

Eastern puts on their 'Terminator' mask against East Catholic

By MICHAEL LETENDRE
STAFF WRITER

When East Catholic boys basketball team invaded the Thomas M. Monahan Gymnasium to face-off against Bristol Eastern last Monday night, the battle from the floor looked like David versus Goliath.

And while the Eagles attempted to play the roll of Goliath with two 6-foot-7 centers, the Lancers hardly resembled David.

In fact, Eastern acted more like the Terminator and by the time the game was said and done, it was "Hasta la vista, baby."

Eastern's Chris Colon went for 20 points and six rebounds as the Lancers defeated East Catholic 54-48 in a CCC Interdivisional game from Bristol.

The Eagles (9-3) threw just about every kind of defense against Eastern (10-2) including various zones, man and even a box-and-one against the elusive Colon.

"It was a tough match-up (for Colon)," said Eastern coach Mike Giovinazzo.

"The kid that was guarding Colon (Rohan Brown) was more of an interior defender so it allowed Chris to come out on the perimeter and bring that kid out where he was a little bit uncomfortable. Colon was able to hit those shots and then when (Brown) ran at him, he took it to the hoop. That's why Chris is a good player. He has a great feel for the game."

Colon damaged East Catholic's zone by draining 4-of-5 three-pointers while Ray Ortiz (11 points, seven rebounds), Xavier Wade (10 points, four assists) and Tylon Holmes (seven points, four rebounds) all paced an even scoring attack.

Jerome Harris led the Eagles with 17 points while Brown dumped in 10.

Catholic tried to draw even against Eastern with a barrage of three-pointers but missed 20-of-24 attempts (17-percent) and only hit 37-5 percent of its field goals overall against an aggressive Eastern defense.

But East Catholic came all the way from back a 37-

29 third period deficit to knot the score at 44-44 with 2:50 left off an offensive rebound and put-back by Brown.

From that point, Wade scored four points in a row – including a put-back off his own missed free throw – to propel the Lancers to a 48-44 edge with 1:49 remaining.

The Eagles cut the deficit to two but consecutive hoops by Colon – including a three-point play off a brilliant feed from Wade – and a free throw by Tyrell Holmes (three points, four rebounds) with 24.5 seconds left proved to be the difference as Eastern reclaimed a 54-46 advantage.

A three-pointer by Wade made it 11-6 Eastern with 4:41 left to play in the first frame but an 11-0 run by Eastern Catholic – capped by a steal and lay-up from Harris – gave the Eagles a 17-11 push.

Down 17-13 after one, Eastern's defense only allowed East Catholic five points in the second stanza

as Colon came out firing from behind the three-point arc.

After a lay-up by Brown got East Catholic within one at 23-22 with 4:03 left before intermission, the Eagles did not score again in the period.

On the Eastern front, Colon nailed a three-pointer and Tylon Holmes notched a hoop off a brilliant spin move to put the Lancers up by six.

Finally, Ortiz had the basket of the night. With five seconds left in the second in the half, Ortiz stole the ball at half court, sprinted to the hoop and released a two-handed lay-up as the buzzer sounded to give Eastern a 30-22 halftime push.

Ortiz's basket at the buzzer just typified the effort Eastern made on the night as the extra effort led to the Lancers' eight point cushion at the break.

East Catholic cut the deficit to 32-29 off a steal and lay-up by Justin Nunez with 6:02 left in the third period but the Eagles' offense stalled for the next

4:06 of the game.

One last three-pointer by Tyrell Holmes pushed the lead out to 37-29 with 2:37 left in the third.

East Catholic was down 40-35 after three periods of play but a barrage of three-pointers – coupled with Brown's put-back – made it 44-44 before Eastern seized control of the game.

"We're going to be more poised down the stretch in (close) situations," said Giovinazzo. "We know what a good shot is and how we need to value each possession. We didn't value the ball at Maloney (when we lost in double overtime)."

It was a benchmark win for Eastern as East Catholic is one of the premier teams of the CCC Division.

Our Reviews

Friday, Feb. 5 Girls Basketball: Boys Basketball: Boys Swimming:	St. Paul at Sacred Heart Sacred Heart at St. Paul Bristol Central/Bristol Eastern at Newington, 3:45 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 6 Wrestling:	Bristol Eastern at New Fairfield, 9 a.m.
Monday, Feb. 8 Girls Basketball:	Bristol Central at Platt Berlin at Bristol Eastern Platt at Bristol Central Bristol Eastern at Berlin
Tuesday, Feb. 9 Girls Basketball: Boys Basketball: Boys Swimming:	St. Paul at Derby, 6 p.m. Derby at St. Paul Bristol Central/Bristol Eastern at Bulkeley, 3:45
Wednesday, Feb. 10 Wrestling:	Bristol Eastern at Bristol Central, 6 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 11 Girls Basketball: Boys Basketball:	Bristol Central at Bulkeley Plainville at Bristol Eastern Bulkeley at Bristol Central Bristol Eastern at Plainville
Friday, Feb. 12 Girls Basketball: Boys Basketball: Boys Swimming:	St. Paul at Holy Cross Holy Cross at St. Paul Bristol Central/Bristol Eastern at Middletown, 3:45 p.m.

St. Paul boys: Lay-up by Jones lifts Falcons

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our group," said Phelps. "We think, given the right times, defense will create some offense for us. Well, if you're not scoring, it's tough to set what you want to do defensively. Even though we tried to play transition defense, where we tend to create some havoc, we're much more comfortable doing that off made possessions."

Watertown used a mini 10-5 run to get back into things as a free throw by Tom O'Brien (14 points) made it 26-20 with 34.8 seconds left.

St. Paul grabbed a huge lift to end the half as Byron Jones (13 points, 12 rebounds) scored a key lay-up – off a beautiful pass by Borea – and trailed by a single possession at 26-23 going into intermission.

"The play at the end of the half was pretty key just for our psyche," said Phelps. "Chris Borea makes a feel play on that. That was the right time and that was a

good way to go into half-time."

David Shaw – who hit five three-pointers and scored a team-high 16 points – made his second three of the evening with 5:51 left in the third quarter as St. Paul gained its first lead of at 31-30.

Watertown grabbed the lead right back but four huge third period steals by Justin Gonzalez and two big free throws by Dan Borea led the Falcons on a 7-0 surge that turned a one-point deficit into a 44-38 edge after three complete periods.

Shaw opened the final frame with a three-pointer which quickly changed Watertown's defensive schemes.

The visitors switched from a zone to a man-to-man defense and St. Paul slowed the game down and ran some time off the clock.

Chris Borea flipped in a lay-up with 4:50 remaining as the Falcons went up 49-

39 and were in command.

Down the stretch, Watertown played the foul game but the Falcons drained nine-of-13 shots at the charity stripe to preserve the nine-point win.

In the JV game, St. Paul defeated Watertown 61-34 behind the power of 24 points from Jacob Jaquo.

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