

# Metro East Lutheran takes home 55-49 victory against Roxana

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January 26 2016 10:59 PM



**ROXANA** - Traveling less than seven miles from **Edwardsville** to the **Larry Milazzo Gymnasium**, home of the **Roxana Sr. High School Shells** boys basketball team, the **Metro East Lutheran High School Knights** slipped to a close **55-49** victory.

Coming right off the their unbeaten trip to the **Litchfield Tournament**, the Knights kept the momentum going and snagged yet another victory to push his team to a 21-3 overall

record on the season. The Knights are considered one of the best IHSA Class 1A teams in the state.

Although the Shells could not top the boys in green tonight, Roxana posed quite a challenge to the team, said Coach **Anthony Smith**.

“We knew Roxana was going to come out and play a good game,” Smith said. “I think we may have thought we were still in Litchfield, living off that win. I thought we could have played a little better, but it was so-so.”

Roxana coach **Mark Briggs** was ultimately proud of how his team defended against the now 21-3 team.

“Overall, we gave up five to six inches in every position, but I felt like we did a great job guarding Johnson,” he said. “We worked hard to negate their size and I thought our team played well defensively and had a pretty good plan.”



The first period was an intense battle of wits between the teams, who had difficulty feeling each other's offense and defensive tactics out. A relatively low-scoring period, each team had a bit of trouble earning some baskets.

**Noah Coddington** kicked off the night with a two-point shot for Metro East. Roxana's **Chance Foss** was quick to rebuttal to tie up the core at two. **Teddy Fifer** came through for Metro East and knocked in a basket before the Shells' **Zack Haas** could tie the score yet again. **Trace Gentry** was able to take the lead at 6-2 after scoring two before Coddington knocked in his second of many baskets for the evening. **Blake Vandiver** was able to keep the Shells above the Knights by two after landing a two-point shot to close out the period with a score of **8-6**.

Metro East started the second period by taking back the lead with baskets from **Kenrique Brown** and Coddington.

**Zach Golenor** swooshed in a three-pointer for Roxana to tie the score at 11. **Braden Woolsey** took a great two-point shot to retain the lead for the Knights at 13-11 before having it yet again taken by Gentry. A foul on **Jason Johnson** allowed Metro East to tie the score yet again at 14. Vandiver knocked in a two-point shot before Woolsey scored another basket to tie the score for another time at 16. Coddington brought the score to 18-16 before Gentry evened the score again. Vandiver locked down another two before another a foul allowed him to earn one more point from the foul line. The score was 21-18.

A foul on Coddington earned him a free-point. On a rebound shot following his missed second attempt, **A.J. Risavy** brought in two more to tie the score at **21-21** at the end of the second period.

The third period was an intense back-and-forth battle that can be summarized by numerous tied situations and a bit of foul trouble.

Golenor kept the Roxana Shells alive with 10 points added to the scoreboard this period, landing two three-pointers, one basket and two successful free throws. Gentry assisted Golenor this period by knocking in seven points. Unfortunately, none of the other members of the Shells' offense got involved in the third.

Both Brown and Johnson brought in seven points each for the Knights this period. **Garrett Niemeier** was able to knock his first scoring shot, which was ultimately a very strategic three-pointer. Fifer knocked in a three-pointer to close out the period, letting his team take the lead with a score of **41-38** at the end of the third.

In the fourth, Roxana made quite the valiant effort to keep their team alive.

Beginning the period with a three-point shot, Gentry tied the score at 41 before Metro East's offense took charge.





A foul on Fifer allowed him to score one from the goal line. On a turnover that can be considered as “game losing” to some, Coddington used all of his might to run and dribble down court and jump to dunk in a basket, sending the visitors crowd into an uproar from the astounding 6’6” junior. After Coddington’s basket, Woolsey was able to knock in two more for the Knights before a timeout was called.

After the timeout, yet another foul on Gentry allowed him two successful free throw points. Another foul on Golenor earned the team one more point to bring the score to 46-44 in the Knights’ favor.

Brown knocked in a basket to maintain his team’s lead before a time was called with 2:53 left on the clock. When the break concluded, Johnson locked in a two-point shot to further the Knights’ lead.

In the start of a comeback attempt, **Cody McMillen** knocked in first and only basket of the game to bring his team’s score to 56. A foul on Coddington earned him one more for the Knights.

In Roxana’s last plays of the game, Golenor knocked in a basket and then was fouled upon. He was able to earn one more point to freeze Roxana’s score at 49 points.

Fouls on Brown and Coddington allowed them each to earn two points each to close out the score of 55-49 at the final buzzer.

The Knights' Johnson is only 113 points away from 1,000 career points with 987 points to date. He had 10 points against Roxana.

Noah Coddington had 15 points for the Knights; Kenrique Brown added 13 points.

The Knights play Cahokia in the Pinckneyville Shootout at 11:30 a.m. Saturday.

Roxana's Trace Gentry led all scorers in the game with 19 points; Zach Golenor followed his teammate with 17 points. Blake Vandiver contributed seven points for the Shells.

**SEE VIDEO BELOW:**