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Panthers downed by Indians, 70-50

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Oblong stayed with Lawrenceville for the first eight minutes of Saturday's Little Illini Conference Boys' Tournament quarterfinal, but it was all Lawrenceville in the final 24 minutes, as the Indians pulled away for a 70-50 win.

"We didn't come ready to play ball tonight," OHS head coach Brent Harper said. "We've had a week off, but that's no excuse."

The game was tight early, but a 10-3 run by Lawrenceville gave them a 14-7 lead with 2:10 to play in the first quarter. The Panthers would respond, as Curtis Hoalt, Elliot Smith and Drew Morecraft hit consecutive three-pointers to give Oblong a 16-14 lead with :35 seconds left in the period. Unfortunately, that would be the only lead the Panthers would hold in the game, as Lawrenceville's Ryan Klein nailed a three-pointer with 10 seconds left to give the Indians a 17-16 lead after one quarter and it also started a 10-0 Lawrenceville run that lasted until 2:50 remaining in the second quarter, when Morecraft made a layup to make the score 24-18 in favor of the Indians. Lawrenceville would then outscore Oblong 10-5 to finish the first half and take a 34-23 lead at halftime.

A pair of three-point plays by Kendrick Greathouse early in the third quarter brought Oblong to within seven, 36-29, but Lawrenceville responded with an 11-0 run increase their advantage to 47-29 with 2:15 to play in the third quarter and the Panthers would never threaten again.

"Lawrenceville threw a little pressure at our guards early," Harper said. "They played good defense and we couldn't handle it."

A poor shooting performance hampered the Panthers' ability to stay in the game, as they made 18-54 field goal attempts (33 percent), which included an 11-34 (32 percent) effort from two-point range and a seven of 20 (35 percent) showing from long range.

"Our shooting really struggled early," Harper said. "We missed some easy shots inside. We couldn't get our inside game going. When the defense collapses, you have to knock down outside shots and we didn't make enough of them tonight."

Lawrenceville, on the other hand, made 44 percent of their field goal attempts (24-54), while they also held a significant edge at the free throw line, as the Indians made 17-23 (74 percent), while the Panthers were seven of 10 (70 percent) at the charity stripe. The Indians also held a 41-30 rebounding edge and committed just 11 turnovers, compared to 17 for Oblong.

"For us to be successful, we have to show up and play good team basketball," Harper said. "We can't expect to win many ball games if we come out and play like we did tonight."

Three players reached double figures for Oblong, led by Morecraft with 12. He also had six rebounds, four steals, four blocked shots and an assist. Smith added 11 points, seven rebounds, four assists and a steal, while Greathouse had 10 points, seven rebounds, one steal, one assist and a blocked shot. Paul Stahnke posted five points, one rebound and a blocked shot off the bench for the Panthers, Curtis Legg chipped in four points, two steals and a rebound, Curtis Hoalt had three points, five rebounds and one assist, Joey Harder had three points and two rebounds and Ethan Mendenhall had two points, one rebound, one steal and one assist.

Lawrenceville was led by Nathan Waldroup, who had a game-high 20 points, while also recording seven rebounds, three assists and two steals. Dane Kelly posted a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds, along with an assist and a blocked shot. Zach Manley added 11 points, five rebounds, three blocked shots, two steals and two assists for the Indians, Josh Potts had nine points, four assists, three steals and two rebounds and Nick Potts had eight points, seven rebounds, two blocked shots and a steal.

In other first round action Saturday, top-seeded and undefeated Marshall blasted eighth-seeded Edwards County, 81-42, sixth-seeded Flora upset third-seeded Red Hill, 56-53, and fifth-seeded Cumberland knocked off fourth-seeded Casey-Westfield, 73-61.

Oblong (9-9, 2-1 LIC) will play Hutsonville-Palestine in a consolation bracket game of the Little Illini Conference Tournament tonight at

6:30 in Oblong.

2009 Little Illini Conference

Boys' Basketball Tournament

At Casey

Oblong 16 7 11 16 - 50

Lawrenceville 17 17 18 18 - 70

OBLONG (50)

Ethan Mendenhall 1-1 0-0 0-0 2, Curtis Hoalt 0-3 1-1 0-1 3, Elliot Smith 1-3 3-7 0-0 11, Drew Morecraft 1-6 3-6 1-2 12, Kendrick Greathouse 3-7 0-2 4-4 10, Curtis Legg 2-6 0-4 0-0 4, Joey Harder 1-4 0-0 1-1 3, Paul Stahnke 2-4 0-0 1-2 5, TOTALS 11-34 2FG, 7-20 3FG, 7-10 FT, 50 TP.

LAWRENCEVILLE (70)

Manley 3-5 1-1 2-2 11, Kitchell 0-1 0-0 0-0 0, Sweeten 0-1 1-1 0-0 3, Klein 0-4 1-2 1-2 4, Benson 0-1 0-0 0-0 0, J. Potts 3-5 1-4 0-0 9, Leighty 0-2 0-0 0-0 0, Kraft 0-1 0-0 0-0 0, Kelly 6-10 0-0 3-5 15, Waldroup 4-6 1-3 9-9 20, N. Potts 3-6 0-0 2-5 8, McCullough 0-0 0-0 0-0 0, McKinney 0-0 0-0 0-0 0, Seed 0-0 0-0 0-0 0, Goings 0-1 0-0 0-0 0, TOTALS 19-43 2FG, 5-11 3FG, 17-23 FT, 70 TP.

Turnovers - OHS 17, LHS 11. Team fouls - OHS 16, LHS 15. Fouled out - Smith. Technical foul - none. Rebounds - (OHS 30) Greathouse 7, Smith 7, Morecraft 6, Hoalt 5, Harder 2, Mendenhall, Legg, Stahnke. (LHS 41) Kelly 11, Waldroup 7, N. Potts 7, Manley 5, Klein 3, Sweeten 2, J. Potts 2, Leighty 2, McCullough, Seed. Steals - (OHS 9) Morecraft 4, Legg 2, Mendenhall, Smith, Greathouse. (LHS 11) J. Potts 3, Manley 2, Klein 2, Waldroup 2, N. Potts, McKinney. Assists - (OHS 8) Smith 4, Mendenhall, Hoalt, Morecraft, Greathouse. (LHS 15) J. Potts 4, Klein 3, Waldroup 3, Manley 2, Kitchell, Sweeten, Kelly. Blocked shots - (OHS 6) Morecraft 4, Greathouse, Stahnke. (LHS 6) Manley 3, N. Potts 2, Kelly.

Next game - Oblong (9-9, 2-1 LIC) will play Hutsonville-Palestine in a consolation bracket game of the Little Illini Conference Tournament tonight at 6:30 in Oblong.