

Raider boys in must-win territory

By Nick Herman
Sports Editor

The 2018-19 Laurens boys' basketball season has essentially come down to one game: Win or else.

The Raiders faced that predicament after Tuesday night's 58-54 loss to the T.L. Hanna Yellow Jackets in their home finale. The loss dropped Laurens to 10-15 on the season and 5-8 in Region 1-5A play, and placed the team in a three-way tie with J.L. Mann and Greenwood for fourth place. If the Raiders were to defeat Greenwood Friday night in the regular-season finale, they would be guaranteed a spot in the state tournament next week.

A loss, however, would require a Mann loss to Wade Hampton to keep any slim playoff hopes alive for Laurens. A Mann victory, coupled with a Raider loss to the Eagles, would all-but end any hope of making the tournament.

"We're battling. Every night is a dogfight," Laurens Head Coach Ryan Walker said. "I'm not really into moral victories - they're still losses - but those five seniors had a big old hand in coming from a four-win team three years ago to 10 wins last year, to right now sitting at 10."

Laurens trailed for much of the game Tuesday night against Hanna, save one stretch in the first half. With the Raiders trailing 10-2 with 1:05 left in the first quarter, Dee Foster got scorching hot from the field. Foster hit six straight field goals and accounted for 15 straight points, part of a team-high 27-point performance. Following Foster's 15-point run, a J'Von



Photo by Nick Herman

SENIOR CLASS — Senior members of the Laurens boys' and girls' basketball teams, and the cheerleading squad, were honored before Tuesday's home finale with T.L. Hanna.

Harris basket with 3:55 left in the half gave the Raiders a 19-17 lead.

"Dee's improved a lot from last year to this year. He's one of our best players when he's in the right frame of mind," Walker said. "Tonight he was good. He kept us in it."

But as soon as things spun in Laurens' favor, the Yellow Jackets took the momentum right back. Hanna scored on four straight possessions and six of their last seven in the first half, part of a 12-0 run that gave the Yellow Jackets a 29-19 lead at the half. Hanna never trailed the rest of the night.

Laurens did put up a good fight in the second half, rallying from down as many as 16 points to get within three, 52-49, with 1:07 left in the game on a 3-pointer from Foster. Hanna responded with a basket from Ja'hem Handy and four free throws from Avery Jones in the final 46.7 seconds to finally put the game away.

Dravious Copeland also finished in double figures for Laurens, scoring 12 points.

T.L. Hanna 56, Laurens Girls 37: Tuesday's loss saw many of the hallmarks of the Raiders over the season - a cold-shooting offense with far too many missed layups and turnovers.

Laurens had 27 turnovers, which led to 17 points for the Yellow Jackets. The Raiders also gave up a 20-5 run from near the midway point in the second quarter through the first two-thirds of the third quarter. That gave the Yellow Jackets a 34-14 lead and, effectively, put any hope of a Raiders victory to bed.

The Raiders finally found their offense in the fourth quarter, running off 15 of the last 25 points in the game, and finished the quarter with 20 points - three more than the first three quarters combined.

Qua Fortson had 10 points for the Raiders (6-17, 2-11).

CHS boys ice tourney spot, girls falter

By Nick Herman
Sports Editor

The Clinton varsity basketball teams wrapped up their regular seasons Tuesday night with a trip to Woodruff, splitting their games against the Wolverines.

As a result, both Red Devil squads will play in the state tournament.

Clinton's boys wrapped fourth place in Region 3-A with a 67-57 victory over Woodruff, finishing the regular season with an 8-13 overall mark - but a 5-5 record in region play.

Ahmari Bates had a team-high 24 points for the Red Devils, including 11 of 13 free throws against Woodruff. J.D. Payne added 20 points.

"I'm so proud of this team," Clinton Head Coach Eddie Romines said. "We hustled, rebounded, played tough, aggressive defense and did a great job of executing our offensive game plan."

Thanks to the win, Clinton will start Class 3A Tournament play Tuesday night at Chapman. The game will tip at 6:30 p.m.

Clinton's girls suffered a 55-39 loss in their finale against the Wolverines, falling to 17-5 overall and 5-5 in region play.

De'Shanti Watts had 13 points, while teammates Savanna Campbell and Terriauna Bennett each scored 11. Clinton Head Coach John Gardner said his team played hard for three quarters, but got beat mentally and physically in the fourth quarter.

Clinton begins tournament

action Monday night at Southside. The game is slated for a 7 p.m. start.

LA Boys: The Laurens Academy boys' basketball team opened the Region 2-A Tournament Tuesday night with a long-range barrage as it routed Palmetto, 61-22, at Newberry Academy.

The Crusaders hit 13 3-point baskets in the game, with Noah Moore hitting five of them. Moore finished with 21 points through the first three quarters. Dawson Foster hit four 3-pointers and scored 14 points.

Laurens Academy held Palmetto Christian to 12 points in the first half before shutting out Palmetto in the third quarter, which was 0-for-9 from the field in the third. The Crusaders led by 26 at the half and coasted home from there.

The Crusaders (11-13) took on Anderson Christian Friday night at 5:30 p.m., at Greenwood Christian. The game was to be followed by the LA girls' tournament opener against W.W. King, which eliminated Cambridge with a 28-25 decision Tuesday night. The winners of Friday's games will play in the championship round today (Saturday).

COLLEGE Women's basketball Hampton 79, Presbyterian 62 (Tuesday): Kacie Hall's record

night for the Blue Hose was all for naught as the team lost its sixth straight game.

Hall hit a program-record seven 3-pointers as she finished with a game-high 27 points. The seven 3-pointers moved Hall to seventh place in career 3-pointers at PC, passing Kristen Stevens. Hall now has 146 made 3-pointers in her career.

One of Hall's 3-pointers pushed PC up by 11 points, 23-12, before the Pirates stormed back with a 30-6 run to grab a 42-29 lead early in the second half.

Hampton did much of its damage at the foul line, hitting all 21 attempts it had. PC went 11-for-14 in comparison.

Salina Virola had 12 points and six rebounds. Hall, along with her scoring, added five boards and three assists.

PC (4-17 overall, 2-8 Big South) hosts Winthrop today (Saturday) at 2 p.m., and will immediately be followed by the PC men's game against Gardner-Webb.

Men's tennis South Carolina 7, Presbyterian 0 (Wednesday): The Blue Hose were shut out against the Gamecocks.

Nicholas McKinney (No. 4 singles) came the closest to picking up a point for PC, falling 6-2, 7-5 in his match.

PC hosts Coastal Carolina and Lee in separate matches today (Saturday).

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