

Boys basketball: Rolling Meadows seniors shine again vs. Libertyville

By Lou Nunez Jr.

Saturday evening's nonconference boys hoops bout between host Rolling Meadows and visiting Libertyville was a contest that featured teams who lived up to their school nicknames.

On one side the home Mustangs were seeking to continue their frontrunner pace atop the Mid-Suburban East standings and in prime position to procure the top seed at the Class 4A Schaumburg sectional. On the opposite side you the visitors were living up to their Wildcats moniker as it sought to claw back from having gone 2-7 after an 8-1 start to their season.

Unfortunately for Libertyville their efforts to do so would find themselves both being caught by and eventually outran by Meadows as it posted a 62-44 triumph that moved their record to 19-3 on the campaign.

"We start five seniors who've been in the Meadows program since we were in the fifth grade and we bonded together," Mustangs senior guard Jack Duffer said.

"I think last year we lost some games because of immaturity and inexperience but this year I think we've been able to weather every storm because of our connectiveness and experience."

The home team would need to regroup after the visitors led 20-16 after the opening eight minutes as 6-foot-8 junior center Bryce Wegrzyn scored 15 of his game-high 23 points.

Libertyville (10-9) increased that lead 30-25 on a three from freshman guard Terrence Davis (8 points) at the 4:05 mark of the second before Meadows used a 10-0 run which featured five of 6-7 Marquette-bound swingman Ian Miletic's 13 points to head to the locker room up 30-25.

Miletic (5 points) and Duffer (4 points) drove the way forward for the Mustangs on the decisive 11-0 run over the first four minutes of half number two that left them safely ahead 41-25 on Duffer's second basket.

It also held the Wildcats to just 2-of-10 shooting in the quarter and 17-44 (38%) for the game.

"We were trying to protect the paint and they kind've got some offensive rebounds and were making shots, but we knew if we controlled our effort and our communication that we'd fly out there and they wouldn't keep hitting those shots and we'd swarm the rebounds," Duffer said.

Senior guard Gavin Escobedo added eight points in the win for Meadows as the Wildcats dropped their fifth straight.

"Give them a lot of credit, they came out real strong and took it to us early," Meadows Coach Kevin Katovich said.

"Wegrzyn had a nice game early obviously but our guys did a nice job adjusting and just kind of sticking with it. This is a veteran group so they just responded."

Still, Katovich, who shares the honor with his Hersey counterpart Bob Widlowski as dean of area coaches in his 23rd season, knows that there is still room for growth for his club.

"We like where we're at. Every day they come with the right mindset to get better so that's half the battle."