

Bulldogs give BE fits, but Lancers prevail

By MICHAEL LETENDRE
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD— If the Bulkeley boys basketball team has 20 wins or if the squad hasn't won a game all season, one thing is for sure: The Bulldogs are a handful to play on their home court in Hartford.

Boys basketball

But Bristol Eastern overcame all the obstacles put in front of it on Saturday afternoon and came away with an impressive 62-50 CCC South victory from Hartford to improve its record to 11-2 on the season.

With Maloney's 49-45 loss at Berlin on Saturday, Bristol Eastern once again reclaimed the lead in the CCC South standings as the Lancers are 8-1. The Spartans fell 7-1 in CCC South play.

Bulkeley (4-9) led for only 13 seconds in the game midway through the first quarter but two free throws

by Ray Ortiz (10 points, 11 rebounds, four assists, two steals) gave Eastern an 11-10 push with 1:54 left in the frame. The lead was not challenged the remainder of the afternoon.

And even when the Bulldogs went to the full-court press and harassed and hounded the Eastern guards, Ortiz brought the ball up the floor on many occasions and got the Lancers into its offense.

"It wasn't even an organized press, it was just random kayos," said Bristol Eastern coach Mike Giovinazzo of the Bulkeley defense. "They were just coming at us from everywhere. (But) the key player of the game was Raymond. Raymond's ability to handle the ball and attack their defense, as we came out of those double teams, was the difference in the game. He was unbelievable."

Eastern opened the game with a 9-4 run as a three-pointer by Christian Pierce (eight points, two steals) put the Lancers on top early.

Bulkeley scored six

straight points to grab a 10-9 edge with 2:07 left in the stanza.

After Ortiz hit the two free throws, Eastern finished the first period strongly off a three-pointer by Xavier Wade (eight points, three assists) and a lay-up from Christian Pierce as Eastern posted a 16-10 push after eight minutes.

Colon (game-high 24 points, 15 rebounds) pumped in points early in the second frame as Eastern beat the Bulkeley's press and off a Colon lay-up, the Lancers grabbed a 20-15 edge with 6:54 left before the half.

"Chris is the recipient of Ray's ability to put the ball on the floor," said Giovinazzo. "Chris is obviously a great finisher and a great rebounder. It was just a great performance on the road."

After a three-pointer by Bulkeley's Brandon Jones (19 points) cut the Eastern lead to 20-18, the Lancers ended the frame on a 9-4 run as a three-pointer by Tom Tarantino (12 points, two steals), a jump-shot by

BRISTOL EASTERN 62, BULKELEY 50

From the Babe Allen Fieldhouse, Hartford

Bristol Eastern (11-2, 8-1)	16	13	13	20
62				
Bulkeley (4-9, 4-4)	10	12	15	13
50				

BRISTOL EASTERN (62): Tyrell Holmes 0-0-0, Christian Pierce 3-0-8, Xavier Wade 2-3-8, Chris Colon 9-6-24, Tom Tarantino 2-7-12, Andre Brooks 0-0-0, Ray Ortiz 0-10-10. TOTALS: 16-26-62.

BULKELEY (50): Bonnani Jones 1-3-5, Jessie Robinson 2-2-6, Jon Wilson 2-0-4, Evan St. Juste 4-2-12, Chris Martinez 2-0-4, Brandon Jones 8-1-19, Mapp 0-0-0. TOTALS: 19-8-50.

Three-point goals: Bristol Eastern 4 (Pierce 2, Tarantino, Wade); Bulkeley 4 (St. Juste 2, B. Jones 2).

Wade, A Colon hoop off a feed from Ortiz and two free throws staked the Lancers to a 29-22 halftime push.

Bulkeley's trapping and pressure cut into the Eastern lead in the third quarter and off four straight points by Evan St. Juste (12 points), the Lancers lead was cut to 33-28.

But a quick 7-0 Eastern run - highlighted by a three-pointer by Pierce - pushed the score out to 40-28 with 4:19 left in the third stanza.

"Whenever we play Bulkeley, we let the JVs follow us in practice because we know we're going to get hit so we fully anticipate it and we were really strong with the ball," said Giovinazzo. "I was really pleased overall. Going up

against that kind of pressure and being able to deal with it and function in this environment is really a sign of their mature as a team."

The Bulldogs charged right back and ended the frame off a 9-2 run of its own as Eastern's lead was once again trimmed to five at 42-37.

Once again, the Lancers' offense surged past the extended defensive pressure and Eastern used an 8-2 spurt to capture a 50-39 push with 5:17 left.

The game became a foul shooting contest for Eastern late and the Lancers responded by making its free throws and off another basket by Colon, the visitors went up 56-47 with 1:48 remaining.

Bulkeley cut it to 56-50 off a three-pointer by Jones but late charity tosses by Tarantino and Ortiz sealed the deal as Eastern closed out the game with one last Colon lay-up to grab a 62-50 victory.

In all, Eastern drained 26 of its 31 free throw attempts in the game.

"Foul shooting is a funny thing," said Giovinazzo. "Some days you can't find the hoop and some days, guys are just money. I think they really wanted to win this game and their focus and concentration was good."

The win left Eastern with a clean sweep of Bulkeley, which was the first time the Lancers have accomplished that since the 2003-04 campaign.

"I'm just super pleased with this effort," said Giovinazzo. "This is not an easy place to win and that has to be the best team in the state that only has four wins."

Comments? Email mle-tendre@BristolObserver.com.

Scrappy St. Paul shows value of believing in itself

By MICHAEL LETENDRE
STAFF WRITER

A basketball team that believes in itself - no matter how badly things are going during the game- is a dangerous entity, indeed.

And no lead is safe against a scrappy St. Paul boys basketball team that simply keeps coming and coming at you until either time runs out or the Falcons grab the momentum to win the game.

Down by as many as

Boys basketball

nine points to Watertown, St. Paul made a third period charge to seize the game and snatch a 60-51 Nutmeg Valley League Brass Division game from the Maltby Street Gym in Bristol last Tuesday night.

The Falcons (7-4) opened the contest missing its first nine field goals that

pushed Watertown to a 10-2 cushion with 3:21 left in the first frame.

"We weren't firing on all cylinders tonight and I think Watertown had a lot to do with that," said St. Paul coach Steve Phelps. "We might have been too ready to play tonight, which is not a bad thing. I think we were really excited and ready to play. That was evident (when) we had some great looks in the first quarter (and) the shots did not go

ST. PAUL 60, WATERTOWN 51

at Maltby Street Gymnasium, Bristol

Watertown (5-8)	16	10	12	13	51
St. Paul (7-4)	9	14	19	16	60

WATERTOWN (51): Alonzo Oates 2-0-4, Matt Quatrano 2-1-5, Tom O'Brien 5-4-14, Zach Buesser 7-4-18, Chris Milo 2-0-6, Mitch Wagner 1-0-2, Tom Frenette 1-0-2, Tom White 0-0-0, Ed Hill 0-0-0, Tony Avoletta 0-0-0. TOTALS: 20-9-51.

ST. PAUL (60): Chris Borea 4-5-15, Bryon Jones 6-2-14, Travis Thomas 2-0-5, Justin Gonzalez 0-4-4, Pat Donahue 0-0-0, Dan Borea 0-2-2, Pat Maguire 1-0-2, Jacob Jaquo 0-0-0, David Shaw 5-1-16, Josh Davidson 0-2-2, Joe Villani 0-0-0. TOTALS: 18-16-60.

Three-point goals: Watertown 2 (Milo); St. Paul 8 (Thomas, Shaw, Chris Borea 2).

in." But a three-pointer by Chris Borea (15 points, seven assists) got the ball

rolling as the Falcons to cut it to five (10-5) before the teams settled on a 16-9 score after eight minutes

with the visitors in front.

The Falcons' defensive effort to open the second stanza led to seven straight Watertown turnovers and even before the visitors could get a field goal off, another three-point by Borea cut the deficit to 16-15 with 6:08 before the half.

"As a coaching staff, my guys recognize what potentially are the strengths of

See ST. PAUL BOYS, page 26

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