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Boys basketball scoreboard

Boys Basketball

Steve Majerle returns to Rockford, guides short-handed Grand Rapids Christian over Rams



Grand Rapids Christian coach Steve Majerle, left, and Rockford coach Nick Allen talk before the start of the game. Previously, Majerle coached at Rockford. (Rex Larsen | The Grand Rapids Press)

By Jeff Chaney | grsports@mlive.com
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01/10 - 7:45 PM Boys Basketball	Final
Grand Rapids Christian	61
Rockford	59

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ROCKFORD, MI – Steve Majerle coached his team to an important victory against his former school and proved a point at the same time Friday night.

The Grand Rapids Christian boys basketball coach sat DaRohn Scott, his star 6-foot-8 senior center, the entire game for what he described as “team reasons,” but Majerle was still able to guide the undermanned Eagles to an exciting 61-59 win over host Rockford, the team he led for 14 seasons before a temporary retirement.

“Let’s just say (DaRohn Scott) sat for team reasons tonight, but Dwayne Barfield played the game of his life tonight,” said Majerle, whose team evened its record at 3-3 with the win. “We only played seven guys tonight, so it was a good team effort. Rockford played their rear ends off tonight. We put a lot of pressure on them, but they handled it.”

Barfield, a 6-2 senior guard did have a great game, scoring a team-high 21 points, including 17 in the second half when the Eagles needed him most.

Christian had to overcome a 26-point night from Rockford senior forward Nathan Woznick, who hit eight of 10 shots from behind the 3-point line.

“It was a challenge for us tonight, DaRohn is the center of our team,” Barfield said. “But we worked it out, we did a lot of talking out there and worked it out. And this is a big win for us, because we have a tough schedule this year.”

The Rams did have a chance to tie the game in the final seconds, but a driving shot by Austin McKellar just missed, sending Rockford to a 2-4 record.

“We had a stack called there, but they jumped it and (senior point guard Casey Watters) made a pass to Austin,” Rockford coach Nick Allen said. “Austin gave it his best shot, but what are you going to do.”

Allen was pleased with how well his team played, considering the Rams, like many teams in the area, have had a long holiday break because of this week's weather.

“We had three great days of preparation, but they are a good team, and obviously they are well coached,” Allen said. “Two teams had their chances to win tonight, our shots didn't fall for us (in the end).”

Among those shots were McKellar's miss and a 3-pointer by the red-hot Woznick with 13 seconds to play.

“He has made two 3-pointers all year, but got hot tonight,” Majerle said. “Kudos to them, he's always been a good shooter, and a good job to them for breaking all of our traps tonight.”

For Majerle, this was his first time playing against his former team on Rockford's home court, making it a bittersweet win.

Majerle took the Rams to the 2003 state championship and won seven OK Red Conference titles before retiring after the 2011 season due to health issues caused by Parkinson's disease. After successful deep brain stimulation surgery, Majerle returned to coaching in 2013 at Grand Rapids Christian. **He led the Eagles to a 48-39 win over the Rams on Grand Rapids Christian's court last year.**

“This was tough, I am so connected (to their coaching staff),” Majerle said.

“They have been struggling, but they played well tonight. It was a great game.”

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