

MONROE SPORTS

Geralds, Monroe program moves forward despite disappointments

Five seniors will be missed: Brooks, Petett, Rich, Hale and Thompson

“We won 10 games and are disappointed that we couldn’t win a district game. We had our chances. I am proud of these young men...all of them but I know these seniors will be successful in life in whatever path they choose in the future.”—Coach Geralds

By Thomas Wampler
Jobe News and Regional Sports Reporter

For the last two years Barren County lost in the first round of the District 15 tournament. Monroe County last advanced to the Region 4 tournament two years ago. The Barren County Trojans are heading back to Diddle Arena. The Monroe County season ends in disappointment but still takes “positive steps” and moves forward.

The Trojans defeated the Falcons 54-40 the opening game of the tourney.

The Falcons were a team in transition until this season when Coach Ashley Geralds took over the basketball program. Coach Garry Dewitt did an admirable job leading the Falcons to a 10-9 overall record and provided a bridge to Coach Ashley Geralds taking over the program this season. Geralds and the Falcons matched their win total from last season going 10-18 overall but failing to win a District 15 game—0-7.

The Falcons came close. They battled Barren, Glasgow, and Allen County-Scottsville in tight games during the regular season but just couldn’t get over the hump.

“It’s disappointing that we failed to win a district game, but I am proud of the leadership the seniors provided and the way the team played hard even if we didn’t always get the results we wanted,” said Coach Geralds. “We won 10 games and are disappointed that we couldn’t win a district game. We had our chances. I am proud of these young men...all of them but I know these seniors will be successful in life in whatever path they choose in the future.”

Geralds said his seniors have a strong work ethic and brought a positive attitude to the team. “They left a strong example for the younger players to follow,” he added.

Coach Warren Cunningham and the Trojans stiffened up their defense in the seconds half and only allowed

18 points. “That’s what we have hung our hat on all year — defense and rebounding,” Cunningham said. “Scoring can come and go on any given night, but defense wins ball games. We didn’t give them very many easy baskets. We made them work for every point.”

Cunningham said the Falcons were a tough team and that they proved that during the season—time and time again. “We knew going into the game that they have plenty of players that can score or take over a ball game,” he said. “We knew our defense would be key and we were able to shut them down in the seconds half.”

“We spent a lot of time thinking about those losses,” Cunningham said of the previous two years the Trojans bowed out early and failed to reach the Region 4 tournament. “We wanted to get back to the regional tournament. That was one of our main goals and that motivated our seniors and the team.”

All the teams in the district know any team can win. The tournament records over the years reflects the level of competition in the 15th District.

The Falcons led half-way through the second quarter but that’s when the Barren defense began making the difference.

Barren County’s offense made a statement too with a 10-0 run to end the half and led 29-22 at the break. Barren County started strong after intermission and a 10-2 run in the third quarter gave the Trojans some breathing room. Their lead grew to 13 points.

Grayson Rich led the Falcons with 16 points but 10 of those came in the first half. Jholdi Brooks chipped in 12 points for the Falcons and Kale Hagan added eight points and seven rebounds. Curtis Petett had five boards.

Aden Nyekan led Barren County with 17 points and 12 rebounds. Will Bandy added 12 points for the Trojans. Tyler Bush and Jacob Shaw both chipped in six points each. Mason added Griggs added five points and Gavin Withrow chipped in five points.

“Give credit to them (Barren County) defensively,” Geralds said. “They got into us. They do what they do. We got



Grayson Rich brings the ball up the court. PHOTO/George Katchak Jobe Photographer



Jameson Pruitt and Aden Nyekan fight for position. PHOTO/George Katchak Jobe Photographer

some shots we wanted but they didn’t fall. That’s basketball. They hang their hat on defense so give credit to them. They got the job done.”

The Falcons were led by their five seniors all season and Geralds said they will be missed.

“This is a special group of guys that are all leaders,” Geralds said. “I’ve been in a lot of locker rooms throughout my years as a coach, and this locker room stayed positive all year and they leave the program in good shape. I will remember this season and this group of guys.”

“We won several close games but the district games we just came up short,” Geralds said. “We won three games in overtime. We were so close. I hate it for the guys. Everyone of our seniors brought something to

the table.”

Accepting their rolls was a defining moment for this year’s team. “I could not ask for a better group of seniors,” he added.

Geralds sang the praises of his upper classman but also praised his younger players for challenging the seniors in practice. He said from the #1 guy to #15, “you could not ask for a better group.”

“I told them after the Barren game that the foundation they had laid...in the end means so much,” the coach concluded. “They went to battle every night. Hopefully, that group of juniors...all the younger guys will step into the roll the seniors showed them this year. I look forward to seeing how these younger players grow and compete next year.”



Jholdi Brooks drives to hoop with Taye Pointer defending. PHOTO/George Katchak Jobe Photographer



Grayson Rich drives inside with Taye Pointer setting up for the charge. PHOTO/George Katchak Jobe Photographer