

# Hawks rally in the fourth quarter to beat Greenfield-Northwestern

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January 31 2018 1:42 AM





GREENFIELD - All season long it's been a couple plays away for the Carrollton Hawks, but usually, fall short.

On Tuesday night against their longtime Greene County rivals, the Greenfield-Northwestern Tigers, the Hawks pressure defense clicked. They rallied from an eight-point fourth quarter deficit and outscored the Tigers 19-6 to win 44-39 in front of a big crowd at Carrollton High School.

The Hawks improve to 8-12 and 3-3 in the WIVC, while the Tigers fall to 8-12 and 3-4 in the conference.

"It's going to be a memorable one. We started out slow and then the second half we kicked it in," Ethan Brannan said. "Gabe Jones had a big second half. Nate Walker started shooting the ball more, which we've been trying to get him to do and he's been great during practice. Blake Struble rebounds and Kyle taking those charges. We love those."

Jones led all scorers with 18 points and scored all of them in the second half as he was hit with foul trouble in the first half. Brannan followed with ten points, and Walker added eight.

“It’s really big considering the Greene County rivalry and everything. It’s always nice to come back and win,” Jones said. “We had a lot of energy, and good teams find a way to win.”

“I didn’t think we really started to play defense until the fourth quarter the way we’re capable of.” We turned it up,” Carrollton head coach Matt Goetten said. “That was a game we needed to win to get to 500. It’s important.”

The Tigers had a balanced scoring outlet. Zane Thomson and Hayden Lansaw finished with eight points. Blake Meyer and Ben Bayless chipped in seven points each.

Greenfield-Northwestern had outplayed Carrollton with timely shooting and solid defense for the majority of the game, but a 33-25 lead after three quarters just wasn’t a big enough lead. The Hawks were able to speed up the Tigers, who prefer to play at a slower tempo and that forced turnovers.

“We knew we weren’t going to be flawless for four quarters against their pressure, but we did a good job against it until the game got tight,” Greenfield-Northwestern head coach Joe Pembroke said. “ was very constant with their pressure. They were able to hit some shots so that they could get into their press. It got us rattled and forced us to play faster than what we’re comfortable playing.”

The Tigers got out to a strong start and grabbed a 9-0 lead, which would be the biggest of the game. Their 2-3 zone was causing all kinds of fits for the Hawks as they tried to force passes that were intercepted and struggled mightily to make shots.

“I thought we were handling the pace of the game. We talked about slowing things down. “We’re a team that has to play at a certain pace level,” Pembroke said. “We were executing our sets. We were getting a lot of the right shots that we had worked on and anticipated getting. Our zone was keeping them at bay.”

All the while Jones was plagued with foul trouble guarding Bayless who is seven-feet tall. In a big rivalry game, mainly when the offense was hard to come by at the time, it was hard for Jones to do nothing, but he had faith in his teammates.

“It was rough. I’m always looking to get in there and lead our guys, but it was good because other people had to step up,” Jones said. “They did a really good job, so I’m proud of them for that.”





“We came out flat and got in foul trouble. Gabe is our one consistent scorer, and he spends most of the first half on the bench, but we look up, and we’re only down seven,” Goetten said. “Garrett Settles, Jacob Graner, and Seth Howard gave us some nice minutes.”

The Hawks gained some momentum and crawled back to cut the deficit to 16-13, but the Tigers outscored them 6-2 and led 22-15 at halftime.

In the fourth quarter Carrollton wasted little time and got back to within one possession a couple of minutes in, and Jones tied the game at 37 with a jump shot. Defensively Brannan led the charge as he was seemingly always closely guarding Thomson or whoever was bringing the ball up for Greenfield-Northwestern.

“The one constant was Ethan Brannan. We need him to score, but he works so hard defensively. That was the difference,” Goetten said. He was just relentless defensively. That wears on a team over four quarters.”

A 15-foot basket by Wyatt Courier gave the Tigers a 39-37 lead, but with under two minutes to play Jones drained a three-pointer to put Carrollton on top for the first time at 40-39.

“That was the play. I knew Ethan was gonna give it to me and as soon as it left my hand I knew that thing was going in,” Jones said.

Greenfield-Northwestern had multiple chances to take the lead and tie the game, but the Hawks defied them every time.

Settles put the cherry on the icing as he managed to score on a layup as the buzzer sounded.

The Tigers upset the Hawks last season 44-34 in Greenfield, but Carrollton got revenge as the classic Greene County rivalry moves to another chapter.

“It’s a great, rivalry. A lot of the guys are friends, and it was nice to get out of here with a win especially at our home court,” Goetten said. “They got us last year at their home-court so little payback for my guys.”