

Mustangs clutch in win over South Gray

Saturday, 15 February 2014 01:11

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By JASON EPP

Leader & Times

KISMET—Nathan Johnsrud raced toward the basket, got to the lane and went up, made the basket and got the foul call that put him a the line with 49 seconds left. Johnsrud completed the 3-point play putting Heights up by two, and the Mustangs completed the second half comeback with a 73-68 win over the South Gray Rebels.

Heights trailed 35-32 at the half, but came out of the locker room on fire with a 10-2 run with just two minutes off the clock.

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Heights continued to burn the nets in the third, but so did South Gray from that point on. Edwin Martinez drained a three for the Mustangs with just six seconds left in the third to keep Heights on top heading into the fourth quarter, 54-52.

“We were coming off of a double flex screen and we drew that up at halftime and tried to make a change with the way they defended us in the first half,” Mustangs coach Nefro Saucedo said. “It worked for us. It’s kind of nice when you can draw something up on the board and the boys actually do run it well.”

The Rebels continued to claw their way back in to the game, and finally took the lead after converting a 3-point play with 4:04 left, 61-60.

The fourth quarter difference was at the free throw line. Heights made 11 of 15 attempts; South Gray made 8 of 14. Heights was 7 of 8 after regaining the lead in the final two minutes.

In the first quarter Heights started the game with a pair of threes, and took a 9-3 lead

South Gray fired back, and led 17-15 by the end of the first quarter.

Both teams traded baskets in the second quarter until South Gray made a small run to go up 35-28 with less than a minute before half. Heights rallied to score twice to cut the lead to three at half.

“Their guards were quick and we got a little lackadaisical with the ball and they picked us off a few times,” Saucedo said. “It was good experience for our guards to get ready for the playoffs to be ready and do the little things right every time to take care of the ball when there is pressure on you.”

Heights finished the game 28 of 49 from the field, including 4 of 8 from 3-point range. Heights finished the game 13 of 18 from the charity stripe.

“Without Brandon Kisner and Cody Jennings we've had to put a lot of pieces together and some of sophomore—we're giving them a chance,” Saucedo said. “They're doing the little things like the back screens that get our shooters open.”

Nathan Johnsrud was 8 of 12 from the field, including three treys for 21 points. Alexis Loya was 6 of 12 from the field and 6 of 8 at the line for 18 points. Loya also led the team with 7 rebounds. Edvin Martinez had 9, Jorge Dela Torre 8, and Ulises Loya 6.

Heights (11-6) will travel to Meade Tuesday night.

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