

WW knocks off Salem, Borden beats EHS in FHB Tournament

Written by George Browning

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The first round games of the First Harrison Bank Holiday Tournament last Friday were as close as most expected them to be.

Both games were rematches of games that took place earlier in the season and both had similar results.

West Washington opened play with a 41-26 win over Salem and Borden beat host Eastern 64-49.

The following is a look back at both of those games.

WW-SHS

West Washington opened the season with a 39-29 win over the Lions and were looking to do the same thing in the annual holiday tournament.

The Lions had other ideas as they opened the game on an 8-2 run that was sparked by the outside shooting of Caleb Couch.

Couch scored all of those points with two three-point baskets and a two.

He added two more free throws in the first eight minutes and Salem led 10-4.

That would be as big as the SHS lead would get.

Over the next quarter, the Senators used a 17-1 run to take control of the contest 21-11 at halftime.

During the spurt, West Washington had a balanced scoring attack, with Tyler Stahl, Chad Thompson, Evan Woods, Ty Bolton and Lane Hoover, each scoring points.

Three of the 17 points came as the buzzer sounded with Bolton heaving a shot from mid-court.

Salem scored to start the third quarter off a basket by Derek Catlett.

And were able to keep West Washington within arm's reach thanks to solid work on the boards.

The Lions out-rebounded the Senators 8-2 in the third quarter and if not for six turnovers might have even made up more ground.

Hoover scored a basket in the paint for WW, extending his team's margin to 11, 28-17.

Salem answered with a three by Jordan Baker, making the margin eight, 28-20 heading into the final period.

The Lions managed just six points down the stretch, both coming off the hot handed Couch.

West Washington sealed the contest with solid free throw shooting.

The Senators knocked down six of eight to close the game.

Couch ended the game with 16 points to lead the Lions and Hoover chipped in 13 points and eight rebounds to lead the Senators.

West Washington advanced to the championship against Borden and Salem went to the consolation game against Eastern.

Borden-Eastern

The revenge-minded Musketeers looked determined to make up for an over-time loss in their first game of the season against Borden.

In that contest, Eastern had a 10-point lead in the third quarter before eventually losing to the visiting Braves, 79-76 in double overtime.

Friday's semi-final game again had the Musketeers in front early, but again featured another comeback by the Braves.

Three players, Tevin Wolf, Jack Hayes and RJ Jackson each scored points as the Musketeers bolted out of the gate with a 9-0 lead.

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While EHS was putting points on the board, Borden was struggling to score. It took 6:35 before they scored their first points off a free throw by Micheal Lynch.

Jackson scored another two for the Musketeers before Borden finally got its first field-goal of the game off a three by Jalen McCoy with just 45 seconds remaining in the first half.

Eastern answered with a three by Jackson, stretching the margin back to nine, 14-5, but that would be as big as the lead would get.

The Braves got another basket by Lynch before the end of the first quarter and the Braves opened the second with an 8-0 run.

Lynch scored two more and Billy Kirchgessner scored a put-back basket between two field-goals by Cody Bachman.

Bachman's second basket gave Borden their first lead, 15-14, at the midway point of the second quarter.

The Braves continued to pour it on.

Garrett Vick scored six points down the stretch in the second quarter and Josh Vollstedt added two and Borden led 23-16 at halftime.

The Musketeers got a three by Jackson early in the third quarter and a putback basket by Wolf trimmed the BHS lead to three, 24-21 at the 6:25 mark in the third quarter.

Borden was never quite able to put the game out of reach from there and Eastern was never able to make the play to get over the hump.

The Musketeers last opportunity game after the Braves took an 11-point lead, 47-36 early in the fourth quarter.

At that point, Eastern made one last run.

Alex Doeblner scored a basket, but failed to convert the and-one.

After a defensive stop, Wolf scored another two thanks to an offensive rebound by Jackson that kept the play alive.

Jackson hit two free throws moments later and all of a sudden, the Musketeers had life training by just five, 47-42, with five minutes remaining in the game.

The two teams traded baskets to keep the margin at four points, but Borden seized control for good when Kirchgessner drained a three in front of his own bench, stretching the lead back to seven.

Borden Head Coach Doc Nash said Kirchgessner's shot was huge and made up for his senior being too unselfish early in the game.

"He is our leader," Nash said. "We had some dumb turnovers in the first half – dumb turnovers and missed layups to start the game. We got off to a horrible start and a lot of that goes on Billy's shoulders. He is too unselfish. He is our leader in every category, including assists, but when teams don't have to guard him, he makes it easier on the defense. Coach Newcomb figured that out and played him to pass.

"When he figures out how good a scorer he is, we are going to be really good."

Kirchgessner said after the shot went through you could fill the game's momentum swing.

"(Lynch) drove middle and I was wide-open in the corner for a three," Kirchgessner said. "He passed it out and I hit it. I think that stretched the lead back to seven and kind of took the air out of the run they were on."

Besides Kirchgessner's big shot and McCoy's timely baskets, which accounted for 13 points, Nash credited Bachman's defense as one of the keys to the win.

"I thought Cody did an outstanding job of guarding Jackson," Nash said. "It was a war. It was a physical ball game. We did a tremendous job defensively on Jackson."

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The Braves missed the front end of a one-and-one, but then hit 10 of 10 free throws down the stretch to seal the win.

With the loss Eastern was sent to the consolation game, while Borden advanced to the championship to take on West Washington.