

Suvak, Salem defense too much for Eastern to overcome

Written by George Browning
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The pregame atmosphere at Eastern High School in Pekin Saturday seemed to be setting up a high caliber Mid-Southern Conference contest between the host Musketeers and the visiting Lions from Salem.

A hot start by the Lions' Landon Suvak and a smothering SHS defense ended much hope of that as Salem took a big lead early and won easily, 60-47.

Suvak scored 15 of his game-high 23 points in the first half.

SHS led 20-4 at one point in the first quarter and built their advantage to 24-6, before the Musketeers tried to respond to get back in the game.

"We expected a battle and when we jumped out early I was really kind of surprised," said Salem Head Coach Hank Weedin.

A basket by Hunter Weedin and another by Suvak stretched the Lion advantage to 20, but Eastern scored eight straight points to end the first half.

Trevor Lewellen hit a basket and Mason Moore drained back to back threes and the 20-point deficit was back to within striking distance, 28-16 at intermission.

From there the score went back and fourth, but Salem's inside out game was too much.

"We just didn't put our foot down during the last two, two and a half minutes of the first half they went on a 8-0 run and that gave them momentum," Weedin said. "From that point on, the game is really pretty even."

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Weedin said like many of Salem's opponents this year it was clear they wanted to minimize the scoring by Hunter Weedin and Haendiges.

Eastern held Haendiges to just three points and Weedin to 13, which is below both of their season averages.

"Suvak was huge for us," Weedin said. "They were keying on Hunter and X (Xavier Haendiges), which you have to do – Hunter is coming off a couple of 30 point games and Xavier all season long has been averaging 16-17 points a game. Opponents can't guard everyone and those guys did a good job of finding Landon and he knocked them down."

Moore finished with 15 points and was the only Eastern player in double figures.

The win improved Salem to 15-2 on the season with a big Thursday showdown at Silver Creek.

Eastern is 5-11 and will travel to Henryville Thursday.

Weedin said the Lions are looking forward to a few days without any games.

"We haven't had a chance to work on a lot of anything," Weedin said, "we've had five games in nine days and the guys are tired. I can see that in our legs."