



Boys Basketball

# Hudsonville boys basketball team goes to 2-0 in O-K Red with 60-49 victory over Rockford

By Don VanderVeen | Advance Newspapers  
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ROCKFORD – The Hudsonville boys basketball team received a couple big scoring boosts – one expected and the other a bonus – to win its second straight O-K Red Conference game with a 60-49 victory at Rockford High School Friday night.

Rockford senior Austin McKellar (12) drives against Hudsonville sophomore Jared Blum (23). (KAREN WAITE | MLIVE.COM)

Hudsonville junior Brent Hibbitts led the Eagles with his second 22-point performance of the week. Hibbitts also scored 22 in a 46-34 victory over Grand Haven on Tuesday.

“He's been pretty solid and is getting better from a high ankle sprain,” Hudsonville coach Eric Elliott said of his 6-8 junior. “He's beginning to play like he's 6-8 and getting closer to the basket where he is the most effective.

“He's cranked up his game, he's confident and he's playing hard and has helped us a ton.”

Hudsonville senior Mark Dieterle, meanwhile, came off the bench and ignited the Eagles with some solid outside shooting. Dieterle made three first-half 3-pointers and finished with 15 points.

“Mark has been playing well for the last couple of games,” Elliott said. “He's probably our top 3-point shooter and got some confidence going, which was a huge boost for us.

“We've been struggling from the 3-point line all year, and for him to come in here and shoot like that was a huge spark for us.”

Hibbitts set the tone for Friday's game by opening the scoring with a four-point play. He finished it off with nine fourth-quarter points to enable the Eagles (4-5 overall) to get off to a 2-0 start in O-K Red Conference play.

“We're tickled pink to get two tough road wins in conference play,” Elliott said. “We've battled through sickness and injuries, and it looks like we're struggling when you look at our overall record.

“But we have a pretty good team. We're a young team and we're learning.”

Hudsonville junior Mason Oppl (3) goes to the basket against the defensive pressure applied by Rockford's Jacob VanCuren. (KAREN WAITE | MLIVE.COM)

After opening the scoring on Hibbitts' four-point play, the Eagles added 3-pointers by Jared Blum and Dieterle to take a 14-10 first-quarter lead.

The Rams kept it close, thanks to six first-quarter points off the bench by Josh Olson.

Logan Magsig opened up the second quarter with another 3-pointer for the Eagles, and Dieterle added yet another to extend the lead to 20-12.

Dieterle had 13 first-half points, but they were offset by a pair of 3-pointers by both Casey Watters and Nate Woznick in the second quarter which cut the Eagles' halftime lead to 29-28.

A Woznick 3-pointer early in the third quarter tied it at 31, and there were five ties or lead changes before Hudsonville went on an 8-0 run for a 44-38 lead at the end of three quarters.

The Eagles made 10 free throws in the fourth quarter to win their second O-K Red Conference game in four days. The Rams slipped to 2-6 overall and 0-2 in O-K Red Conference play.

“We tied it up, but we just couldn't get a stop when we needed it,” Rockford coach Nick Allen said. “Our energy level was better and our offense looked much better, but we just couldn't get over the hump.”

Watters finished with 17 points for the Rams on the strength of four 3-pointers and a 6-for-6 showing at the free-throw line. Olson added 12 points as he and Watters combined for 29 off the bench.

“They kind of kept our momentum going, especially early in the game when we were coming back from that early four-point play,” Allen said. “When guys come into the game ready to go, it builds a lot of depth for us.

“We had opportunities. Josh Olson played exceptionally well, but (Hudsonville) played well and they shot the ball well.”

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