



By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

Guymon used the three-point shot to put the Redskins on the ropes twice Tuesday night in the Big House but could not deliver a knockout blow. Liberal rallied twice for the 50-43 win, and the points came from nine different Redskins to secure the victory.

Guymon jumped out early with two three-pointers from Carter Nash and baskets by Angel Vega and Derek Portillo to take a 10-0 lead.

Liberal's first rally started from there.

Britton Abbott hit a shot in the lane and Jose Paz nailed a three-pointer to cut the lead in half, 10-5.

Abott added another basket, and Hayden Coker hit two free throws to cut the lead to 10-9, and Coker added a basket before the quarter ended to give the Redskins their first lead of the game, 11-10.

Both teams improved the defensive pressure in the second quarter, and the Redskins missed three free throw attempts including the front end of a one-and-one that allowed the Tigers to reclaim the lead at half, 18-17.

Guymon's Portillo came out hot in the third quarter and hit a basket and a three-pointer that gave the Tigers a 23-17 lead, but Liberal coach Scott Hinkle took a time out to stop the early run.

"It happened at Holcomb," Hinkle said. "We gave up an 8-0 run. I didn't want a 6-0 run to go to a 10-0 run. We had the deer-in-the-headlight look at first. I told them to be patient. We panic and think we have to do something right now. This team has to be patient and let the offense work for it."

That's when Liberal started its second rally.

Blake Stout, Nolan Larkin and Jared Hasik all connected on three-pointers, and despite Portillo's 12-point performance in the third for the Tigers, Liberal outscored Guymon 19-16 to take a 36-34 lead to start the fourth quarter.

Both teams struggled at the free throw line in the final period, but the Tigers were hurt the most. Guymon was one for five at the line including a missed shot on a one-and-one, and the Redskins were able to make four of nine free throws in the quarter. Liberal built a 50-40 lead by the final minute of the game, and Guymon hit a late three to cut the final score to 50-43.

{youtube}DWNDka7mIFM{/youtube}

“It was ugly, plain and simple,” Hinkle said. “It’s something that if its an ugly win you take it, an ugly loss you go home scratching your head. That first half was about as ugly a half of basketball as I’ve seen. It is something we have to execute, we have to run the stinkin’ offense.”

In the second half, that started to happen, and the Redskins were able to erase a seven-point deficit.

“We did some things that made us a little better,” Hinkle said. “The next couple of practices we will have to do some things to get a little better for Lawton on Friday.”

For Liberal to be successful the rest of the season, Hinkle said the defense would have to lead.

“We have to get after it on defense,” he said. “We have to know where our man is. Everyone has to know to transition in full court. Lawton will come in and be like they’ve been every year, not real big but athletic. They will defend like crazy. We will have to take care of the basketball. I told the guys we have to be the best defensive team in the state. We have a long way to go, but that is the goal. We have to execute every offensive possession.”

Abbott led the Redskins with 11 points, Blake Stout scored 10 and Coker had eight.

Liberal will host Lawton in the Conestoga Classic Friday.