some big free throws down the stretch to keep the game just out of reach."

"I thought our guys fought tremendously hard throughout the game. We have a long ways to go, but that's a pretty nice team over there in Rockford. It was great for us to compete against them, and we are looking forward to getting into conference play next week."

Nick Hopkins and Nate Loree led FHE with 16 points apiece, and both players were selected to the all-tournament team. Chad Carlson added 10 for Rockford, while Caleb Kigar chipped in nine for the Hawks.

Consolation Game

Marcus Hall scored 25 points to spark East Grand Rapids to a 51-49 victory over Byron Center in Saturday's Cornerstone University Holiday High School Tournament consolation game. Sawyer Smith and Quinn Humphrey netted 14 and 12 points, respectively, for Byron Center.

Please return later to view a photo gallery from tonight's game.

Email Steve Kaminski at skaminsk@mlive.com (<mailto:skaminsk@mlive.com>), friend him on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/sfkaminski> (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/sfkaminski>) or follow him on Twitter at https://twitter.com/Steve_Kaminski

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High School Basketball Bulletin

By Steve Bell

- Bank Hoops' Class A team, players of the week (<http://blog.mlive.com/highschoolbasketball/2013/01/ba>)
- Bank Hoops' Class B team, players of the week (<http://blog.mlive.com/highschoolbasketball/2013/01/ba>)
- Bank Hoops' Class C team, players of the week (<http://blog.mlive.com/highschoolbasketball/2013/01/ba>)