

Yellow Jackets grab lead when it counts

Greg Oshust

Published: December 21, 2008

goshust@mdjonline.com

MARIETTA - Sprayberry trailed Jonesboro through most of their game Saturday in the Southeast Basketball Academy's (SEBA) Hoop Festival. However, the Yellow Jackets had the lead when it most counted - at the end - as they went on to beat the Cardinals, 68-65, in overtime at Cobb County Civic Center.

Jonesboro held a narrow lead over Sprayberry most of the way, but Brandon Grayson's 3-pointer at the buzzer at the end of regulation forced the game into overtime, where the Yellow Jackets went on to clinch the game. "We fought hard through the whole game," Sprayberry coach Marc Carver said. "It was a good win against a tough team."

Grayson and Hubbard scored 14 points apiece, while Duncan Lunsford added 12 points and Jason Gordon had 10 to lead Sprayberry (4-2). Jesse Gardner scored 14 points and Stanley Clark added 14 for Jonesboro (5-4). Sprayberry jumped out to a 9-2 lead, with Gordon scoring on a layup and a jumper after stealing the ball and Myles Carroll nailing a 3-pointer during the run. Jonesboro responded with a 9-2 run of its own to tie the game at 11-all and the Cardinals went on to lead, 15-13, at the end of the first quarter.

Jonesboro increased its lead to 23-13 with 5:34 remaining in the first half and were up, 29-21, with 2:00 left, but Carroll scored on a putback, Lunsford hit a 3-pointer and Gordon made a layup for Sprayberry to cut the Cardinals' lead to 29-28 at halftime.

The second half was a close-fought battle, with Jonesboro holding a narrow lead most of the way. Carver said Jonesboro's superiority on the boards and its strong defensive play gave Sprayberry trouble. "(Jonesboro) was killing us on the boards," Carver said. "They were also using a 3-2 zone and that was giving us a lot of trouble."

Jonesboro appeared to be in solid shape after Gardner made a pair of free throws to increase the Cardinals' lead to 58-55 with 5.8 seconds left in regulation. Grayson, however, threw up a 3-point attempt from deep in the corner and the ball swished through the basket as the buzzer sounded to send the game into overtime and give Sprayberry another chance. "It's good to see Bradley Grayson step up like that," Carver said.

Jonesboro once again held the lead early in the overtime period, but Lunsford's two free throws with 1:06 left gave Sprayberry a 64-63 and the Yellow Jackets led the rest of the way. Sprayberry will play in the Woodstock Invitational Christmas Tournament beginning Saturday.

Copyright 2008, Marietta Daily Journal. All Rights Reserved.