

Press Clippings - 12/18/2023

- Chicago Tribune -

Listen up. Josh Hibbett quietly begins to emerge for Larkin, which gets its first win. 'Figuring some things out.'

By: Paul Johnson

Dec 15, 2023



Larkin's Josh Hibbett (5) works in front of East Aurora coach Rick Robinson to get past Kenneth Cooley (4) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023.

Just by nature, **Larkin's** Josh Hibbett is quiet off the court.

The challenge as the junior guard stepped into a starting role this season has been finding a way to flip that switch to be more vocal and aggressive on the court.

He confirmed it's a work in progress.

"I'm still trying to figure it out," Hibbett said. "Every game it feels like it builds more and more. I'm coming along with that a lot better, especially from last year when I didn't play too much.

"I'm starting to see myself be a leader a little bit better — things like that."

A third quarter like Hibbett put together Thursday night in the Royals' 60-52 Upstate Eight Conference victory over East Aurora is one of many steps in the right direction.

Hibbett scored 12 of his team-high 20 points in the third as **Larkin** (1-9, 1-4) pulled away for their first

win of the season. He also ended the quarter with an emphatic blocked shot on a 3-point attempt from East Aurora's Jalen Bealer.

The Royals carried that momentum into the fourth, where they eventually opened up a 20-point lead. Andre Jones and Jahvion Sowers added eight points apiece.

Bealer led all scorers with 25 points for East Aurora (2-8, 2-3). Kenneth Cooley had 18.



Larkin's Andre Jones (3) tries to defend against East Aurora's Kenneth Cooley (4) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023.

Larkin coach Deryn Carter has seen Hibbett develop, and while he's making progress, there's still more to unlock.

"He's figuring some things out," Carter said of Hibbett. "He's a laid-back guy off the court, which we like, but he can't be that way on the court.

"At times, he can be waiting for the game to come to him. We're trying to explain to him that the best thing for Larkin is for him to be aggressive."

Hibbett came out in the second half with that aggressiveness, scoring Larkin's first two baskets of the third quarter. He went on to hit a 3-pointer and a runner in the lane and converted a layup off a steal as the Royals took a 46-31 lead into the fourth.

"He brings athleticism, a good touch around the basket, good length," Carter said. "He plays bigger than his height.

"He was a sophomore on varsity last year just trying to find his way in terms of trying to be a scorer for us."



Larkin's Joshua Hibbett (5) looks to pass around East Aurora's Luis Umana (24) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023.

With the duo of Bealer and Cooley, however, East Aurora is never out of any game.

After **Larkin** rolled to a 54-34 lead with 5:58 left in the fourth, the Tomcats unleashed an 18-4 run to cut the deficit to 58-52. Bealer scored nine points in the run.

“Those two can put some numbers up,” East Aurora coach Rick Robinson said. “I don’t know if they thought they were just going to come out and lay down for us or what.

“Our guys just underestimated them, I guess, and then decided it was time to play. It was too late.”

Larkin hasn’t been in a position to close out a game often this season.

It happened two games ago against West Chicago, but the Royals lost by two points. This time, they were able to hang on.



Larkin's Joshua Hibbett (5) drives between East Aurora's Kenneth Cooley (4) and Davion Jackson (23) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023.

“We knew it was going to be a developmental year early and that hopefully we’ll be playing our best basketball in late January, early February,” Carter said. “It’s looking like that may be the way we’re going.”

The team’s development is mirroring Hibbett’s progress. He’s hoping to build off his big third quarter.

“It showed me a lot, especially since I took some bad shots,” Hibbett said. “If I can make the right play more often, I feel like I could have had an even bigger third quarter.

“I still feel like it showed me a lot — for myself and us as a team.”

- Chicago Tribune - Basketball and local scores for the Southland, Aurora, Elgin, Naperville and Lake County

By: From Staff Reports

Dec 15, 2023



Andrew's Grantas Sakenis (24) battles Oak Forest's Nicholas Segreti (24) for the ball as Andrew's Danny Laird helps out during a nonconference game in Oak Forest on Friday, Dec. 15, 2023.

FRIDAY'S RESULTS

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Ag. Science 44, Goode 29

Amboy 45, Hinckley-Big Rock 34

Hinckley-Big Rock (8-5): Raven Wagner 10 points. Anna Herrmann 10 points.

Aurora Central Catholic 62, Kaneland 56

Kaneland (8-4): Lexi Schueler 22 points. Kendra Brown 12 points.

Bartlett 56, **Streamwood** 47

Dundee-Crown 40, Jacobs 29

Geneva 52, Batavia 44
Geneva (7-3, 4-0 DuKane): Leah Palmer 30 points.
Batavia (9-2, 3-1): Brooke Carlson 20 points.
Glenbard South 60, **Elgin** 36
Elgin (6-5, 2-4 Upstate Eight): Izzie Castro 18 points.
Grayslake Central 61, Lakes 31
Hampshire 37, Crystal Lake Central 32
Hampshire (6-5, 4-0 Fox Valley): Avery Cartee 10 points.
Huntley 56, Burlington Central 36
Burlington Central (5-5, 4-2 Fox Valley): Emma Payton 14 points.
Joliet Central 61, Oswego 50
Kenwood 67, Morgan Park 37
Larkin 56, East Aurora 36
Naperville Central 59, Naperville North 49
St. Charles North 44, St. Charles East 38
Wauconda 65, North Chicago 6
Wauconda (7-2, 5-0 Northern Lake County): Asia Zastrow 11 points.
West Chicago 41, **South Elgin** 31

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

HIGH SCHOOLS

BOYS BASKETBALL

Bloom 56, Thornwood 46
Bremen 67, College Prep of America 57
Bremen (2-7): Ja'Ron Powell 26 points. Jalen Clardy 24 points.
Carver 69, Ag. Science 67 (OT)
Ag. Science (5-4, 3-1 Public White-South): C.T. Taylor 32 points.
Elgin Academy 67, IMSA 65
Lake Zurich 58, Libertyville 54
Lake Zurich (6-3, 3-1 North Suburban): Kain Kretschmar 24 points. Connor Strauss 12 points.
Libertyville (3-7, 0-3): Liam Hanson 26 points. Bryce Wegrzyn 20 points.
Larkin 60, East Aurora 52
Morgan Park 70, Urban Prep-Bronzeville 55
Morgan Park (5-4, 3-1 Public White-South): Josh Kelly 13 points, 6 rebounds. Pierre Stevenson 13 points.
Reavis 66, Universale 40
Reavis (6-4): Angel Fernandez 20 points.
South Elgin 64, West Chicago 35
Stagg 49, Oak Lawn 42
Stagg (8-2): Lebarion Gilmore 18 points. Connor Williams 16 points, 10 rebounds.
Wauconda 60, Lakes 54
Wauconda (5-1, 3-0 Northern Lake County): Braeden Carlsen 21 points. Cayden Mudd 17 points, 8 rebounds.

Lakes (3-9, 1-2): Jimmy Kania 14 points. Thomas Mercure 13 points.