

Fourth quarter surge sends Oakers past Warriors

Oakland starts final quarter with 19-2 run to take the game

By Zach Silva
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After three quarters of play, the North Douglas boys looked like a team that couldn't be stopped.

On the road against an undefeated Oakland side that came into the game averaging 69 points, it was the Warriors holding a 30-29 lead and all the momentum. But at the Nut House, it didn't last as the Oakers took back control of the game as they put together a dominant fourth quarter to win 52-37.

"Everything that we did in the game minus the fourth quarter was fantastic," said North Douglas head coach Tyler Vancil.

To start that fateful fourth quarter, Oakland went on a 19-2 run to take over the game. Intensified defensive pressure was paired with offensive contributions from six different Oakland players which helped the team roll to a win.

"We went on some runs where we played pretty decent offensively and then let down defensively. We went on some runs where we played pretty good defensively and then took some bad shots on offense," said Oakland head coach Jeff Clark. "So really, the message [going into the fourth] was let's put it all together... We're going to have to take it so let's go out there and play. I thought we really started the quarter strong and did a lot of good things."

With turnovers and missed layups, the Warriors were unable to recover.

"Fourth quarter they made a run and we couldn't sustain the run that they made," said Vancil.

Oakland was led by Colton Brownson and Austin Madden who each finished with 12 points. Jacob Brooksby had 10 points for the Oakers.

Before Oakland ran away with the game, the contest had been close throughout. Tied after one quarter, the Oakers had a five point lead heading into halftime. But in the third quarter it was the North Douglas defense coming alive for what Vancil believes is the best the team has looked on that side of the ball this season.

"I just think they were working hard. They were outworking Oakland. That's what they were doing and that's why we made the push in the third quarter," said Vancil. "...our goal at half-time was to win the third quarter. I don't care if it's one point, two points, three points, 40, let's win the third quarter. That was our goal and we did."

Leading the way for the Warriors in was Caleb Parks who continuously got to the rim and had 10 of his 14 points in the quarter. North Douglas' next highest scorer on the game was Killian Bond with eight points.

"They came out for three quarters, this is a tough place to play, the crowd is loud, it's hot in here, it's a tough place to play. So I said, you've got to come out, be ready to go,

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Mohawk buzzer beater downs Yoncalla



PHOTOS BY ZACH SILVA/CG SENTINEL

The Mohawk team reacts after Joshua Rowe's corner three as time expired lifted the team to a victory last Wednesday. Rowe finished with 23 points on the game.

Joshua Rowe's last second shot gives the Mustangs a victory

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With just 4.1 seconds left to play, Mohawk, down by two, called a timeout. Then, Yoncalla called a time out. And then, another.

"We were trying to freeze their shooter," said Yoncalla head coach Darwin Terry. "We wanted to see what they were in and we wanted to freeze their shooter."

Three timeouts later and Mohawk junior Joshua Rowe was feeling good.

"We go out there [the first time], I'm like, 'Okay, focus, focus.' And then he calls timeout, so I'm like okay. Then I go back, do the same thing, get ready, okay, focus, focus. Calls another timeout and by then I was like, 'Whatever - this game. Either I make it or I don't.' So by then I was having fun again."

With the play drawn for him for the best available shot, Rowe found himself with just enough space. As three Yoncalla defenders closed out on him, he raised

him and knocked down a corner three to defeat the visiting Eagles 46-45.

"I shot it, made it, it went in and I was like, 'Cool.' I didn't realize we won until I started looking around and like coaches are like, 'Yeah!'" said Rowe on the first buzzer beater of his life. "And then everyone is just yelling and I'm like, 'Oh, we won!' So then I was like, 'Yeah!' That's when it really got going. It was a lot of fun." Rowe finished with 23 points including five three-pointers.

The final minutes of the game were up in the air as both teams traded missed free throws and made buckets. Yoncalla's Austin Clemons was causing problems for the Mustangs as he came away with three steals in the backcourt in the final minute and gave the Eagles a temporary lead. After Mohawk went one-for-two from the line, the Eagles did the same setting up the final play of the game.

"I said best shot available. But I said, if it is a three, let's take it if it's open. I mean, Josh shot really good threes all night so it wasn't surprising for him to come out and shoot a three but it was drawn up for a two," said Mohawk coach Pete LeMay.

"But I'll take it."

To start the game, Yoncalla rolled off an explosive 19-point quarter to take a seven-point lead going into the second quarter.

"Well, I thought we came out flat. I

think we played flat the whole game. Our energy level and intensity. I don't like making excuses for my team whatsoever, but Mohawk, I give them credit," said Terry. "Their energy level and effort was, I thought, 100 percent tonight from what I saw on the basketball court."

Yoncalla's Bryan Allen led the team in scoring with 12 points.

Mohawk, missing their 6-foot-6 post Colten Ireland because of injury, rallied in the second to cut their deficit to three points at halftime and held Yoncalla to five points in the third quarter to take a two-point lead going into the final quarter of play.

"We talked...at halftime [about] how many points are we going to keep them under in the third quarter and in the fourth quarter," said LeMay. "We pretty much met our goal in what we were going to keep them under. Just wish we scored a little bit more but one more is good."

Yoncalla resumes play on Friday Dec. 28 as they travel to the Regis Holiday Tournament. The Eagles begin league play on Jan. 4 at Elkton.



The Yoncalla defense swarms Rowe on his last second shot.

Oakland defense stifles North Douglas



PHOTO BY BECKY GERRARD

North Douglas' Abby Whipple looks to get a shot off through a sea of Oakland defenders.

Warriors fall to Oakland, defeat Oakridge before break

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All teams like to stress the importance of defense but for the Oakland girls basketball team, it is not just lip service—it's the foundation their team is built on. Last Tuesday at the Nut House, they gave the visiting North Douglas side a firsthand look at their defensive prowess as they defeated the visiting Warriors 44-24.

"It's been kind of funny because you see those stretches where teams get on a run offensively but - and it's happened several times this year - we go on defensive runs," said Oakland head coach Don Witten af-

ter the victory that put his team at 7-0 on the year. "So we'll go several possessions and just get stops or get a block, get a rebound. They find that rhythm defensively. That's really been a key for us."

It was the Oakland defense plaguing the Warriors throughout the night as the team finished with 10 blocks on the game led by six from senior Grace Witten. Oakland's Hadley Brooksby, who uses her length and speed to be seemingly everywhere on defense, had four steals on the night as North Douglas finished with 24 turnovers. Brooksby led all scorers on the night with 16 points.

"We're not tall but we are kind of long. And kids really bought in to the defensive scheme last year," said Don Witten. Adding, "Defense can be a hard sell but

they know if we're going to be successful, that's where it has to start. It sounds a little cliché but it's not. It's just the key to the game."

Against one of the top teams in 2A, the Warriors trailed 8-1 after the first quarter before they put together a quick second quarter run that cut the deficit to just three. But the close game didn't last long as the Oakers put together a 7-0 run and a 14-point lead at halftime.

"We had a couple stops at times, we had a couple transition baskets, we execute on offense but not consistently enough," said North Douglas head coach Jeff Davis. "We said... that if we looked at each of our kids, they each have, on the season, there's a highlight reel and there's also a reel of things that aren't so good."

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Athletes of the Week



This week's athletes of the week are the local athletes named to the all-state teams. To read more, turn to page B3.



Cottage Grove's Erick Giffen was named first team all-state at wide receiver.

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