

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Second-half boost lifts Mankato East past Tigers

By Jake Przytarski
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MARSHALL – The No. 6 ranked Mankato East Cougars boys basketball team – in the midst of a seven-game winning streak – paid a visit to the Marshall home gym on Saturday in what looked to be one of the most difficult challenges for the Marshall Tigers thus far in the season.

Playing a team of the Cougars' caliber, a complete 36-minute effort would be required to come away with the victory. By and large, the Tigers rose to the challenge and outplayed the Cougars in the opening 18 minutes, but a four-minute dominant stretch by the visiting team to begin the second half was all it took to shift the outcome, as Mankato East picked up a hard-fought 81-69 victory.

Similar to their previous

outing against Pipestone, Marshall coach Travis Carroll believes his team didn't match the effort-level of their opponent when the action commenced for the second half.

"In the first half we thought our kids met the challenge," said Carroll. "In the second half, in the first four minutes, we did not meet the challenge. Mankato East came out with great energy and great effort. We didn't match their energy, we didn't match their effort and we didn't execute. After the first four minutes we put ourselves in a tough spot and found ourselves trying to catch up, and that's tough to do against a team like Mankato East."

One of the biggest factors in the Tigers rising to the occasion to begin the game was the effort made by junior Noah Peutz, who scored Marshall's first 11 points of the game that gave them an

early 11-9 lead. Carroll pointed to Peutz's fast start as a catalyst for their offensive surge in the first half.

"He got us going offensively. He did a great job of getting us going, and it was good to see him get us kick-started," said Carroll. "Noah does a great job for us each game, and he definitely has the ability to do that for our team."

In spite of the early offensive success by the Tigers, the Cougars did not flinch, and had an answer for every basket made by the home team culminating in nine lead changes between the two teams. The deadlock would eventually be broken on a last-minute shot by Trey Steinbach to give the Tigers a 34-33 advantage heading into halftime.

The momentum built up in the previous half appeared to carry over into the second as Camryn Alex got the Tigers going offensively

with a 3-pointer to push the lead to four. Unfortunately, the momentum was short-lived and shifted over to the Cougars end shortly after thanks to an 8-0 run that put them back in front and forced a Marshall timeout.

Continuing to generate offense on the perimeter and at the free-throw line, Mankato East refused to relinquish the lead for the rest of the game with Jax Madson doing to the bulk of the damage for the Cougars with a game-high 39 points, including six 3-pointers and nine points from the charity stripe.

"We put them on the free-throw line quite a bit, and we need to do a better job defensively of not putting teams at the free-throw line," said Carroll. "We could've done a better of defending personnel. The Madson kid scored



Photo by Jake Przytarski

Marshall's Matt Onken shoots over a Mankato East defender during their game on Saturday. The Tigers fell to the Cougars 81-69.

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NBA

20/20 vision

Wolves' Towns scores 27 points, grabs 27 rebounds in win over Pelicans

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — With the Minnesota Timberwolves badly needing to win after blowing it the night before and the game hanging in the balance, Karl-Anthony Towns took over.

Towns did so against one of his most daunting opponents, too, furthering his place as the franchise leader.

With 27 points and a career-high 27 rebounds, the most in the NBA this season, Towns helped the Timberwolves fend off Anthony Davis and the New Orleans Pelicans for a 110-106 victory on Saturday night, the first at home for interim head coach Ryan Saunders.

"I just want to be the energy my team needs on a nightly basis," Towns said, "and if they need more I've got to be able to bring it."

Towns swished a top-of-the-key 3-pointer to make it 106-103 with 2:55 left, giving the Timberwolves the lead for good. Then Towns blocked a 3-point try by Davis on the other end, triggering a fast break that Tyus Jones finished with a layup.

"We need him to set the tone for us, and we've got to follow his lead," said Jones, who took the final 17 1/2 minutes at point guard for the ailing Jeff Teague.

Davis had 30 points and 14 rebounds for his 13th consecutive double-double. Jrue Holiday added 25 points and seven assists for the Pelicans, who pulled within 108-106 on Holiday's three-point play with 2:23 remaining.

But Towns blocked another 3-point attempt by Davis with 1:37 left that would have put the Pelicans in front, and the Timberwolves took it from there. Jones and Dario Saric each added 14 points on 2-for-3 shooting from 3-point range off the bench to help offset a 7-for-33 performance behind the arc by the rest of the team.

The Pelicans shot 20 for 29 from the floor over the final three minutes of the first half through the third quarter to take an 89-87 lead, but they faltered late.

"They were better coached. They played



AP photo

Minnesota Timberwolves' Karl-Anthony Towns, left, shoots over New Orleans Pelicans' Anthony Davis in the first half of an NBA game Saturday.

harder. They did everything they had to, to win the game, and we didn't," Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry said. "That's the bottom line. We didn't rebound the basketball, we turned it over, and I'm as much to blame as anybody."

This was a critical game for the Wolves, coming off a four-point loss to Dallas here the night before and facing some serious catching up to do in the relentless Western Conference race in order to

return to the playoffs. The Mavericks, Pelicans and Wolves all entered the evening tied for 11th place, 2 1/2 games below the cut.

The Wolves played without second-leading scorer Derrick Rose, who has missed all three games against the Pelicans this season, for precaution on the second of the back-to-back nights because of his return on Friday from a six-game absence to a sprained right ankle.

The Pelicans brought a similar urgency, beginning a stretch of five straight road games against Western Conference foes. They had losing streaks of four, five and six straight games over the first half of their schedule, slumps that will loom large down the stretch.

"We can finish this trip 4-1," Davis said, adding: "We've got to come in with a defensive mindset going into the rest of these games, these next four games."

PREP BASKETBALL

WWG, YME earn split in doubleheader

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MARSHALL – The Westbrook -Walnut Grove and Yellow Medicine East boys and girls basketball teams kicked off a string of games at Southwest Minnesota State University on Saturday with a doubleheader matchup. The Chargers and Sting earned a split in the pair of games, with the WWG boys and YME girls picking up wins.

Boys Basketball

WWG 71, YME 46

The WWG and YME boys basketball teams got the day started with a matchup that saw the Chargers take a double-digit lead at halftime before using a strong defensive performance in the second half en route to a 71-46 victory over YME.

It was tight to start the first half, with WWG holding a slim 5-4 lead, before YME's Jahrell Ishmon got fouled on a 3-pointer and connected on all three at the free-throw line to give the Sting a 12-11 lead with 13:41 left.

The two teams then traded points over the next several possessions, as the Chargers used a 6-1 run before YME's Bennett Knapper answered with a 3-pointer to make it a three-point game at 20-17 midway through the first half.

That's when WWG's defense started to come alive. Led by multiple steals from Andrew Quade, the senior guard's ability to read the YME defense helped the Chargers capitalize on the other end and take a double-digit lead with four minutes left. WWG would hold at least a nine-point advantage the rest of the half and take a 37-22 lead into the locker rooms.

Holding a double-digit lead going into the second half, the Chargers cranked up the defensive pressure to start the frame. That stifling presence allowed WWG to get out into transition and turn YME's turnovers into points as the Chargers took a 52-30 lead with 11:21 left before pushing their advantage to 30 at 60-30 midway through the second half.

After going scoreless for five-plus minutes, the

WWG/YME PAGE 2B



Photo by Sam Thiel

WWG's Andrew Quade drives around a YME defender during their game on Saturday. The Chargers defeated the Sting 71-46.

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