

Shelbyville Rams charge past Warriors in CIC match up

By Lenny Sementi

It took a big game from an unknown commodity to upend Tuscola's boys' basketball team on the road at Shelbyville. Coach Justin Bozarth and his crew were hit by two surprises Friday, Jan. 11.

The game at Shelbyville was moved up an hour in an attempt to beat Mother Nature and her snowstorm forcing an early bus departure. Then Brayden Nichols a sophomore shooting guard for the Rams decided to toss in a career best seven three pointers en-route to 27 points, beating his career best by nearly 10 points, which helped the home team secure the Central Illinois Conference victory 62-55.

Nichols stepped up to the plate handing Bozarth and the boys their first CIC loss of the season despite a career night from freshman Jalen Quinn. Quinn went toe to toe

in the scoring department with one of the best around, Shelbyville senior Malcom Miller. Miller resides near the top of the area leaders list and showed why Friday evening when he dropped in 25 points, but Quinn was not to be outdone, scoring a career best 25 points of his own. He was good on seven fieldgoals and was a perfect 8 for 8 from the line.

"We knew going into Shelbyville that Malcolm Miller was one of the best players in the conference," stated coach Bozarth. "Our game plan was to make him work for his points. We thought Will Little and Ben Dixon contested him well forcing him to make some extremely difficult shots over our defense. And didn't count on Nichols scoring that much, unfortunately, we lost track of him too many times. To his credit, very few high school players can go 7 for

10 from three, but it was his night."

Brayden VonLanken found his way to the charity stripe, as well, by attacking the inside. The Warrior big man connected on 9 of 10 on his way to 15 points as Tuscola went 21 of 22 from the line. Which is where the Rams ultimately cinched up the win, draining 10 of 10 in the final six minutes of the fourth quarter.

A pair of threes from Nichols midway through the first was all that separated the two squads after one with the Rams in front 19-13. Tuscola hit just one field goal in the frame, a three by Jacob Kibler, but as a team the boys sank 8 of 8 from the line in a very physical first eight minutes of action.

VonLanken went to work on the inside early in the second period, which opened up a three ball for Quinn outside the arc, but Nichols,

once more, came through with a pair of threes to end the half and kept the Rams in front by four 29-25. Quinn was huge after returning to the floor in the third. He posted 12 points in just six minutes that included a pair of threes, fueling a pair of five-point runs, only to watch the Rams answer with threes of their own heading into the fourth on top by six 45-39.

Ben Dixon set the table for a shoot out, banking in a pair in the paint to open the fourth on back-to-back trips down the floor, which cut the Rams' lead to two. Shelbyville fired back following two straight misses by the Warriors and a turnover opening a small lead that forced the Warriors to foul to save time. The Rams slammed the door shut on the win sinking all ten attempts at the charity stripe in the final three minutes of the game.

The Warriors drop their first CIC contest of the year and move to 1-1 on the year in the league and 11-5 overall. They return home this week with games against 16-3 Central A&M on Tuesday and an unbeaten-in-the-CIC Warrensburg-Lathem team that is 13-7 on the year Friday.

Eight players in all scored in a well-balanced attack for coach Jacob Hilgendorf's JV team that secured a 17-point win over the Rams 57-40. Cole Cunningham hit three threes in the first half and scored all of his game high 13 points in the first frames. Silas Hortin hit three from outside the arc, as well, on his way to 11 points, while Cameron Homann fell just short of double digits by chipping in nine points.

TUSCOLA (55)												
fg	ft	3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp					
VonLanken	3-13	9-10	0-1	10	0	0	1	15				
Little	0-3	2-2	0-3	1	2	0	4	2				
Kresin	0-1	0-0	0-0	2	0	0	2	0				
Kibler	2-8	2-2	1-3	6	2	1	5	7				
Quinn	7-17	8-8	3-7	7	0	4	2	25				
Dixon	2-3	0-0	0-0	4	0	0	2	4				
Hardwick	1-4	0-0	0-2	1	1	1	2	2				
Cunningham	0-3	0-0	0-3	1	1	1	2	0				
Totals	15-52	21-22	4-19	32	6	7	20	55				
FG% - 29% FT% - 95% 3-FG% - 21% Turnovers-13												

SHELBYVILLE (62)											
fg	ft	3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp				
Bryant	2-5	0-0	1-4	1	2	6	25				
Reed	1-2	1-2	0-1	3	7	10	27				
Logue	1-8	0-0	1-7	3	5	0	2				
Cunningham	5-9	0-0	3-4	13	1	2	0				
Calderon	2-6	0-0	1-4	7	1	2	0				
Williams	1-2	0-0	0-0	2	0	0	2				
Wyninger	2-2	0-0	0-0	2	0	0	2				
Calderon	2-6	0-0	1-4	7	1	2	0				
Hortin	4	0	0	4	2	0	2				
Williams	2	0	0	2	0	0	2				
Calderon	2	0	0	2	0	0	2				
Dixon	1	0	0	1	0	0	2				
Wyninger	1	0	0	1	0	0	2				
Hardwick	1-2	0-0	0-1	0	0	0	1				
Cunningham	2-6	3-4	2-6	4	1	0	4				
Totals	14-45	11-17	4-18	34	6	8	19				
FG% - 31% FT% - 65% 3-FG% - 22% Turnovers-13											

Big day for Cunningham not enough for Warrior victory

By Lenny Sementi

Cole Cunningham came off the bench early in both halves and turned in maybe the best game of his career, but it was not enough for coach Justin Bozarth's Warriors to pull out a victory against a scrappy Tolono Unity squad.

The Warriors limited the rivals from the north to under 40 percent from the floor, but the Rockets five threes in the middle two stanzas and 10 points from the charity stripe allowed them to sneak out of historic Tuscola gym with the victory.

Unity reached deep into its bag of tricks Tuesday, Jan. 8, utilizing a box and one zone to slow down freshman Jalen Quinn en-route to a 53-43 victory over the Warriors. The two rivals traded buckets and leads throughout the first half, but a 10-point run in the third by Unity was too much for Tuscola to overcome.

"It's the first gimmick defense we have seen all season," commented

Bozarth. "With Jalen's success we knew it was going to show up at some point, overall though I thought we still got good looks at the hoop, but in the end shots just didn't fall for us tonight."

Cunningham led all Warriors with nine points, hitting a pair of threes while connecting on 3 of 4 from the charity stripe. He was also strong on the boards grabbing four rebounds. Next in line was Quinn and senior point guard Will Little. The duo scored eight points each, combining for 16 points. Brayden VonLanken was just one back adding seven points to his season stats. Jacob Kibler checked in with six points, but he truly showed up on the rebound chart hauling in a game high 13 boards to go with a pair of steals.

Quinn found his way to the line twice in the first three minutes of the game despite the extra attention focused on him, but for the remainder of the first half they denied him the ball. Little picked up the slack early draining a three

midway through one and then found VonLanken and Grant Hardwick late in the period handing Bozarth a one-point lead at the first buzzer 10-9.

The two teams traded leads five times in the first 10 minutes of the game until Unity scored on second chance baskets three times late in the second posting a 8-2 run that put the Rockets on top by three at the break 25-22 they would never relinquish. Tolono hit a three to open the third, and Little answered with a runner, but threes by the Rockets on consecutive possessions and two more buckets pushed their lead to nine points entering the fourth. Unity hit just two buckets in the last seven minutes of the contest but sealed the deal at the line connecting on 10 of 13 from the line, dropping the Warriors to 10-5 overall and 5-2 in the friendly confines.

JV coach Jacob Hilgendorf saw four players score in double figures, which led to a dominating 26-point victory

over Unity 57-31. Cunningham was top of the scoring list notching 14 points. Ben Dixon and Grant Hardwick

were two back with 12 points, while Mike Calderon donated 10 points.

TUSCOLA (43)											
fg	ft	3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp				
VonLanken	2-6	2-4	1-1	3	2	4	7				
Little	3-10	1-2	1-6	1	0	2	1				
Kresin	0-1	1-2	0-0	3	0	0	4				
Kibler	3-10	0-0	0-2	13	0	2	3				
Quinn	2-9	4-5	0-2	8	1	1	2				
Dixon	1-1	0-0	0-0	2	0	0	1				
Hardwick	1-2	0-0	0-1	0	0	0	1				
Cunningham	2-6	3-4	2-6	4	1	0	4				
Totals	14-45	11-17	4-18	34	6	8	19				
FG% - 31% FT% - 65% 3-FG% - 22% Turnovers-13											

SHELBYVILLE (53)											
fg	ft	3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp				
Meback	5-13	5-6	0-0	15	2	12	6				
Porter	4-12	2-4	4-11	14	3	2	4				
Crouse	2-2	4	1	5	0	0	5				
Ewerks	4-8	0-1	0-0	8	2	3	0				
Drennan	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0				
Innus	0-0	0-2	0-0	0	0	0	0				
FG-17	48	(35%)	FT-14	25	(56%)	3FG-5	16	(31%)	Reb: 29; TO: 8		
Unity	9	16	13	15	5	53					
Tuscola	10	12	7	14	4	43					

TUSCOLA JV (57) UNITY JV (31)											
fg	ft	3a	reb	a	s	pf	tp				
Dixon	6-10	0-0	0-2	12	3	2	4				
Hortin	0-1	2-2	0-1	2	0	0	12				
Hardwick	5-8	2-3	0-0	12	3	0	0				
Cunningham	6-11	0-0	2-5	14	2	2	2				
Calderon	6-12	0-0	0-2	12	2	0	0				
Patel	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	0	0				
Totals	14-45	11-17	4-18	34	6	8	19				
FG-14 48 (35%) FT-14 25 (56%) 3FG-5 16 (31%) Reb: 29; TO: 8											



Submitted photo
Jalen Quinn drains a free throw during a match up with Shelbyville Friday, Jan. 11. Quinn was good for 8 of 8 from the line.



Submitted photo
Warrior starters—pictured clockwise are Brayden VonLanken, Jalen Quinn, Cade Kresin, Will Little, and Jacob Kibler—gather for a pre-game huddle prior to a conference match up with the Shelbyville Rams Friday, Jan. 11.



Submitted photo
Warrior Ben Dixon tips one in for two during CIC action with the Shelbyville Rams Friday, Jan. 11.

Tuscola student events taking place this week

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| <p>Tuesday, Jan. 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS boys' basketball vs Central A&M—6 p.m. <p>Wednesday, Jan. 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSS—2 p.m. dismissal <p>Thursday, Jan. 17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS boys' basketball vs Sullivan—6 p.m. • EP volleyball at Holy Family 6 p.m. • Freshmen boys' basketball at Arcola—6 p.m. • HS girls' basketball vs St. Teresa—6 p.m. | <p>Friday, Jan. 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP volleyball vs Mt. Zion—4 p.m. • HS boys' basketball vs Warrensburg—6 p.m. <p>Saturday, Jan. 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS girls' basketball at CIC Tourney at St. Teresa • EP seventh grade boys' basketball at Regionals <p>Monday, Jan. 21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No school – MLK Day • Freshmen boys' basketball vs Shelbyville—6 p.m. <p>Tuesday, Jan. 22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP volleyball vs Monticello—6 p.m. • HS boys' basketball at Arthur Christian—6 p.m. |
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