

Press Clippings 01/08/20

SPORTS

---Daily Herald---01/08/2020

Hall reaches 1,000-point milestone in Glenbard East win at South Elgin

By: Jerry Fitzpatrick



Daron Hall

An individual milestone for senior DaRon Hall lifted the Glenbard East boys basketball team to a collective achievement at South Elgin on Tuesday.

The Upstate Eight Conference leaders blew a 12-point, third-quarter lead, but Hall scored 10 of his game-high 27 points in the fourth quarter -- highlighted by his 1,000th varsity point -- to fuel the Rams' 43-42 road victory.

Upset-minded South Elgin (5-11, 2-4) closed the third quarter on a 17-4 run to take a 34-33 lead and grabbed a 38-35 advantage on a running bank shot by Drew Cwik midway through the fourth.

However, Hall personally outscored the Storm 8-4 thereafter to propel Glenbard East (10-4, 6-0). The 6-foot-1 guard sank a pair of free throws to draw the Rams within 40-39 with 2:28 to play.

The Storm enjoyed possession with 1:17 remaining until it dribbled the ball out of bounds unforced for its 15th turnover.

Sitting on 998 points with his team trailing by a point with one minute left, Hall drove from the perimeter past two defenders and scored on a left-handed layup. The bucket gave him 1,000 points and staked Glenbard East to the lead for good.

"It was a designed play to me," Hall said. "Just get the ball in the bucket to get us up by one. And that's what I did."

"We tried to run somebody at him to make him give up the ball and there was a miscommunication," South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said. "Our goal was to make somebody else beat us. He had a great game. He got to the line and made double-digit free throws."

Hall sank 13 free throws in 15 attempts.

Cwik, who led South Elgin with 13 points, missed a 3-pointer at the other end and Joe Hamilton snared the defensive rebound.

Hall was fouled and sank two more free throws with 19.1 seconds left to make it a 43-40 lead.

A pair of Wyatt Steurer free throws drew the Storm within a point with 4.1 seconds left. It had one last chance after the Rams missed a free throw with 2.9 seconds to play, but a desperation heave from beyond midcourt by Kendis Wiley fell short.

"It's a good road win, a gutty one," Glenbard East coach Scott Miller said. "I'm real proud of our guys."

Hall reflected on the personal milestone after the victory.

"It's a great accomplishment," he said after shooting 7 of 15 from the field. "My teammates got me open a lot, I got the ball a lot, I started shooting a lot and I started feeling it toward the end."

---The Courier-News---01/08/2020

Girls Basketball

Hare, Sinclair help Bartlett surge past St. Charles East

By: Paul Johnson

By now, most people realize sophomore guard Mackenzie Hare and junior guard Lexie Sinclair are a big-time duo for Bartlett.

But when Hare and Sinclair get going right from the opening tip and play with confidence, it spells even more trouble for opponents.

Hare hit two 3-pointers in the first minute of the game Monday night, prompting a quick timeout.

Sinclair followed with a 3-pointer, setting the tone for a 56-37 win over host St. Charles East.

“It just brings up the energy for the whole team,” Hare said of the strong start. “They do a good job of getting me open. We just did a good job with ball movement, so that was nice.

“If we’re too worried about stats and we’re not playing basketball, it doesn’t look too good. It was nice to just go out and play.”

Hare led all scorers Monday with 24 points for Bartlett (13-7). Sinclair added 21.

When coach Joseph Eirich pulled his standouts with 5:12 left in the fourth quarter, they had scored 45 of the Hawks’ 50 points.

“When we play loose and play free, that’s the type of team we are,” Eirich said. “When we clamp up and worry about our opponent, that’s when we struggle.

“I think (Monday) was the first time in a long time that we all just played relaxed. We all finally got the weight off our shoulders and just played basketball. It was really fun to see.”

Bartlett outscored St. Charles East (6-13) by a 15-5 margin in the second quarter to build a 29-14 halftime lead.

Hare scored 15 points in the first half, while Sinclair had nine.

“We knew exactly what they were going to do,” East assistant coach Jeff Lawrence said. “We practiced against it. You have to take your hat off to those two kids.

“Not only can they play, they play well with each other. They complement each other. They have what I would consider excellent basketball IQs. When you put some skill and great basketball IQ together in high school, you’re going to have a winning program.”

The Saints used a 9-2 burst to cut the deficit to 33-23 with 3:50 left in the third quarter, but they got no closer. Another 15-5 stretch followed to put the game away. Bartlett led by as many as 25 points in the fourth.

Olivia Kiefer paced the Saints with 13 points.

“I think sometimes we still, given our (young) age, have a tendency to let the game get ahead of us a little bit,” Lawrence said. “It’s understanding the situation.

“When we need to attack, when we need to slow it down, when we need to get the ball in the hands of the right people to take the shot to cut it from 10 to seven.”

Wrestling Notes

Akins on 'monster run' for Larkin

By: Kevin McGavin



Larkin senior DJ Akins has 18 wins in 21 matches at 170 pounds this season.

Compared to the wrestlers who dot the state rankings, DJ Akins is clearly a neophyte.

“He only started wrestling as a sophomore,” Larkin coach Earl Danan said of Akins, his prized 170-pound senior.

Akins came to his winter sport by accident.

“I wanted to get better at football as I knew it would help me,” Akins said. “I ended up liking wrestling more than football.”

Akins is primed to become the first wrestler from Larkin to compete in the large-class state meet since heavyweight Brian Rose captured the Class AA state title in 1990.

“He is at his true weight,” Danan said of Akins transitioning to 170 after a series of matches at 182. “He is definitely on a monster run right now.”

January is a pivotal month in the sport.

The conference championships invariably arrive at the end of January in anticipation of the go-for-broke, three-week individual state series in February.

Akins does not want to experience the same feeling he had last season at the Class 3A Conant Sectional.

“I was very upset,” Akins said of being eliminated from the competition one round shy of an automatic berth to Champaign.

Akins’ training regime to rectify that predated the start of the current season.

“I put in a lot of hard work in the gym over the summer,” he said.

Akins has recorded 18 wins in 21 matches this season, but he’s still smarting from losing to Waubonsie Valley sophomore Antonio Torres at the Wheaton Warrenville South Tournament.

“I think if I was in better condition I could have done better,” Akins said of Torres’ win by pin in the semifinals.

“He was a pretty good scrambler,” Torres said of his showdown with Akins. “Every time I got a shot, he would scramble out. That was pretty good on his part.”

Akins routinely displays his skills as a football linebacker on the wrestling mat.

“I like to be in neutral,” Akins said of his most advantageous position. “I am very quick.”

As February inches ever closer, the Royals will return to Conant for the last of the two grueling state-qualifying preliminaries.

Danan, for one, foresees a different outcome.

“He is always going to look for the best,” Danan said of Akins’ quest for a state berth. “I feel Akins will be in the top four.”

Making strides: As a newcomer to the St. Charles North program last season, Colman Gonnella was thrust into the starting lineup.

“We only had five guys,” Gonnella said of his first year on the varsity for the North Stars.

But Gonnella, a sophomore, is part of a new breed at the school. He captured the 195-pound championship of the Margaret Flott Invitational at Kaneland over the weekend.

Gonnella had all first-period pins in his round-robin bracket.

“The coaches have been really good at in-sourcing and getting more guys out,” Gonnella said of the transformation this winter.

Surviving brutal stretch: St. Charles East steamrolled Geneva by winning all but two weight classes Thursday in a 66-7 DuKane Conference decision.

The Saints had an entirely different weekend itinerary by traveling to suburban Milwaukee for the Cheesehead Invitational.

“It’s one of the best Midwest tournaments in the nation,” said St. Charles East coach Jason Potter, whose Saints finished 20th out of 33 teams with 169 points. “There are literally some of the best kids in the country there.”