

Community Sports



Bench big in bounce back win for Warriors

By Lenny Sementi

Boys basketball coach Justin Bozarth's squad has gotten help from non-starters all season long and it was never more evident than this past Friday in Sullivan. The black and gold bench boys donated 25-points to the cause in a 65-40 win over the Redskins ending a 2-game skid with a Central Illinois Conference victory.

"It was good for us to get back on track," stated Bozarth. "Really happy with the way Josiah shot the ball and stayed aggressive on the offensive end throughout. Jackson Barrett seemed to get comfortable again in the second half and we know he's going to knock down big time shots for us in crunch time as we head into the second half of our season."

Parker James has had a few starts thus far but comes off the bench most games midway through the first frame and just might be the leagues sixth man of the year. James scored in 3 of the 4 quarters tallying a game high 14-points on 6 of 9 from the floor, including a 3. The tall guard slash forward scored 5 of his points early in the pivotal 4th frame. Sawyer Woodard and Jackson Barrett also added to the mix off the bench scoring 6 and 5-points respectively.

Coming off a double overtime loss at the hands of Tolono Unity the Warriors blew open a tight game in Sullivan in the 2nd half after trading buckets most of the first two stanzas. Jordan Quinn stepped outside the arc in both helping Tuscola build a 7-point lead entering the break on top 31-24. Josiah Hortin also tickled the bottom of the net on a three ball as well both joining James as top scorers tallying 14 apiece.

Hortin fueled an early run in the third and scored 9-points



WARRIORS SAWYER WOODARD shoots for the hoop during the Jan. 13 JV game against Sullivan. Photo by Dominik Stallings.

in the period helping the Warriors enter the final 8-minutes of action in front by 14-points 49-35. Defense was front and center late in the game limiting the Redskins to just 5-points in the 4th securing win number 15 on the year while moving to 1-1 in the CIC. Chris Boyd added 7-points to his season totals hitting 3 of 5 from the floor. The big man also hit the boards hard grabbing 7-rebounds. Quinn led all falling one board short of a double double notching 9 in the game.

Boyd hit a big bucket late in the loss versus Unity a few nights earlier on Tuesday the 10th forcing the first overtime. He was nearly unstoppable around the hoop scoring a game high 19-points on 9 of 12 shooting while producing the first double double of his career securing a game high 11-rebounds. Quinn hit a 3 in

the 1st overtime helping extend the game into the 2nd overtime and knocked down 3 in the game joining Boyd above the double-digit plateau delivering 15-points.

The two area heavyweights were never separated by more than 6-points throughout the contest and exchanged leads 9-times after the break, 3 of which came in the extra periods. Kam Sweetnam drained a 3 with 25-seconds left in the 2ndextra stanza on his way to 12-points but a late runner sealed the deal on the win for the Rockets. James hit a pair of 3's in the first half delivering 6-points while Hortin found his way to 5-points.

"What a great high school basketball game that we unfortunately came out on the wrong side of the scoreboard," stated the coach. "We played hard enough and well enough to win

but we let some opportunities slip away. Our free throw shooting and defensive breakdowns were an issue throughout the game. As coaches, we've got to do a better job with our defensive coverages. A loss like that doesn't sit well but I am proud of our guys for how we responded. Wednesday and Thursday were our best two practices we've had in a long time in terms of the level of competitiveness."

"Parker had a great week. His level of aggressiveness in practice is translating into the game. He's as dynamic as any guy we have on our roster and we are asking a ton of him this year as a sophomore jumping right into high-level varsity basketball. His improvement is accelerating and we are really, really excited about where he's going to be toward the end of this year with his willingness to work."

TUSCOLA (59)							
	fg-fga	ft-fta	3-3a	reb	a	s	tp
Quinn	6-14	0-1	3-4	7	3	0	15
Musgrave	1-5	0-0	0-3	5	1	1	2
Boyd	9-12	0-0	1-1	11	1	0	19
Hortin	2-6	1-4	0-0	4	2	2	5
Sweetnam	5-12	0-2	2-5	0	0	1	12
Barrett	0-3	0-0	0-2	2	1	0	0
James	2-5	0-0	2-2	2	0	1	6
Totals	25-57	1-7	8-17	31	8	5	59
FG% -44% FT% -14% 3-FG% 47% Turnovers-14							

UNITY (60)							
FG-23-50 (46%) FT-11-19 (58%) 3FG-3-15 (20%) Reb 33; TO-13.							
	fg-fga	ft-fta	3-3a	reb	a	s	tp
Tuscola	11	17	5	14	8	4	-59
Unity	11	13	14	9	8	5	-60

TUSCOLA JV (19)				UNITY JV (47)			
Woodard	4-6	1-4	0-0-9	Spillman	0-3	0-0	0-0-0
Kurtz	3-5	0-0	0-0-6	D.Graves	0-2	0-0	0-0-0
Gabbard	0-2	0-0	0-2-0	Rennels	0-1	0-0	0-1-0
Jeffers	1-2	0-0	0-0-0-2	Devlin	0-2	0-0	0-0-0
Chenoweth	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	Wilcox	0-2	0-0	0-0-0
Gough	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	Warner	0-0	0-0	0-0-0
Thomas	0-0	2-2	0-0-2	B. Graves	0-2	0-0	0-0-0
Totals: fg-fga 18-27 (64%); ft-fta 3-6 (50%); 3fg-3fga 0-3 (0%) REB:(15) Woodard 4, Rennels 3.							
UNITY JV fg-fga 20-45 (44%); ft-fta 6-8 (75%); 3fg-3fga 1-11 (9%); Reb. 20; TO 14.							
Statistics order: fg-fga,ft-fta, 3fg-3fga-pts							

TUSCOLA (65)							
	fg-fga	ft-fta	3-3a	reb	a	s	tp
Quinn	6-10	0-0	2-4	9	0	4	14
Musgrave	1-1	1-1	0-0	2	0	0	3
Boyd	3-5	1-4	0-0	6	1	0	7
Hortin	4-9	4-4	2-4	2	2	1	14
Sweetnam	0-6	2-2	0-5	1	3	4	2
Barrett	2-4	0-0	1-3	0	4	1	3
James	6-9	1-2	1-3	5	0	1	3
Woodard	3-4	0-0	0-0	3	0	0	2
Broady	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	1	0
Totals	25-48	9-13	6-19	28	10	12	16
FG% -52% FT% -69% 3-FG% 32% Turnovers-10							

SULLIVAN (40)							
FG-15-34 (44%) FT-5-13 (38%) 3FG-5-12 (42%) Reb 13; TO-19.							
	fg-fga	ft-fta	3-3a	reb	a	s	tp
Tuscola	16	15	18	16	-	-	65
Sullivan	14	10	11	5	-	-	40

TUSCOLA JV (43)				SULLIVAN JV (30)			
Woodard	7-10	1-2	0-0-15	Spillman	1-2	0-0	0-1-2
Kurtz	2-2	4-6	1-1-9	D. Graves	1-2	0-0	1-1-3
Gabbard	2-5	0-1	0-2-4	Rennels	0-2	0-0	0-1-0
Jeffers	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	Devlin	0-3	0-0	0-2-0
Russo	2-2	1-2	1-1-6	Chenoweth	0-2	2-2	0-1-2
Wilcox	1-2	0-0	0-1-2	Thomas	0-1	0-0	0-0-0
Gough	0-1	0-0	0-0-0	B. Graves	0-0	0-1	0-0-0
Totals: fg-fga 16-34 (47%); ft-fta 8-14 (57%); 3fg-3fga 3-11 (27%) REB:(25) Woodard 9, Rennels 4. Asst. (7) D. Graves 3; TO 25.							
Sullivan JV fg-fga 12-39 (31%); ft-fta 3-7 (43%); 3fg-3fga 3-11 (27%); Reb. 17; TO 23.							
Statistics order: fg-fga,ft-fta, 3fg-3fga-pts							

Lady Warriors' consistency counts

By Lenny Sementi

If nothing else, this season, Tuscola's girl's basketball team has been nothing but consistent. Consistently coming out on the right side of the scoreboard, or that their defense never takes a night off, or that they are going to produce enough points to win, or that most teams won't score much after the break. The other part of the consistency counts argument in this historic 22-0 start after producing 3 more wins this past week is that of a strong coaching staff.

Head coach Tim Kohlbecker has been in charge for 19 seasons, assistant and JV coach Mike Rosenbaum is in his fourth year on the sidelines and assistant Justin Quick has been with him for a large part of his tenure. Timeouts are like clockwork with all three on the same page, it's that consistency that has led to success for the program on and off the floor.

This past week the trio watched the Warriors win three games, notching a CIC win and a pair of non-conference skirmishes upending a very good Clinton squad 57-49 on Monday Jan. 9, Cerro Gordo 49-28, and Cowden Herrick in the premiere game of the CIC/NTC shootout 42-33.

"We played 3 games in a week span against tough competition," stated the coach. "These girls play fast, physical and they compete every single game, and they have developed a collective mental toughness where they do not complain about fatigue, aches, or pains. A hallmark of this group is no matter how we are playing, they find a way to win."

Ella Boyer provided the offensive punch in the Clinton contest to open the week. She did a little bit of everything, hitting 4 of 8 from beyond the arc and 5 of 6 from the line en route to 21 points while donating 3 assists and 2 steals to the cause. Harley Woodard, who reached double digits in all 3 contests, found her way to 11 in the win over the Maroons. She was tops in the rebound column, grabbing 6, and added 5 steals and 3 assists to her season stat sheet. Sydney Moss was next up with 8 points and 4 steals while Isabelle Wilcox and Ava Boyer followed with 7 points apiece.

"Clinton is always a battle and initially, I thought our defense could have been better, however, they run a set every time down court and they are well designed and difficult to defend," commented Kohlbecker. "Overall, we did a de-

cent job pressuring them and not allowing them to run their sets. The on-ball defense of Lia and Izzy, that duo has the job most nights of taking out the other team's best player and not letting them catch. They are making other players miserable."

Kohlbecker's crew looked to a balanced attack and a stingy defense that held the Broncos to 16 points under their average. Ella Boyer and Woodard ventured above the double-digit plateau scoring 13 and 10, respectively. Moss was next with 9 points, then Zoey Thomason with 8, and Wilcox with 7. Wilcox hit the boards, grabbing 8 rebounds and Molly Macaulay secured 5. Ava Boyer had 5 rebounds as well and stoked both the offense and the defense delivering 6 assists and 4 steals.

The Warriors limited Cowden Herrick to single digits in 3 of the 4 stanzas breaking up a 6-6 game after the first 8 minutes of action with a 6-point run in the second frame that led to a 20-12 lead at the break. Wilcox, who entered the scorebook in all four quarters hit three balls in both the 3rd and 4th frames to pace the Warriors following the half. The senior led all with 14-points in the contest. Wo-

odard donated 11-points the cause and Ella Boyer 7. Boyer dished out 6-assists finding Wilcox 3 times for buckets. Moss ended her night at the shootout with 6-points and 7-rebounds.

"This was not pretty, we struggled a bit offensively with their height but defensively we played well," Kohlbecker said. "I need to highlight the work on defense by Molly. She is probably our best off ball defender in terms of positioning and she, Harley and Sydney held their huge front line to just 6-points!"



LADY WARRIORS' SYDNEY MOSS (24) looks for an opportunity to pass the ball in the Jan. 9 game against Cerro Gordo Bement. Tuscola won 49-28. Photo by Dominik Stallings

Wilcox makes it official

By Lenny Sementi

Isabelle Wilcox has had a bush winter thanks to a historic girl's basketball season while also preparing to take the hill for Tuscola's softball team this coming spring. She took some weight off her shoulders a few weeks back, making her college plans official, signing on the dotted line with Lindenwood University out of St. Louis to continue her softball career.

"It's a perfect fit. I loved it there when I visited," stated Wilcox. "Coach (Erin) Brown has only been there a year but it felt like she has been there forever. She has a lot

of energy and I am really excited to play for her."

Wilcox will most likely patrol the outfield for the Lions in the future. She is a two-time all-CIC performer, also garnering first-team All-Area accolades in both the Champaign News-Gazette and the Decatur Herald and Review. And, this past spring she added 2nd Team Illinois Coach Associations All-State Honors. As a junior, she hit .484, producing 40-RBIs, 7 doubles, 7 triples and 5 HRs.

Wilcox was weighing numerous offers when coach Brown came calling late in the fall. Brown knew a few

other Division 1 coaches wanted Wilcox to play a year at a lower level first but the longtime coach said why wait and take a chance losing the All Stater and offered her following her fall season.

Lindenwood is entering its first Division 1 campaign this spring and will be eligible for the NCAA tournament in Wilcox's senior season. The Lions posted a 35-13 record overall a year ago and a 21-7 mark in the Great River Conference. Coach Brown owns 365 wins during her career, serving as the head coach at Truman State from 2007 to 2019.