

Roxana Hoopsgiving Classic Round-Up: Shells Top Defending State Champs; Marquette, Piasa Fall In Final Day Of Pool Play

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ROXANA 36, WATERLOO GIBAULT 34

After briefly trailing 3-2 early on in the first quarter, Roxana senior guard Chris Walleck made a couple of free throws, following those up with the game's first three-pointer as the Shells stormed out to a 12-5 lead over the Class 1A defending state champs Waterloo Gibault Catholic Hawks after the first quarter.

Roxana kept its foot on the gas and led 19-14 at the half and 27-23 after three, but the final quarter was a completely different story.

After Roxana senior forward Aidan Briggs opened the quarter with a quick basket, the Hawks stormed back with a six-point run to tie the game up at 29-29 with 4:30 minutes left in the game.

Then the teams started going blow for blow until the end.

The Hawks regained the lead for the first time since the first quarter after senior guard Kanen Augustine's basket took them ahead 31-29.

Roxana sophomore guard Trenton Hollaway answered right back with a three-pointer, followed by a three from Gibault's junior guard Ryan Biffar, and another one from Roxana sophomore forward Sean Maberry to go ahead 35-34, all within the final 1:30 of the game.

The Hawks had a good chance to go back ahead, but after a mad scramble at the basket, a foul was committed, giving Roxana possession with 6.4 seconds left.

Roxana senior forward Michael Silas sunk a free throw to make it 36-34 with 3.4 seconds left. The Hawks inbounded the ball and got a mid-court shot off, but it was short as the Shells were able to hold on to the win.

"We got one of the best programs in the state of Illinois," Roxana head coach Mark Briggs said of his opposition Wednesday afternoon. "They've got two or three kids back that played a little bit in that state championship team, so we feel pretty good about that. I felt like our defensive effort was tremendous."

Walleck finished the game with a team-high 13 points and three three-pointers. Briggs followed suit with 11 points, Maberry added five, Silas had four, and Hollaway had three.

"I'm proud of our kids," Briggs said. "Michael Silas hit some big shots, Hollaway hit a big three, and Maberry's stepping up. This is a good feeling to beat a quality team like that."

Augustine led the Hawks with 12 points while senior forward Gavin Kesler had 11.

It's the first time the Shells have been in the semifinals in their own tournament since its inception three years ago. Roxana won Pool B, going 2-0, beating Jerseyville in come-from-behind fashion 50-48 on Tuesday.

Roxana will take on the winner of Pool C, the Carbondale Terriers on Friday, Nov. 24 at 6:30 p.m.

Carbondale beat Civic Memorial 48-45 and Pisa Southwestern 69-52 in pool play.



GATEWAY LEGACY CHRISTAIN 66, ALTON MARQUETTE 50

After winning their first game of the season 57-38 over East Alton-Wood River, the Marquette Explorers wrapped up play in Pool D with a game against Gateway Legacy Christian.

The Lions started out hot, going on a 14-0 run to kick open the game, one that the Explorers couldn't respond to.

Marquette's first points of the game came from senior forward Brody Bechtold's three-pointer to make it 14-3 with 2:52 remaining in the first quarter. The Lions went on to lead 17-5 after one.

"A team like that, you can't spot 14 points," Marquette head coach Cody Best said.

“We got up early, shot around early, and tried everything we could, but we came out flat. We couldn’t hit a shot to save our life.”

The Explorers and Lions got stuck with the early game on Wednesday, an unusual 11 a. m. start.

“I could come up with a lot of excuses, but I think that would be number one,” Best said. “They’re definitely not used to playing in the morning. We practice in the morning, but it’s a different animal going against those guys.”

The Explorers came back onto the court with a 9-0 run of their own, getting it to a one-possession game at 17-14, but GLC still led 23-19 at the half.

It was a close game again at 25-22 early on in the third quarter, but in a game that they never once led, the Explorers went on to lose 66-50.

Marquette didn’t have an answer for Gateway Legacy’s junior guard Gabriel Gambria. He led all scorers with 30 points, followed by an 18-point performance from teammate, junior forward Jean Pierre Villegas.

“He’s the real deal,” Best said of Gambria. “Sean Williams, he can guard anybody, but that guy is just on a different level.”

Senior guard Braden Kline led the Explorers with 18 points while senior forward Jaden Rochester had 14. Senior guards Jaylen Cawthorn and Sean Williams each came up with six points.

The Explorers finished 1-1 in Pool D, dropping down to the fifth-place bracket. They will meet the Freeburg Midgets on Friday, Nov. 24 at 2 p.m.



CARBONDALE 69, PIASA SOUTHWESTERN 52

The Piasa Southwestern boys basketball fell to 0-2 on the season after back-to-back losses in Pool C of the Roxana Hoopsgiving Classic.

After a 53-27 loss to Civic Memorial, the Piasa Birds fell to the Carbondale Terriers 69-52 on Wednesday.

Piasa junior center Ian Brantley had a hot start to this game and thanks to him, his team led 7-6 early on. Unfortunately for the Birds, Carbondale rallied back to lead 15-9 after the first quarter and held on to that lead for the remainder of the game.

The Terriers led 36-29 at half and 53-40 after three.

Brantley finished with a game-high 25 points and was the only Piasa Bird in double digits.

For the Terriers, senior DeCarl Payne had 30 points, sophomore Jaxon Marlow-Evans had 18, and senior Levi Teague had 11.

The Piasa Birds drop to the ninth-place bracket where they'll meet Jerseyville on Friday, Nov. 24th at 12:30 p.m.
