Written by Larry Heiing Friday, December 27, 2013 9:18 PM -



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NEW PHILADELPHIA — The St. John's boys basketball team made the long trip east on State Route 30 to Amish country to participate in the first-ever Dover-Phila Credit Union Holiday Shootout.

The Blue Jays made the trip worthwhile as all the varsity players saw action in a 66-39 blowout of Fremont St. Joseph.

The tournament features a total of 14 Catholic schools from across Ohio and one from Pennsylvania, a high school basketball junkie's dream come true with a total of 14 games played over a 2-day span Friday and today.

The field features teams with a long resume of successful programs with a combined 16 state titles, 16 state runner-ups and 59 state semifinalists.

Jays rout Crimson Streaks in holiday tourney

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The Blue Jays lived up to the elite billing with pressure defense. St. John's 1996 graduate Jonathan Will is the head coach of the Crimson Streaks.

"My team doesn't face a whole lot of teams with the pressure defense that Delphos brings. Playing a team with a rich history like St. John's will help prepare us for our league schedule," Will said before the game.

Another St. John's alum, Eric Buettner (Class of 2009), is an assistant coach for Will.

After Marcus Kerr gave St. Joseph the lead after the opening tip, Eric Clark tied the score at two with a 10-foot jumper. Tyler Conley gave the Blue Jays for good with a short jumper inside and they never looked back. Junior Andy Grothouse got going with an offensive rebound of a Ryan Koester miss for the putback. After St. Joe's Hunter Harrison tied the score at six, Grothouse recorded a 3-point play with a driving basket and was fouled. Another junior for St. John's, Alex Odenweller, traded two treys with two short buckets by Harrison. Evan Hays nailed a pull-up jumper to end the first quarter scoring for St. John's. Despite Harrison's eight points in the opening eight minutes, St. Joe's trailed 17-10.

Koester got into the action, opening the second period with a driving bucket from the right side after a score by St. Joseph's Ben Linke. Grothouse kept the St. John's defensive pressure turned up with a steal and nice pass to Conley for the score-and-foul for a 10-point lead. Grothouse drained a 3-pointer, forcing Will to call time. St. John's followed a score by Kerr with an offensive rebound by Conley and assist to Koester for the answer. With the score 27-14, Will called another timeout to try to keep his troops close. Grothouse scored his 13th point of the first half with a layin on the in-bounds play. Hays scored on a miss and put-back for the 19-point lead. Koester finished the half out with another steal, driving the length of the floor for his sixth point of the second quarter. The Blue Jays headed for the locker room with a 35-14 halftime lead.

St. John's coach Aaron Elwer kept his team fired up and focused after the break with more pressure defense. Hays stole a pass and laid it in at the other end. Fremont only shot 33 percent from the charity line for the game and couldn't cut into the large deficit, making only 1-of-3 freebies to open the third. Aaron Hellman drilled the 3-pointer from the corner for a 40-15 Blue Jay lead. Odenweller found the bottom of the basket with an 8-footer between two buckets

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by Fremont. Austin Heiing banked in a short jumper from the left side and Elwer called a timeout to get new faces into the game. Harrison muscled his way to the bucket between three Delphos defenders for two. Grothouse drove for two more and Koester got an offensive rebound and putback for a 49-22 lead. Heiing continued the Blue Jay domination on the glass with an offensive takedown and score. Fremont scored twice to head into the final eight minutes trailing 51-26.

Grothouse and Conley scored to open the period. Elwer called timeout after Fremont scored nine points to cut the deficit to 20 against less intense pressure. After regrouping, the Jays displayed great team play after breaking the Fremont full-court press: Clark hit Conley at half-court, who then passed it to Hays to Grothouse and back to Conley for the streaking layup. Great team worked continued with a steal by Hays and a dish to Grothouse for the lay-up and a 61-38 lead. St. John's went to a spread offense with 2:15 left on the clock. Working the ball around, Hays got a 3-point play with an open 10-footer and was fouled. Jake Csukker was fouled with three seconds left in the game and hit the pair of charity tosses for the final margin.

St. John's had balanced scoring on Friday with Grothouse leading the way with 17 points, Conley had 11, Odenweller 10, Koester chipped in nine and Hays not only had another great defensive game but added eight points.

St. John's made 9-of-15 foul shots and outrebounded Fremont 24-17.

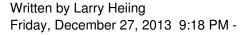
The second game for St. John's at the Shootout will be 1:30 p.m. today against Columbus Bishop Hartley, who defeated Dayton Carroll 46-43 in the first game of the tournament.

St. John's (66)

Andy Grothouse 7-2-17, Evan Hays 3-2-8, Eric Clark 1-0-2, Ben Wrasman 0-0-0, Aaron Hellman 1-0-3, Ryan Koester 4-1-9, Nick Bockey 0-0-0, Alex Odenweller 4-0-10, Tyler Conley 4-3-11, Austin Heijng 2-0-4, Jake Csukker 0-2-2. Totals 27-10-66.

Fremont St. Joseph (39)

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Lucas Michael 1-0-2, Ben Linke 4-2-10, Marcus Kerr 3-0-7, Kyle Velba 2-0-5, Ryan Williams 1-0-2, Hunter Harrison 5-2-12, Cody Sandgross 0-1-1. Totals 16-5-39.

Score by Quarters:

St. John's 17 18 16 15 - 66

FSt. Joseph 10 4 12 13 - 39

Three-point goals: St. John's, Odenweller 2, Grothouse, Hellman; St. Joseph, Kerr, Velba.