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High school basketball Red Hill falters in LIC loss at Flora

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FLORA - A much-anticipated early season Little Illini Conference showdown between two former North Egypt Conference rivals turned out to be a dud Friday night.

Homestanding Flora, after trailing throughout most of the game, found the answers at the end and handed Red Hill's Salukis a 39-34 setback.

"This was an ugly game on both sides," said Red Hill coach Bryan Havill, after his team fell to 2-2 overall and 0-1 in the LIC. "It wasn't what it was cracked up to be. I don't want to take anything away from Flora, but we just played awful."

Despite trailing 11-8 at the first stop, the Salukis rallied to seize control of the game. Red Hill surged to a 19-14 lead at halftime, thanks to an 11-3 spree in the second period. The Salukis still led after three quarters, 28-25.

The final period, however, belonged to the Wolves (4-2, 1-0 LIC). After Trevor Albertson's two foul shots pushed the Red Hill lead to 30-25, Austin Lewis bagged a 3-pointer to start the Flora run. The Wolves then tied the game, when Bryton Krutsinger turned a Saluki turnover into a layup. Another Lewis 3-pointer, with 4:14 to play, put the Wolves on top for good.

Havill was disappointed in the way his team responded.

"When they took the lead in the fourth quarter, we looked like a young team and we didn't know where to go," he said. "A leader has to be vocal, and we're still searching for someone like that."

Albertson topped Red Hill with 13 points in the loss, while Matt Wirth contributed 10 points and nine rebounds. Robert Young scored seven points off the bench for Red Hill, while Cameron Lewis rounded out the scoring with four points.

Flora sophomore Paul Knapp, averaging more than 20 points per game early in the season, topped the Wolves with 14 points, despite making just 4 of 16 shots. Krutsinger was next for the Wolves with 13 points, while Lewis chipped in with eight.

"Knapp only 14 points, but he missed a lot of open shots he usually knocked down," Havill said. "We have nobody to blame but ourselves. I know Flora has to feel like they didn't play a good game, but they still won."

Although the Salukis shot just 30 percent (13 for 44), Havill was more concerned about the Salukis' 29-23 rebounding deficit.

"We definitely looked like a team that hasn't played ball in a week," he said. "If we don't start rebounding better, we're not going to win a lot of games."

Flora claimed the junior varsity game, 36-26. Logan Blair paced Red Hill with nine points.

The Salukis will travel to Mount Carmel Tuesday, but will be off over the weekend.

Flora 39, Red Hill 34

RED HILL (34)

Albertson (g) 5-12 2-3 13, Wirth (c) 3-8 4-6 10, Young 3-4 1-2 7, Lewis (f) 2-7 0-0 4, Brewer (g) 0-2 0-0 0, Latch (f) 0-1 0-0 0, Jones 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 13-44 7-11 39.

FLORA (39)

Knapp (g) 4-16 4-7 14, Krutsinger (c) 6-10 1-2 13, Lewis (g) 2-7 2-4 8, Greenwood (f) 1-2 0-2 2, Taylor 1-2 0-0 2, Painter (f) 0-8 0-0 0, Bush-King 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 14-45 7-15 39.

3-point field goals: Red Hill 1 (Albertson), Flora 4 (Knapp 2, Lewis 2). Rebounds: Red Hill 23 (Wirth 9), Flora 29 (Painter 8). Turnovers: Red Hill 11, Flora 6. Fouls: Red Hill 13, Flora 13. Fouled out: None.

Red Hill 8 11 9 6 - 34

Flora 11 3 11 14 - 39

Officials: Bill McClain, Greg Mullinax, Matt St. Ledger. Junior varsity: Flora 36, Red Hill 26 (Logan Blair 9).

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