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Wednesday, January 15, 2020, 11:15 am

By:

Mark Meyer



East Lansing sophomore guard Brevin Jackson (20) looks for a way around Okemos senior center Grant Holtzer during Tuesday night's game. Holtzer made several key defensive plays for the Chiefs, who won 69-51. (Photos by Gary Caldwell)

OKEMOS ? The showdown for first place in the Capital Area Activities Conference Blue division Tuesday evening turned into a second-half slowdown for the East Lansing boys basketball team.

The Trojans absorbed their first defeat of the season, 69-51, in a game that ebbed and flowed favorably for East Lansing in the first half but escaped their grasp quickly in the third and decisive quarter.

Okemos head coach Jeff Wonch wasn't seething at halftime but he did let his Chiefs know that their offensive effort in the first 16 minutes was not up to par. Well below it, in fact, and not in a way that would make a golfer happy.

"The first thing I told them was defensively we were fine. They were working hard, and they were communicating," Wonch said. "Offensively, I don't think I've ever been more disappointed. We're not the kind of team that can stand around and then try to attack the paint. We're a team that is setting screens, reading screens, and moving. Lots of movement. And we didn't get any of that in the first half."



East Lansing junior guard Marcus Wourman shields the ball from Okemos senior guard Noah Pruitt (21).

Okemos senior guard Austin Gibson made his first three attempts from beyond the three-point arc as the Chiefs raced out to a 16-3 lead. East Lansing weathered the initial storm of treys and when sophomore guard Mason Woods drained a pair of long-range shots early in the second quarter, the Trojans led 22-19.

East Lansing expanded the lead to 30-26 at halftime, but it was short-lived. Okemos, now 4-0 in the CAAC Blue and 6-2 overall, scored the first six points of the second half en route to a 12-2 run in the first four minutes of the third quarter.

Gibson led all scorers with 25 points while senior guard Noah Pruitt accounted for 14 and helped

get the Chiefs back on track.

"The second half, I couldn't have been more proud of the adjustment (offensively)," Wonch said. "The second half is the best we've played this season."

Defending against East Lansing can be challenging, Wonch said, because "they can go small and be extremely quick and athletic, or they can go really big. You try to come up with best matchups you can and go from there."



Okemos senior guard Austin Gibson (23) keeps a close eye on East Lansing's Mason Woods (11). Gibson led all scorers with 25 points.

Woods led East Lansing (6-1 overall, 3-1 CAAC Blue) in scoring with 12 points. Andrei Anthony Jr. (11 points) was the only other Trojan in double figures.

East Lansing's slow start was not what head coach Ray Mitchell wanted to see in an opponent's gym.

"We came out flat, and I think that set the tone for the game," Mitchell said. "Even we had our run in the second quarter (16-7), they gained so much confidence early. If you give the home team a head start like that, you're going to be in a dogfight."



Andre Anthony Jr. (3) restrains teammate Malakai Matthews (15) after the latter was whistled for a technical foul with 5:32 remaining in the fourth quarter of Tuesday's game at Okemos.

Foul trouble crept up on the Trojans early in the third quarter when both post players Ethan Dunn and Ethan Boyd had three fouls each.

"We have to pay attention to the game plan and know who we're matched up against," Mitchell added. "We gave twenty-three (Gibson) too many open shots, especially threes. That just shouldn't happen if we're paying attention."

CAAC Blue Boys	Conf	Overall
Okemos	4-0	6-2
East Lansing	3-1	6-1
Grand Ledge	2-1	5-2
Everett	2-1	5-2
DeWitt	1-2	3-3
Holt	1-3	3-4
Waverly	0-4	2-6

Tuesday night's scores

Okemos 69, East Lansing 51
DeWitt 61, Waverly 43
Grand Ledge 71, Everett 60
Holt 56, Eastern 52

East Lansing Junior Varsity boys win on last-second shot: Freshman Evan Boyd sank a last-second shot as time ran out Tuesday evening to lift the Trojans to a 54-52 win over Okemos. Boyd received a pass from Evan Sundermann with less than a second to play and released his shot just inside the three-point arc in the right corner.

East Lansing girls remain unbeaten in CAAC play: No. 2-ranked East Lansing outscored the visiting Chiefs 15-2 in the third quarter on its way to a 73-33 victory Tuesday. Trojan senior forward Aaliyah Nye led all scorers with 16 points while sophomore guard Soraya Timms ? recently hobbled by leg soreness ? contributed 13 points and five assists in 18 minutes of play.

East Lansing, 7-1 overall and 4-0 in the CAAC Blue, returns home Friday to host Grand Ledge (5-2 overall, 3-0 CAAC Blue) at 6 p.m. Friday.

CAAC Blue Girls	Conf	Overall
East Lansing	4-0	7-1
Grand Ledge	3-0	5-2
Holt	2-1	7-1
DeWitt	2-1	6-2
Okemos	1-3	4-6
Everett	0-3	1-7
Waverly	0-4	3-6

Tuesday's scores

East Lansing 73, Okemos 33
Holt 51, Lansing Eastern 32
Grand Ledge 61, Lansing Everett 4
DeWitt 51, Waverly 31

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