

Brunaugh's 21-Point Night Leads Jersey's Comeback To Beat CM

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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JERSEYVILLE – After being down by 12 points midway through the third quarter, the Panthers boys basketball team came back to beat the Civic Memorial Eagles 42-35 Friday night.

Dubbed as 'Mega Night' this was both teams' first look at the new Mississippi Valley Conference schedule. Now, for every upcoming MVC matchup, both the boys and girls JV teams will play at 4:30 p.m., the varsity girls will start at 6 p.m., and the varsity boys will begin at 7:30 p.m.

It all led to a long night of basketball, and a rather large crowd in Jersey County.

The teams exchanged three-pointers as the game kicked off. Jersey's Abe Kribs made it 3-0 before CM's Jack Piening tied it right back up. Francis Voegel took the lead back temporarily for Jersey, but Adam Ogden drained back-to-back threes as the Eagles took a 13-7 lead after the first quarter.

A three and another basket from Jaxon Brunaugh gave Jersey the lead back at 24-22 at the half.

Brunaugh finished as the game's scoring leader with 21 points and five threes. He was the only Panther to score in double digits.

"That's a tough dude," Jersey head coach Matt Murphy said of Brunaugh. "He missed practice yesterday because he was sick. So, for him to come out and take over the game there for a little bit, the leadership he's been showing this year early has been huge for us."

CM still had a huge response in the second half.

After Aiden Taylor made it 26-22 Jersey to kick off the third quarter, the Eagles went on a 12-0 run to flip the script and regain the lead at 34-26.

Brunaugh made back-to-back threes to cut the lead down to 34-32 after three quarters of play.

CM managed to only score a single point in the fourth to Jersey's 13 as the Panthers came back to get their first MVC win of the season.

"One point in the fourth is inexcusable," CM head coach Lee Green said postgame. "Give credit to . They turned up the pressure and got in us defensively and we melted. We melted."

This loss follows a close 69-66 win over Freeburg to wrap up the Roxana Hoopsgiving Tournament last week for the Eagles.

Friday night at Jersey was a much different offensive performance for CM.

“We got up 34-26, and then you score three points the rest of the game, and only one point in the fourth,” Green said. “We missed free throws and point-blank layups. You’re not going to win games like that. You’ve got to learn how to finish.”

“We’re a young team, we’re trying to get there, but right now we’ve got a long way to go,” Green added.

It was arguably Jersey’s best defensive effort of the young season as well.

“We played our butts off defensively tonight,” Murphy said. “I really challenged the guys yesterday because that’s something I wanted from this team.”

CM had just one double-digit scorer as well in Adam Ogden. He led the Eagles with 15 points. Riley Lamb scored six points while Piening and August Frankfort each had four.

CM drops down to 2-3 on the season and 0-1 in the conference. Jersey improves to 2-4 on the year and opens MVC action with a win.

“Starting out 1-0 is huge. We’re undefeated in conference,” Murphy said with a giant grin.

The Panthers host Centralia on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 7:30 p.m. while the Eagles host Gillespie on the same night and same time.