

SPORTS

CHS boys dodge rally; girls routed

By Nick Herman
Sports Editor

The Clinton Red Devils boys' basketball team has struggled through a good part of the 2018-19 season, but Tuesday's 62-61 victory over the Emerald Vikings may mark the start of a second-half surge.

Senior J.D. Payne had 23 points to lead the Red Devils, including 1-of-2 free throws with 1.5 seconds to go to put his team ahead for keeps. Emerald had a chance to win the game, getting the ball back with 0.9 seconds to go, but could not get a shot off before time ran out after a long inbound pass.

Clinton Head Coach Eddie Romines joked his team doesn't make things easy, and Tuesday night was no different. Clinton led by as much as 13 points early in the fourth quarter, having led nearly the entire contest, and was on the verge of putting the Vikings away. But Emerald scored 21 of the next 29 points to erase the deficit and tied the score on a basket from Jamil Martin with 8 seconds left.

Clinton (4-11 overall, 1-3 Region 3-3A) called timeout with 3 seconds left and ran a play that, as Romines said, usually has the Red Devils throwing the inbound pass into the backcourt. This time, however, the plan developed with Payne taking the inbound pass in the front, but Emerald's Zack Amerson fouled Payne with 1.5 seconds left to send him to the line for a 1-and-1. Payne hit the first free throw and missed the second, leading to an immediate timeout from Emerald.

The Vikings then called a second timeout after seeing Clinton's alignment on defense, and the inbound pass went to just past half court. Emerald, however, could not get a shot off before time ran out, leaving Clinton with a victory.

"We told them to not foul, not let them roll the ball in," Romines said of the defensive strategy. "They ended up putting two guys at half court, one or two back, and I just told them just don't foul, switch every screen, and if they catch it - as soon as they catch it - they've got to throw it up because it's only .9."

While Payne scored 23 points to lead the Red Devils, one of the better sights for the Red Devils was



Photo by Nick Herman

PRESSURE — The Clinton girls couldn't handle Emerald's defense Tuesday and were routed at home, 70-29.

the play of Konnor Richardson, who missed the early part of the season due to injuries suffered in the football season. Richardson played what Romines said was his best game of the season, scoring 12 points, and showed some nifty moves at the basket on offense. He also had a block at the start of the fourth quarter that directly led to a basket by Sam Tiller that pushed the Clinton lead to 11 points early in the fourth quarter.

"He's not going to back down from anybody. He's going to be physical, but not physical to the point where he's going to pick up a foul on every possession," Romines said.

Amari Bates added 11 points for Clinton.

No. 6 Emerald 70, Clinton Girls 29: Clinton has rolled through its first 15 games, starting the season 14-1, but Tuesday's game showed there is still plenty to improve on with a month to go before the state tournament. Emerald, leading 13-11 with 7 minutes, 25 seconds to go in the first half, scored 20 of the next 27 points and eventually blew away the Red Devils with a dominant offensive performance by Quadijah Moore.

Moore, a senior for the Vikings, had 24 points to lead all scorers - many of her points coming from close to the basket on post-ups that allowed her to turn toward the middle and casually scored over Clinton's overmatched defenders.

LA sweeps: boys rally, girls roll

By Nick Herman
Sports Editor

The Laurens Academy Crusaders' varsity basketball teams took on Anderson Christian Tuesday night, and each team walked away with an impressive victory.

The LA boys moved to 10-7 overall, 4-2 in the region with a 54-44 victory. The Crusaders rallied back from down 16 points down. LA senior Noah Moore finished with a team-high 22 points and topped the 1,000-point plateau for his career. Dawson Foster added 17 points.

LA's girls improved to 14-3 overall and 4-0 in the region standings with a 62-5 blowout victory. Anderson Christian did not score its first points until the third quarter when Kaleigh Tollison hit a pair of free throws. She added a 3-pointer in the fourth quarter to wrap ACS's scoring.

Ruthie Moore had 19 points, Jennifer Wu added 12 points, and Emily Abercrombie had 12 points for the Crusaders, who led 37-0 at the half.

Laurens: The Laurens Raiders were on the road for a doubleheader against Hanna, and the Raiders walked away with a pair of defeats.

The girls opened the night against the No. 10-ranked Yellow Jackets, who handed LDHS a 66-28 decision. Hanna led 19-5 at the end of the first quarter and pulled away from there. Qua Fortson, Raniya Jackson and Asia Davis all had five points to lead the Raiders (5-12 overall, 1-6 Region 1-5A) in scoring.

The LDHS boys suffered an 87-71 loss after allowing a five-point halftime lead to get away. Laurens led 44-39 at the half before Hanna outscored the Raiders 28-11 to seal the win.

Christian Anderson led the



Submitted Photo

MILESTONE — Laurens Academy's Noah Moore, posing with head coach Travis Plowden, passed the 1,000-point plateau for his career Tuesday against Anderson Christian.

Raiders (9-9 overall, 4-3 region) with 25 points, while Dee Foster followed with 20 points, and Jordan Woodruff added 12.

Softball
New softball program: Laurens Head Coach Michaela Smith announced registration dates for a new youth softball association in Hickory Tavern.

Sign-ups for the Hickory Tavern Youth Association will run from Feb. 1-21, with sign-ups each Tuesday and Thursday from 6-8 p.m., and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. All sign-ups are taking place at Hickory Tavern Park, and cost \$45 per child.

For more information on the program, contact Nicole Patterson at 907-1549, or e-mail m-mscrap-metal-halfdime@outlook.com.

COLLEGE Basketball
Gardner-Webb 66, PC women 58 (Tuesday): Presbyterian rallied back from a double-digit deficit to take a lead in the second half over the Bulldogs, but the Blue Hose were unable to hold on.

Kiara Jackson hit a layup with 4:49 left in regulation to give PC a 53-52 lead, which capped a come-

back from 10 points down in the third quarter. Morgan Pointer and Neydja Petithomme hit 3-pointers within a span of 57 seconds, however, to give G-W the lead for keeps.

Kacie Hall had 18 points, her 12 straight game of double-digit scoring. Hall hit 723 career points to pass Amanda Mills for ninth in the program's Division-I era. Hall also hit two 3-pointers to reach 131 for her career, passing Darah Huffman (1995-99) for eighth in program history.

Salina Virola had her fourth double-double of the season, scoring 11 points and pulling down 11 boards for PC (4-12, 2-3 Big South).

PC men 85, Hampton 70 (Wednesday): Davon Bell had 22 points and eight rebounds, while Adam Flagler added 21 points and another eight boards, lifting PC past the Pirates.

PC (10-9, 2-2) hit 10 3-point shots in the contest and went 17-for-23 from the foul line.

The Blue Hose also had a 27-18 edge in bench scoring, led by 16 points from Romeo Crouch.

PC hosts Longwood today (Saturday) at 4 p.m.

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