

Hawks fight hard but comes up short to Triopia once again

by John Hough, Sports Writer
January 7 2018 1:56 AM



WINCHESTER - It's almost there, but not yet a reality.

The Carrollton Hawks have struggled with youth, taken blows to the face, and learned on the fly throughout the season, but with a couple of minutes to play against the talented Triopia Trojans, the Hawks were getting stops on defense to give them chances to succeed.

After trading six points and trailing 53-40 with time winding down in the fourth quarter, the Hawks went on a run. Hunter Flowers connected on two free-throws, and after getting a stop, Ethan Brannan cut the lead to nine. Less than ten seconds later, Gabe Jones forced a steal at mid-court and passed to Brannan who raced to the basket and laid the ball in. It was 53-46, and after the Hawks got another stop on defense they had all the momentum, but they would get no further.

“We need a stop, a score, and a stop. We would get the stop. It looked like we were going to get it. We had the shot we wanted, but it wouldn’t fall,” Carrollton head coach Matt Goetten said. “The ball just wouldn’t find the bottom of the net in some of those crucial situations.”

Carrollton was defeated 59-50 by Triopia in the first round of the Winchester Invitational Tournament at Winchester Elementary on Saturday night.

The Hawks move to 4-7 and will meet Rushville-Industry in the consolation quarterfinals on Wednesday at a scheduled 7:00 p.m. tip-off time.

“The shot-selection and decision making was so much better tonight than it has been and every night I see that improvement,” Goetten said. “It’s hard to say that you like the trajectory when you’re 4-7, but I do like where we’re headed, and a game like this exposed the talent that we have when we put it all together. When we turned it on in the fourth quarter, it was an avalanche and Triopia did a nice job of weathering the storm.”

A trio of Hawks scored in double-figures. Jones led the Hawks with 18 points, Flowers followed with 17, and Brannan added 14. So far this season it’s rare to see Carrollton have that many scorers in double-figures, which pleases Goetten.

“Those guys are all capable of doing that, and it’s a step forward for varsity basketball. I think they’re all getting used to that now,” Goetten said. “I like that effort; it’s balanced scoring. The leadership I saw from a couple of those guys tonight is really going to serve us well going forward.”

The Trojans were led by their two star junior guards Shawn Bell and Zach Thompson. Bell tallied a game-high 19 points and dialed up five three-pointers, while Thompson scored 18.

“two of the best guards around so they can weather a storm like that. Other teams, we can put pressure on, but we can’t do it for 32 minutes against Triopia, they’re going to burn us,” Goetten said. “For a couple of minutes at the time, our switching defenses helped us to keep them off balance kinda offensively.”



Triopia previously beat Carrollton 76-54 on Dec 15 and although that game was closer than the final score indicated, this time the Hawks were never out of it.

Bell and Garrett Snow opened the game with back-to-back three-pointers for the Trojans, but the Hawks would go on an 8-2 run that included five points from Jones. After a bucket from Thompson, Brannan scored two straight points to give Carrollton their only lead of the game at 12-10. A short-range basket by Tanner Allen leveled things at 12 all after the one quarter.

The two junior studs from both teams opened the second quarter with a bang. Bell hit a trey, Jones did the same on the next possession, but Bell retorted Jones' answer with another triple. So, Jones took his game inside by attacking the basket to put the Hawks within one at 18-17. The Trojans led 24-19 when Flowers threw his hat into the ring. He made a free-throw then moments later he stole a pass in the paint and drove coast-to-coast for a layup to make it 24-22. However, Snow nailed a three and Thompson followed with another bucket before Flowers stole another pass and turned it into points.

Triopia led 31-24 at halftime and proceeded to trade buckets with Carrollton for a couple of minutes and pushed their lead out to 39-30. After being quiet for a little while, Jones broke his silence and converted a layup and just as Triopia inbounded, Nathan Walker poked the pass away, kept it inbounds and passed to a streaking Brannan who laid the ball up and in to put Carrollton within five at 39-34.

However, Mr. Bell was there to kill off the momentum.

On the following possession he knocked down a three from the baseline and with four seconds to play, he received an inbounds pass, dribbled down court, released his shot from the volleyball line and drilled it at the buzzer to give the Trojans a 45-34 lead.



