

Late first half run propels Columbia and ends Civic Memorial's season

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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WATERLOO - Things were going seemingly as planned for the Civic Memorial Eagles.

With 3:47 to go in the first half, the Columbia Eagles called a timeout and the game drastically changed. They ended the half on a 14-2 run and would go on to outscore Civic Memorial 42-18 and cruise to a 55-39 victory in the Class 3A Waterloo Regional Semifinals on Wednesday night.

“Basketball a game of runs. We hit them, and they call timeout. They come back out, they hit us, and we never responded after that,” Civic Memorial head coach Ross Laux said. “ came out of that timeout with a lot more jump in their step.”

Jordan Holmes scored a game-high 20 points for Columbia. Jon Peterson had 15, and Riley Huber chipped in 8. It was also a night of revenge for Columbia as they previously lost to Civic Memorial 54-48 in their own Christmas Tournament.

“In the timeout, we talked about being aggressive and playing the way like we have the last ten games. I thought we were on our heels and didn’t think we did a good job pressuring and making them take tough shots,” Columbia head coach Mark Sandstrom said. “All of that changed after that second timeout.”

JaQuan Adams led Civic Memorial with 14 points. He was followed by Caden Clark’s 13 and Bryce Zupan tallied ten.



Civic Memorial got out to a bright start leading 10-5 after the first quarter, and their half-court press was causing Columbia problems. In the second quarter, Adams got into the game and scored eight points by attacking the basket and hitting mid-range floaters.

Holmes sparked Columbia's comeback with 14 points in the quarter with a three-pointer and two and-ones. With 4.3 seconds to go Columbia stole an inbounds pass and Holmes got back to the charity and knocked down two more shots to put his team up 27-23 at halftime.

"A lot of it was self-inflicted. Turnovers that led to fast-break baskets, an and-one there and an and-one here," Laux said.

“Momentum is a funny thing. We came in at halftime, and we got the lead instead of being down eight,” Sandstrom said. “Our kids are feeling a lot better about themselves, and Civic not so much. It’s a huge boost psychologically.”

In the second half Columbia very nearly put a lid on the basket.

They held Civic Memorial to 17 points by mainly denying them access through or around the paint. That forced mostly Adams and Clark to plow through at least two defenders, which caused several off-balanced shots.

“It was a concerted effort to keep them out of the gaps. We wanted to clog, but didn’t want to give them easy looks at the basket,” Sandstrom said. “We wanted to make everything contested if they got in the gaps and I thought we did much better in the second half.”

Another phase of the game Civic Memorial struggled with was rebounding.

On offense Columbia hardly gave them a sniff of second-chance opportunities and on the other side, Civic Memorial gave Columbia enough opportunities for second-chance points.

“Defensive rebounding to me is everything. Our downfall led to the offensive boards on part,” Laux said. “We knew they were gonna crash. The No. 1 key on our board was to keep them off the boards. They’re big, long, athletic, they crash hard, and it’s the best offense against a zone.”



Holmes scored three points in the second half, but he helped set up a variety of teammates for open for looks and easy baskets. He's committed to play football at the University of Illinois but has shown throughout the years and last night that he's an adequate basketball player.

"That's Jordan. He's been doing that for four years, and he just knows how to play," Sandstrom said. "He gonna go to college to play football. He could've to college to play basketball and would've made somebody happy. He's got great court sense, great savvy, and he wasn't gonna lose to Civic tonight."

Civic Memorial trailed 30-27 with 4:34 to play in the third quarter, but Columbia went on another run and led 40-30 heading into the fourth and would stretch the lead to as big as 17.

Civic Memorial's season comes to an end with an 18-11 record.

"I talked to the seniors of what kind of group they are and how fun it's been to watch them mature over the last three years," Laux said. "I bleed purple and gold. I told everybody whatever their next sport is, use this as motivation to take it to the next level. Don't let the talent we have right now end in another round."











