

Double-double by Gross leads Scottsburg over Eastern

Written by George Browning
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The Tuesday, Nov. 27 boys' high school basketball game between Scottsburg and Eastern was a nail-biter for the first 16 minutes.

That wasn't the case, however, for the second 16 minutes as the visiting Warriors dominated the glass and used a zone defense to limit the Musketeers to 12 points on their way to a 66-52.

The score was 41-40 at the break and Scottsburg Head Coach Jacob Johanningsmeier said he challenged his team.

"It seemed like we gave Eastern whatever they wanted offensively in the first half," he said. "The first half was sloppy with both teams trading buckets and we told the kids in the locker room that we don't want to give up 40 points a game, much less in a half and they did a much better job."

The other key was rebounding. Scottsburg had a 19-8 advantage on the boards in the second half.

"We were out-rebounded by three in the first half and did a much better job in the second half," Johanningsmeier said. "They scored because of offensive rebounding on four consecutive possessions in the first half and I am not sure they converted one offensive rebound into points in the second. We did a nice job."

The Warriors' leader on the glass was junior move-in Malik Gross, who finished the game with 15 points and 13 rebounds.

Dakota Snider hit a three-point basket for Eastern to start the second half, putting the Musketeers up 43-41.

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That would be their final lead.

Gross tied the game with a basket off of an offensive rebound and Christian Evans put Scottsburg in front 43-41 moments later.

Eastern continued to struggle to put the ball in the basket in the second half and the Warriors continued to take advantage.

Gross and Zach Boyd scored for SHS, stretching the lead to 49-43, forcing Musketeer Head Coach Scott Newcomb to call a timeout.

The break in action seemed to work as Tevin Wolf hit one of two free throws and RJ Jackson drained two, pulling EHS to within three, 49-46.

Kirk Hardin and Evans each hit baskets to answer for Scottsburg to end the third quarter, helping them to stretch the lead back to seven, 53-46.

The Warriors continued the onslaught with an 8-0 run to start the final quarter and Eastern was never able to get back in the game.

"The first half we were putting the ball in the basket and were able to do some things," Newcomb said. "In the second half we just couldn't score. We started taking bad shots and forced some things. Scottsburg played a zone and I thought we'd be a real good zone offensive team, but we didn't move the ball and attack like you need to (against that defense).

"Once things started to fall apart, it seemed like we started feeling sorry for ourselves and quit playing defense. We just didn't seem to have much energy."

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Much of that energy was likely spent in the first half.

Jackson put 10 points on the board in the opening quarter for the Musketeers and when Scottsburg adjusted their defense to stop him, Wolf took over.

He scored on three straight possession, but quickly picked up his second and third fouls and was never able to establish himself again in the flow of the game.

“Tevin is a good athlete and we have to have him on the floor,” Newcomb said. “We put him back in with two fouls and told him not to pick up his third. He was trying to make an aggressive play to the basket and the Scottsburg player stepped in and took a charge. It was one of those things where they made a play. It did hurt us having him on the bench because he was attacking the rim on offense and doing a good job defensively, as well.”

Jackson led Eastern with 15 points and Austin Churchman and Wolf finished with nine each.

Hardin and Evans joined Gross in double figures for the Warriors with 14 and 13 points each, respectively.

Scottsburg (1-1) will look to continue their winning ways Friday when they host Charlestown.

Eastern (0-2) steps out of Mid Southern Conference play for a county clash against West Washington.

The Senators are 1-0 after beating Salem to start the season.