

Marquette Boys Lead CM Whole Way In Late-Season Test

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BETHALTO - The Marquette Catholic boy's basketball team never trailed in a 44-33 win over the hosts Civic Memorial Tuesday night. The Explorers spoiled the fun on CM's Senior Night and move to 18-12 with one game left in the regular season.

The Eagles lose their third straight and slip to 13-17 also with one game left in the regular season.

It was a 9-0 run from the Explorers that set the tone for what would be a long night for CM.

Parker Macias opened the scoring with a three followed by a couple of Braden Kline layups. Marquette kept on and led 13-4 after the first quarter and then 24-10 at the half.

This wasn't so much an offensive masterpiece, definitely more of a defensive battle. A battle that Marquette won.

CM's seven-footer Sam Buckley has been averaging nearly 17 points a night. Marquette kept him to just five in the first half. CM only made four field goals in the first half and not for lack of trying, shots just did not fall.

CM's 10 turnovers didn't help them either.

Marquette outscored CM 16-9 in the third to go ahead 40-19. 10 of those points came from Kline who finished the night with 16. Kendall Lavender put in 10 while Macias and Sean Williams each scored seven.

Buckley started making some shots in the fourth and finished the night leading all scorers with 19. CM outscored Marquette 14-4 in the fourth, but the comeback was a little too late.

The Explorers' defense frustrated CM all night.

"We definitely stepped up the defense," Marquette head coach Cody Best said. "They've got a monster down low (referring to Buckley) and that's what we had to key on. Our guys executed everything we taught them this whole week so I'm very impressed on our defensive end."

Marquette will finish its regular season at Gibault on Thursday with a 7:30 p.m. start time. Gibault is currently ranked No. 8 in Class 1A by the Associated Press. However, the Explorers have already defeated an AP-ranked team when they beat No. 3 at the time Christ Our Rock by a score of 40-38 back on Feb. 3.

"If we play defense like that I'll put us up against anybody right now," Best said.

As for the postseason, the Explorers earned the No. 2 seed and a first-round bye. They await the winner between No. 6 Vandalia and No. 8 Litchfield and will take on the winning team in the Regional Semifinals on Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 6 p.m. in Litchfield.

CM will end the regular season on Friday when they host Mascoutah.

With the Eagles as the No. 6 seed, they'll take on No. 7 Cahokia on Saturday in the Regional Quarterfinals at 2 p.m. CM has the luxury of hosting its regional games.