

Bailey's hot hand in three-point range pushes Piasa Birds past Shells

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southwestern and Roxana battled closely for some of Wednesday night's contest in the **Metro East Lutheran Thanksgiving Turkey Tip-Off Classic Tourney**, but the Piasa Birds pulled away in the end for a 63-54 triumph.

Justin Bailey had a hot hand for the Piasa Birds, netting five of eight shots from the three-point range (63 percent) and finishing with a game-high 19 points. The Piasa Birds

as a team netted 12 of 21 three-point conversions for 57 percent. Caleb Robinson had three three-pointers for Southwestern, while Zack Seymour added two three-pointers and Caden Heyen and Ben Lewis added a three-pointers. Robinson had 11 points, Heyen had 10 points, while Seymour and Lewis had eight points. Baumgartner had five points.

Zach Golenor had 16 points to lead Roxana, followed by Trace Gentry with 13 points, Cody McMillen with 11 points and Blake Vandiver with nine points.

Southwestern coach Jason Darr was exceptionally pleased with the way with his team having such a young group of mostly sophomores and freshmen seeing playing time.

“Roxana is a good basketball team and does a lot of things right,” Darr said. “This was a huge win. We will probably see Roxana two or three more times on the season. They have a lot of experience, so this win is pretty special.”

Southwestern led 17-7 at the end of the first quarter, but Roxana scored 22 points to Southwestern’s 7 points in the second quarter to lead 29-28 at the half. Southwestern outscored Roxana 14-9 in the third quarter and 21-16 in the final frame.

Roxana coach Mark Briggs said he thought his team battled back from a deficit in the game, but couldn’t quite get over the top.

He said the loss against Southwestern is hopefully one his kids can learn from and play better through the rest of the tourney.

Southwestern, 2-0, moves in to the Gold Bracket of the tourney, attempting to defend a championship in the tourney from last year.

The victory sends 2-0 Southwestern into the Gold Bracket for a chance to defend the tourney championship.