

Warriors win

Fairview beats North Olmsted 54-49

By BRIAN LOVE

With just 26.7 seconds left and holding on to a 4-point lead, Fairview Park Coach Ryan Berry told his team to remain calm during a break in the action.

His Warriors had just seen blazing 3-point shooting of North Olmsted's Miles Ciula, and the sharpshooting senior could expect to see the ball again when play resumed.

Fairview followed the coach's advice and played solid defense, forcing a missed shot before holding on for a 54-49 victory at North Olmsted High School.

"I think they did a heck of a job," Berry said. "Sometimes when you blow a lead in the second quarter of a game, you feel like you're losing. You have to remind them who's in control of the game and who's in the lead. There's no reason to panic."

Following the missed 3-pointer, senior forward Wesley Fletcher, Jr., sank a free throw with just 4.7 seconds left to assure the win. Down the stretch, Fletcher scored 11 of his team's 13 points, including hitting 7 of 9 free throws.

"I give all the credit to Coach Berry," Fletcher said. "He's worked hard with me to improve my game."

"We work hard on free throws every day in practice. We had to make 10 in a row before we can quit."

Fairview (5-4, 21 in the Great Lakes Conference) used two runs to take control of the game. The second one, a 10-0 run, opened the final quarter, changing a 3-point deficit into a 48-41 advantage.

"We don't know how to win," North Olmsted Coach Kyle Johnson said. "We get in situations where we don't value the basketball on the offense. We turn the ball over or defensively we're not locked in for certain spurts. And then I always said it snowballs. They come down and score three, and that three goes from three to 10 real quick."

Fairview opened the game by jumping out to a 13-4 lead before settling in for a 19-9



Wesley Fletcher, Jr. proved to be a factor late in the game, scoring 11 of Fairview's final 13 points. Photo by Sean Faska

advantage at the end of the first half. North Olmsted (3-8, 3-5) had a 14-7 run in the second quarter, holding the Warriors scoreless for five minutes.

"We had the best first quarter of the year, followed by the worst second quarter of the year," Berry said.

"That's part of growth."

Fletcher was the Warriors leading scorer with 17 points, followed by Colin Meany, with 12 and Jacob Rehor with 10. Collin Lucas and Will Allen both added 4, while J.R. Beato and Sal Rizzo each contributed 3. Nolan Davis had 2.

For North Olmsted, Ciulla had 17 points, including five 3-pointers. Kam Swanson

came off the bench for 14 points, followed by Alex Pullin with 8 and Nick Tepper with 4. Both Xavier Balson and Napki Sato had 3 points each.

North Olmsted took the lead going into the final quarter by outscoring the Warriors 11-5 down the stretch.

"We had a pretty good third quarter," Johnson said. "It's just hit or miss sometimes with our guys. I think we came out a little tight early on and I think toward the end I think we got gassed. I think we got a little tired and that'll lead to mental mistakes."

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