

SPORTS

Jackets rally in opening season scrimmage

By Josh Shephard
The Canton Mirror

CYNTHIANA — Just beyond the mid-point of the first half, The Nicholas County Bluejackets trailed by eight against the Phelps Hornets. It was the largest lead held by anyone during the course of the scrimmage.

By the mid-point of the second half Chris Sexton, with a good assist from Israel Stacy, drove home the shot that turned the lead over to Nicholas County.

Two separate turns at the charity strips by Brian Ockerman solidified the Jackets pre-season 58-55 victory over Phelps and Head Coach Clay Campbell, or the man who might have been, Campbell held the Nicholas County Head Basketball Coach's position for the shortest term in the school's history — approximately seven hours last summer.

Most remarkable about the Jackets pre-season win, besides giving the team some momentum before the regular season begins, is the balanced performance of all players. Though at times seemingly rough around the edges, the Bluejackets were first a team and the accolades cannot be draped about the shoulders of one or two players.

"We played hard and put forward a decent defensive effort. But the Bluejackets struggled offensively. That's expected, especially when they're working with a new offense."

"They have to think through the plays rather than react. As the season progresses the offense should become more natural to them," Bluejackets Head Coach Chris O'Hearn commented.

Winning, however, was not the ultimate goal of the scrimmage, he said. "Playing time against an opponent was what O'Hearn felt was most important."

"Sometimes if there is a score, the tendency is to get caught up in the game when we're only playing a scrimmage," O'Hearn said.

But there were significant bright spots during the course of the contest. One was the way in which the Jackets came out on defense and held Phelps shooter Mike Wolford to only a three pointer. There was also a great deal more scoring in the second half, he said.

"One thing is for certain. The team is in pretty good condition. We played about nine people and few got overly winded through the game," O'Hearn said.

Through the Phelps Hornets' lead to an early eight point lead before the end of one 16 minute period, it didn't last. Within a minute and a half, the Jackets out to a shooting of Bradley Trussell and Sexton.

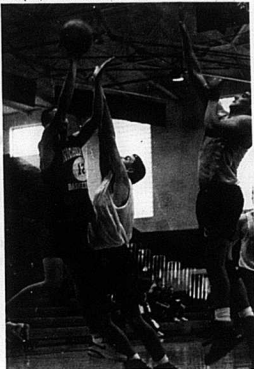
But perhaps most significant was the inside defensive play of Brian Ockerman.

Ockerman rejected two key shots in the final two minutes and rebound a strong drive by Bradley Brown to keep the Jackets in 27-23.

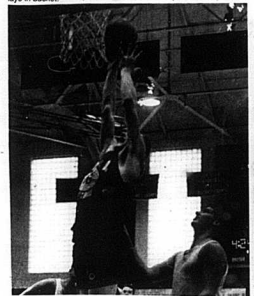
Phelps point man Scott Carroll took the Phelps back with a three pointer, forcing the Jackets to close down the inside man to man just inside the perimeter. Trussell pulled an excellent spin for two from mid-key to pull back within three, 32-29.

Uncharacteristically, Bradley Brown missed both ends of a step up to the foul line, but the opportunity was saved as players scrambled for possession of the ball. Brown came up with it and banked it to bring the Jackets within one, 34-33.

The comeback was, for the most part, attributable both to strong rebounding which put the Jackets on good time-out.



The Cantons Mirror/Pam Shephard Photo Above, Bradley Brown fires up a jumper on Saturday as the Jackets rally past Phelps High School. Below, senior center Brian Ockerman stays in block.



Little League Basketball Results

Nicholas County Little League Basketball Results
B-Teams
 Pistons - 9; C Ring 1; R Ring 6; Whites 2; Wildcats 7; Hicks 4; Bowles 1; Sharp 2.
Hornets - 8; C Earlywine 3; Vic 2; Mustangs - 1; Mitchell 1.
**Balls - 12; Jeremy Dunn 9; Jeff Dunn 1; McNabb 2; Hawks - 7; Jones 1; J. Minton 3; Wilson 1; Mitchell 2.
 Celtics - 8; Tinsler 3; Rector 4; Fulton 1; Bears - 1; Rod Trussell 1.
**Rebels - 11; Herrington 6; J. Hunt 5; Demons - 9; Gray 5; McGrath 3; Ring 1.
 Patriots - 10; Marcum 1; Smith 1; Broderick 3; Rockets - 7; Sada 1; Terrell 2; Grant 3.
**Kats - 4; Harmon 1; Gaunce 2; Ormes 1; Panthers - 3; Berry 2; Boone 1.
 Phillies - 5; Hamilton 1; Adams 4; Salts - 4; Sapp 2; Gilliff 2.
A-Teams
 Pistons - 24; Hall 8; Robinson 10; Whites 3; Wildcats - 16; Hicks 1; McEne 11; Sapp 4.
**Hornets - 23; Hamilton 2; Hunt 2; Brown 6; Clark 4; Anderson 3; Lemons 2; Lawrence 2; Mustangs - 2; Gray 2.
 Bulls - 25; Jenkins 8; Snapp 10; Kenney 3; Jeremy Dunn 2; McNabb 2; Hawks********

ing, offense. But also key were turnovers. Stacy was able to break up one Phelps set up and nailed another turnover a minute later to keep the ball primarily on the Jackets' side of the court. But Phelps was never out of it. The Jackets held the lead, but always with Phelps a mere shot away from the tie. Trussell, with 11 points in the second half alone, was especially effective from the perimeter. With 3:30 to go, Bradley Phelps completed a tough in-

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