

Basketball roundup

Written by George Browning

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Just two local boys' basketball teams played during the two-week holiday break. Salem suffered a loss Dec. 29 at Madison and West Washington split a pair of games.

Salem fell to the host Cubs, 62-54 and the Senators defeated Eastern Greene 64-55 on Dec. 30, but lost to Lanesville in three overtimes 64-63 on Jan. 2.

West Washington Head Coach Neil Coyle was very happy with his team's win over the Thunderbirds and said he doesn't fault his group's effort in the loss to the Eagles.

In fact, Coyle said the two games were the Senators' two best efforts on the season.

Josh Green scored 24 points to lead West Washington in the win over the Thunderbirds.

"Eastern Greene is a quality team," Coyle said. ". . . Josh led us, but the win was probably the most we got out of every player in a game this year. We got contributions from a lot of guys. We had nine guys score and some of the guys who didn't score contributed in different ways. That was a good team win."

Coyle said turnovers and missed opportunities doomed his team against Lanesville.

"We gave ourselves opportunities and as long as we are there with a chance to win at the end of the game I am not going to be too disappointed," Coyle said.

In the third overtime, the Eagles sank a free throw late in the game to seal the win.

"When it comes to overtime it's the little things," Coyle said. "It comes down to making layups and free throws and not turning the ball over. The overtime is just four minutes and you can't afford a lot of miscues. The kids fought hard and gave themselves an opportunity, but we came up short."

With the loss to the visiting Eagles, West Washington drops to 5-4 on the season.

Things don't get any easier this week for the Senators as they are set to host the undefeated Brownstown Central Braves.

"We knew after the holiday tournament things were going to get tough," he said. "We play three of the better teams on our schedule. We beat the first (Eastern Greene), lost to Lanesville and now we play the best team on our schedule in Brownstown. It will be a challenge to use it as a gauge to see where we are at and to see where we need to go. I hope the kids step up to the challenge."

The Lions are now 2-5 on the season after loss at Madison.

Salem Head Coach Hank Weedon said the thing that has hurt his team all season was evident against the Cubs.

"We've had opportunities to win every game we've had so far and we shoot ourselves in the foot with turnovers," he said.

Weedon said at one point in the Madison contest his team turned the ball over on six out of seven possessions in a row.

He said he thinks the group's inability to hold on to the ball is just a matter of a lack of focus.

"The first few games youth might have been a factor, but it's a focus thing right now," Weedon said. "We'll just be holding the ball and drop it, or be standing there dribbling and dribble the ball off our foot. It has nothing to do with youth and besides, we are seven games into the season."

Weedon said his group has the potential to turn it around, but it is a matter of them wanting to do it.

"I hope they are trying to fix it," he said. "That's our goal. We want to get better everytime we step on the floor. Sometimes I see it and sometimes we just show up and seem content to be where we are. I haven't seen that drive in this group. I don't know if they don't realize how

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close we are to being a pretty decent team. It's been tough to get a read on this team as far as what fires them up and what doesn't."

The Lions will get the second half of the season underway this weekend with a PLAC doubleheader.

Salem will host Orleans Friday and then travel to Crawford County for a Saturday showdown with the Wolfpack.

Eastern was back on the court Tuesday at Austin and will host Silver Creek Friday.