

# **Carrollton closes season with 27 wins in sectional title game against Okawville**

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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Carrollton's outstanding boys' basketball season was upended by the Okawville Rockets 57-43 in the IHSA Class 1A Okawville Sectional Finals on Friday night.

The Hawks' season comes to a close with a 27-5 record. Fouls and free throws played a

primary role in deciding Friday night's 1A Sectional Final between Carrollton and Okawville, at least in the opinion of Carrollton Hawks head coach Jeff Krumwiede. "28 for 42 and 5 for 10. There's really nothing else to talk about," Krumwiede said.

That was the number of free throw makes and attempts for Okawville and Carrollton, respectively.

The Rockets outscored the Hawks 28-5 from the free throw line and Carrollton committed 28 fouls to Okawville's 14 for the game. On top of that, four Carrollton players fouled out of the game.

Cody Leonard ended his stellar career with 17 points. Luke Palan chipped in 12 as he bowed out for the last time.

Okawville's super sophomore Noah Frederking dropped in 20 points. 11 of them were from the free throw line. He wasn't alone as Shane Ganz finished with 15 points and Brad Fuhrhop added 12.

"I decided before the game started that we would probably get in foul trouble trying to guard Frederking," Krumwiede said.

The first quarter was a nightmare for Carrollton. It was 8-4 Rockets halfway through, but with 3:48 left, Leonard picked up his second foul. In every game in the playoffs he has sat out for a period of time in the first half because of foul trouble. Okawville took advantage and expanded their lead to 18-6 to the joy of a record-breaking home crowd.

Okawville led 20-8 going into the second quarter, but Carrollton woke up. The Hawks went on a 7-0 run to cut the Rockets lead to 22-17 midway through the quarter. Leonard had a hand in it as he subbed back in at the start of the second quarter.

"Generally two fouls early means sit the rest of the half depending on the score," Krumwiede said. This is a sectional final and we were behind. I had decided that if they were going to not play it was going to be of disqualification, not because of my decision."

It would turn out to be the closest Carrollton would come to threaten Okawville's lead. The Rockets launched a 9-2 run to cancel out Carrollton's run and get the lead back to 12 points.

"We missed some shots that we normally make and you can't overcome that," Krumwiede said.

The Hawks were losing 31-19 at halftime and needed to make something happen soon. On the first possession of the third quarter Leonard got a steal and layup, but worse things were to come. Okawville went on another 8-2 run that stretched the lead to 16, which would be the biggest of the game.

“I told them how proud I was of the effort despite being down 12 at halftime and we lost by 14 and that included complete desperation of the last 10 minutes,” Krumwiede said.

The Hawks began the fourth quarter down 12 and without Jerrett Smith and Cole Brannan, who fouled out in the third quarter. Still, the Hawks refused to give in completely, and lost by only 14.

“The kids left it all out on the floor. I was really proud of their effort,” Krumwiede said.

It already was tough outside of the game with the fact that the entire town of Okawville was on hand to see the Rockets play in their two-year-old state of the art gymnasium, which holds 1,600 people. It was filled to near capacity.

“Someone’s got to host a sectional, so build a beautiful gymnasium,” Krumwiede said. “Build it and they will come and the IHSA will come and if you’re fortunate enough to win a regional you got a great advantage. I’m glad we had the opportunity to play Okawville in Okawville and if we had a gym that could seat enough to host a sectional we would be trying to get it too.”

With the season ending, Carrollton said goodbye to Luke Palan, Cody Leonard, and Jacob Smith. Palan and Leonard both scored over 1,000 points in their careers. Jacob Smith scored over 900 for his career. All three combined for over 3,000 career points, a number that could only be viewed as massive, except perhaps in comparison to the gargantuan statistics the three produced on the football field.

“Every year we have to have this talk and we thanked them for everything that they did and appreciated their leadership over the last couple of weeks especially,” Krumwiede said.

“Palan’s got talents that don’t come around very often. Leonard is the same way. You can repeatedly watch us play other opponents and Leonard does things that no one else on either team does, Palan the same way,” Krumwiede said. “Jacob was always the quiet one that did the little things, the things that didn’t get noticed. That’s why we’ll miss him.”

“That’s why together they mesh as a team and when we were able to get some good younger underclassmen around them. It made for another great banner year for Carrollton basketball,” Krumwiede said.

Alas there is a light on the horizon for the Hawks. The Hawks will return two starters in Luke Gillingham, who is approaching 1,000 points for his career, and Cole Brannan. Carrollton will also return several players that played key roles on this year’s team and inherit an undefeated JV team.

“We got a big bunch coming back and we’re going to have a big bunch of seniors so our leadership shouldn’t be an issue next year,” Krumwiede said.

