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Sports

Abbeville Survives Emerald

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Abbeville High School boys basketball coach John-Mark Scruggs likely didn't leave Westview Middle School on Friday feeling too good about his team's performance. The Panthers looked out of sync through much of the second half, but thanks to a third quarter run that extended into the fourth, Abbeville managed a 74-66 victory over Emerald in a Region 1-AA meeting.

Emerald fell by 30 to Abbeville on Dec. 20 in the Bearcat Classic semifinals at Lander University, but the Vikings managed to stay with the Panthers much of the game Friday. "Emerald's good and they play hard. They're playing hard, we're playing hard - it's kind of back and forth, back and forth," Scruggs said. "I just wish we could learn how to slow down. We've got some terrific guys to take care of the ball if we ever get some patience."

Abbeville opened the second half with a 13-point lead, 43-30, but the Panthers began turning the ball over and Emerald went on a 6-1 run to pull within eight. At one point during the run, the Panthers miscued on another play on their end of the court and Scruggs called a timeout. Teammates Sammy Head and Quay Watt began arguing with each other over the play and had to be separated by other Abbeville players. Scruggs benched both players the rest of the game. "Boys being boys. I handled it, it's taken care of and it's over with," Scruggs said. "I took care of it right there, and that's all there is to it."

The Panthers quickly regrouped and ended the third period on a 9-0 run that was capped by Jericho Jackson's layup and foul shot that put Abbeville ahead 58-43 with 1.7 seconds on the clock. "Our play in the second half started falling apart and coach (Scruggs) just told us, 'We're a family' and we started getting back together," said Jackson, who had a game-high 25 points.

Abbeville never lost its lead, but with 1:30 left in regulation Ontario Curry hit a 3-pointer from the right corner and moments later hit one of two free throws to pull the Vikings within six points 70-64. Ultimately though, turnovers out of the Panthers' zone defense was Emerald's undoing. "We get down a bunch, we fight back and every time we fought back - we got it down to six in the first half - we'd just make mistake after mistake," Emerald coach Robin Scott said. "Throwing the ball away, tapping rebounds instead of snatching rebounds; but Abbeville's got a good team."

ABBEVILLE (74): Jericho Jackson 25, Jimmy Thackson 5, Gavagio Enwright 15, Sammy Head 8, Michael Jackson 2, Quay Watt 3, Hakeem Power 3, David White 13.

EMERALD (66): Rahmad Strong 8, A.J. Jones 10, Ryan Tracy 5, Dee Parks 16, Ontario Curry 17, Antonio Gray 8, Austin Baten 2.

Abbeville 24 19 15 16 - 74
Emerald 12 18 13 23 - 66

3-point goals – Abbeville 6 (Enwright 3, J. Jackson 2, Head 1); Emerald 1 (Curry 1); Fouled out -- None. Technical fouls – Enwright (Abbeville); Robin Scott (Emerald).

Records: A (11-1 overall, 4-0 Region 1-AA); E (7-11, 0-4).

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