

## Press Clippings 12/24/2017

---Daily Herald--- 12/24/17

### **Larkin rolls past Lake Park**

BY PAUL JOHNSON



In order to compete at a high level in college, Larkin center Jalen Shaw knows he has to have a diverse array of skills.

The 6-foot-10 senior showed off his all-around talent in Friday's 65-50 nonconference home win over Lake Park.

Shaw led the Royals (7-2) with 17 points and blocked eight shots. He also had several nice passes and hit a couple of midrange jumpers.

"Being at the next level, you have to do everything," Shaw said. "Big men are starting to shoot nowadays, starting to dribble. You have to do everything in the book.

"I just keep practicing hard on everything that I need to do. I go at it hard. I don't go halfway. That's how you get better at the next level."

Shaw is still in the mode of helping his current team, however.

The Royals saw their lead shrink to 27-21 early in the third quarter. Shaw was a part of the ensuing 12-4 spurt that helped put away Lake Park (2-6) by hitting a pair of jumpers.

Shaw shot 4-for-8 from the field and 8-for-10 at the line. Senior guard Anthony Lynch was the only other scorer on either team in double figures, scoring 13 points.

"He's definitely playing at a high level," Larkin coach Deryn Carter said of Shaw. "He's playing like one of the top five or 10 players in the state. He looked that way (Friday)."

Carter still found some flaws in his team's overall game heading into the Proviso West Tournament. Larkin put together a 10-0 run in the second quarter to open a 26-15 lead, only to have that cut to six in the third quarter.

"I was real disappointed in the way we finished the half," Carter said. "We had them on the ropes. I was just telling the boys, it was a five-point swing. We were OK. We had enough cushion.

"But next week, a five-point swing can put the game out of reach with some of the teams that we're trying to play. They were receptive to the message. We have a veteran group and they're still willing to be coached. That's encouraging."

The Royals carry a five-game win streak into the prestigious tournament. They open play at 2 p.m. Tuesday against highly touted Kenwood (5-2).

"Any team that we go against next week, we're ready for them," Shaw said. "We're excited to play every team. I like to play against competition. It will be a good challenge for us, to see how much we've improved."

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## **Leva's last-second jumper lifts Gators**

BY JOHN LEMON

With time running out and the score tied against Streamwood Saturday morning at Jacobs' Hinkle Holiday Classic, Crystal Lake South senior Kyle Leva didn't have any option but shoot.

And that's a good thing for the Gators.

Leva took a pass from Matthew Reall, who drove baseline but was cut off. Streamwood's Lamont Cole deflected the pass, forcing Leva to quickly gather the ball and rise up from the left wing.

Leva buried the 15-foot jumper with .5 seconds remaining, giving Crystal Lake South its second straight win at the tournament, 47-45.

"He (Reall) made a good pass to me and I lost it a little but I was able to regroup and get the shot off," Leva said. "I wasn't really sure (it was going in). I was just getting the shot up because time was close."

Crystal Lake South (6-5) led the entire game until a tip-in by Keenon Cole with 1:57 remaining put the Sabres up 42-41.

Tyler Haskin tied the score with a free throw, then came up with a steal that led to Leva's layup and a 44-42 lead for the Gators.

Jack Maybrun sank a 3-pointer with 1:01 left to put the Sabres up 45-44. Ben Geske's free throw knotted the score, and Streamwood turned the ball over in the final 30 seconds to set up Leva's game-winner.

"Kyle can make that midrange shot and rose to the occasion for sure," Crystal Lake South coach Matt LePage said.

The Sabres (4-8) had one last chance, and Cole caught a full-court pass and got a quick shot off from about 12 feet that was off the mark.

"We chip away, we get back into it, and then we make a couple mistakes that open it right back up," said Sabres assistant coach Ryan Smith, who was filling in for head coach Paul Kowalyszyn (sick). "The little mistakes will come back to bite you. We kind of shot ourselves in the foot."

Cole led both teams with 15 points and 16 rebounds as the Sabres shook off a slow start to nearly steal the win. The Gators built leads of 18-13 after one quarter and 26-18 at halftime behind Blake Kueffel's three 3-point baskets and a defense that held Streamwood to 33 percent shooting (7 for 21) in the first half.

Reall's basket early in the third quarter gave Crystal Lake South its biggest lead at 30-21 before the Sabres started pulling closer. Cole's conventional 3-point play on a strong inside move brought Streamwood within 39-36, and after his dunk was called off on a charge, Brendon Marton stepped into the passing lane for a steal and 2 free throws to make it 39-38.

"We played hard the second half of the game but it's kind of the same story as yesterday," said Smith, whose team had 19 turnovers. "We don't show up for all 32 minutes. Today we played for 16. Second half we distributed the basketball better, played more as a team, got our big guys some touches and hit the offensive boards harder. We have all the pieces, it's just a matter of wanting to do it."

Kueffel led a balanced Gators attack with 11 points. Leva scored 10, as did Patrick Fischer off the bench.

Leva said Crystal Lake South was especially looking forward to playing the Sabres who knocked them out of the postseason last year.

"It was a big win for us," Leva said. "We really wanted to use that as a measuring stick to see how much better we've gotten."

The Gators will try to finish 3-0 in their pool when they play Grant at 3 p.m. Tuesday. Streamwood, 0-2 in the tournament, plays Dixon at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday.

"It was an ugly win but we'll take it," LePage said. "You have to give Streamwood credit for coming back. They had us on our heels. I just like the way the guys dug in the last 30 seconds."

"We have a good group of kids. They play hard, they are very connected as a group. We just have to keep playing as hard as we can, and it's good to see these guys having success."