

Defenders get road win

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By Jon Gerardi

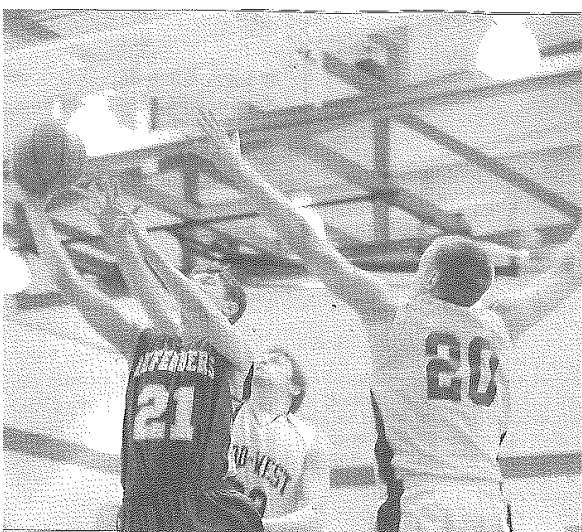
MIDDLEBURG—With Midd-West refusing to go down without a fight, Warrior Run coach Jeff Pealer saw his team go to the foul line numerous times in the fourth quarter. Pealer remembered that last year his Defenders shot roughly 40 percent from the charity stripe, so perhaps hew as thinking that in the back of his mind as each one of his players took their shots.

Those potential worries soon were erased however, as the Defenders made clutch free throws down the stretch to prevent Midd-West from getting closer than it was.

The free throw shooting was big as the Defenders went 8-for-10 from the line in the fourth to escape Midd-West Middle School on Tuesday evening with a 67-56 win in a Heartland Athletic Conference crossover game.

For the Mustangs (3-16, 0-12 HAC-I), it probably left a bitter taste their mouth, as Midd-West is now on a 10-game losing skid.

Warrior Run (7-12, 2-8 HAC II) came out firing from the tip, opening the game on a 7-0 run en route to building an 11-point lead in the final minute of the first quarter. The Mustangs played solid, however, not letting the deficit rattle them as Midd-West battled back and made it a one-point game with 3:17 to play in the first half when Dyllan Folk made a basket to make it 23-22. However, Warrior Run closed the second quarter with a 5-0 spurt to get a six-point lead.



Warrior Run's Zack Miller shoots the ball as Midd-West's Andrew Karchner and Jake Shaffer attempt to defend during the Defenders' 67-56 win over the Mustangs on Tuesday evening.

Warrior Run 67

Midd-West 56



Midd West's Jacob Shaffer shoots the ball as Warrior Run's Zach Burrows attempts to block it in Tuesday night in Middleburg.

Zach Schrader and Ascher Marks both proved to be key for the Mustangs, as both scored a team-high 14 points to keep Midd-West in the game. In the third, the Mustangs cut it down to a 1-point game again, 35-34, when Ryan Kerstetter sank a trey with 4:02 to play. Warrior Run's defense forced two huge turnovers to close the third quarter out, however, as Jared Bender (9 points, 2 assists) converted a steal and layup with 17 seconds to go to make it an eight-point lead for the Defenders.

"The kids were battling. I think the kids played hard today, real hard," Pealer said.

"Any win we get is good."

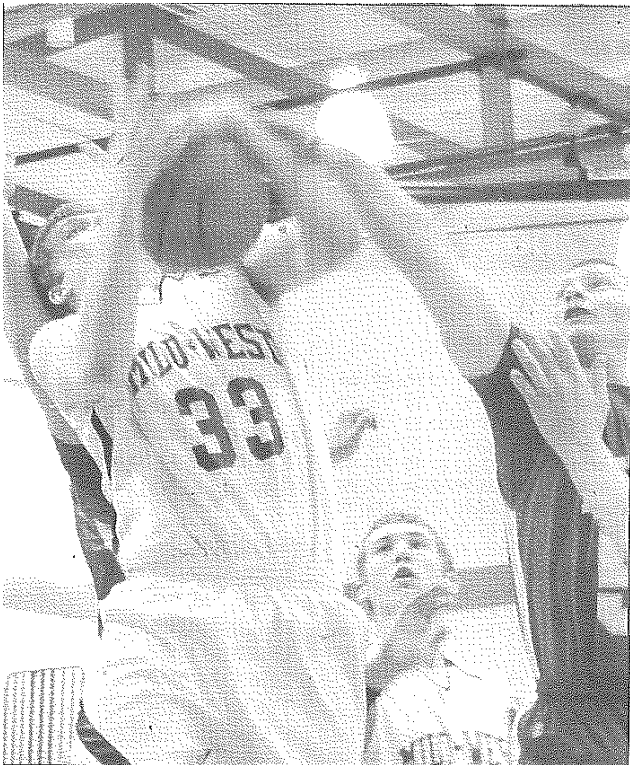
Warrior Run would lead by as many as 11 in the fourth quarter to slowly pull away.

Callen Foresman was nearly impossible for Midd-West to contain, as the senior led the Defenders with 23 points, nearly going for a double-double with eight rebounds. Lance Pealer scored 19 points while Zack Miller added 10. Foresman and Zach Burrows combined for 16 total rebounds as Warrior Run grabbed 31 on the night.

"They hit tough on the boards, all three of them (Burrows, Foresman, Miller) are pretty good on the boards, and they really played hard tonight," Jeff Pealer said.

"When you're winning the inside battle, that's big, and they got a lot of offensive boards included. They're tough. I thought the boys played real well," Pealer added.

Warrior Run faces Mount Carmel in a HCAC-II matchup today.



Warrior Run's Callen Foresman blocks the shot of Midd-West's Andrew Karchner on Tuesday evening in Middleburg.