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SPORTS

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West Aurora dominates second half to upend Streamwood

By: Kevin McGavin

The opening second-half possession spelled doom for Streamwood in its upset bid in Aurora.

West Aurora snared 4 straight offensive rebounds to start the third quarter before retaining possession.

Traevon Brown made the Sabres pay with a baseline-left 3-pointer.

The Blackhawks' senior point guard led three other teammates in double figures with a team-high 18 points as the West Aurora boys basketball team continued its flawless run in Upstate Eight Conference play.

The Blackhawks erupted for 45 second-half points to easily erase a 5-point halftime deficit in a 76-58 victory.

West Aurora ran its league winning streak to seven straight games while improving to 13-3 overall; the Sabres fell to 7-8, 3-4.

"Oh, they killed us on the glass," Streamwood coach Kent Payne said of the Blackhawks. "I think they outrebounded us 2-1 (43-23 in fact). They got us off the dribble, too."

"If you give up an offensive rebound, the chances of the other team scoring go up big time," West Aurora coach Brian Johnson said.

West Aurora scored 25 points in the decisive third quarter as Brown did not miss a shot in scoring 11 of his team-best points in the quarter.

Hezzy Salter gave West Aurora the lead for good on a second-chance bucket as all 4 of his field goals were on putbacks.

"It was just staying aggressive, giving our team as many chances as possible," Salter said of his mindset. "Attacking on the glass and finishing has always been a strong suit for us. The more possessions we have the more chances we have to run up the score."

Leading 40-39 three minutes into the third quarter on the Salter finish, the Blackhawks closed the third on a 16-6 run and 56-45 lead going into the final quarter.

Streamwood, which received a game-high 21-point performance from Northern Illinois-bound forward Kennon Cole, was completely demoralized by the Blackhawks' other players to finish with double digits. Moshe Rogers' two second-half 3-pointers were the linchpin behind his 11 points.

Kelvin Balfour was ever-present in the paint for the Blackhawks in scoring 13 points.

Marquise Walker had three slashing drives in the final quarter in finishing with 11 points for West Aurora.

"We tried to wake up (in the second half) and play like we did at Pontiac (the consolation championship)," Rogers said. "The ball movement definitely improved in the second half."

Streamwood sprinted out to 7-2 and 17-8 leads in the first quarter before settling for a 36-31 lead at the break.

"We did everything that we wanted to do," Payne said. "The thing is, we didn't extend that after the first 16 minutes."

The Sabres' Nikola Sinik finished with 16 points.