

# HIGH SCHOOL

HARRISON 56, RICHMOND 55

## Raiders withstand Red Devils comeback

Dana McBratney  
For the Journal & Courier

Harrison finally was able to hold off a team in the fourth quarter.

The Raiders, who had not won a game on their home floor all season, slipped by Richmond 56-55 in a North Central Conference boys basketball game Friday night at May Gymnasium.

Harrison was coming off a 62-61 last-second loss to Ross-ville last week. This time, when Christian Harvey's 3-pointer bounced off the backboard and in at the buzzer, the Raiders had a big enough lead to walk away winners.

"We just needed to win at home," Harrison guard Jakob Hall said. "We needed to get back on track and winning a close game like this really helps the confidence."

The one-point loss comes on top of a deflating week for Richmond. The Red Devils had to forfeit all their wins due to a clerical error on a player. He was ruled ineligible for those wins but is eligible now. They brought a 0-17 record into the game.

"These are high school kids," Richmond coach Rick Wedlow said. "It was a hard lesson for all of us. It is unfortunate for these kids to have to deal with this situation over a clerical issue. It was resolved in three hours. We will be a better athletic program and better basketball program from this experience."

"I am proud of my kids. They tried and they fought."

Harrison entered the fourth quarter with a 44-40 lead. The Raiders stretched it to 56-50 with 24.6 seconds left. But the inability to hit free throws allowed Richmond to have a chance in

the closing seconds.

Harrison was 1 for 6 from the foul line in the last 24 seconds. Harvey hit a pair of free throws to pull Richmond within 56-52 with 6.7 seconds left. Eliot Champion was fouled a second later but missed both free throws. Richmond got the rebound and Harvey, who had 26 points, was able to make the 3-pointer at the buzzer to make the final 56-55.

"We just have to get better," Harrison coach Mark Rinehart said. "When we have been successful in the conference, we have combined execution and defense. We didn't turn the ball over as much with their pressure and that shows some improvement over the last couple weeks. We were strong with the basketball."

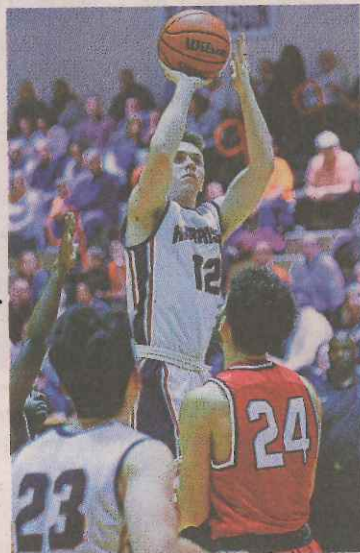
Wedlow agreed with Rinehart's assessment.

"They just out-toughed us tonight," Wedlow said. "To win games on the road, you have to get on the court for loose balls, allow one shot per possession and not allow easy buckets. They were major factors for us not coming out on top."

Richmond, which had not lost to Harrison in three previous outings, got off to a good start and led 15-11 at the end of the first quarter. The Red Devils upped the lead to 20-11 at the start of the second quarter. Then, Harrison switched to a 3-2 zone and the Red Devil offense switched off.

Benito Munoz came in to spark an 11-0 run by the Raiders, putting them on top 22-20 with 4:22 left before halftime.

Munoz, who is known for his 3-point shooting, hurt the Red Devils in the second half with his inside jumper. He tossed in eight



CHAD KROCKOVER/FOR THE J&C  
Harrison's Jack Matthew shoots over Richmond's AJ Ferguson on Friday at Harrison High School.

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points in the second half to help the Raiders maintain their lead.

"I thought Benito came in off the bench and gave us a boost on offense in the second half," Rinehart said. "It is a tribute to him to do that and that gave us a boost. I think that was the difference."

"It was weird for me," said Munoz, who finished with 13 points. "My coach told me you have to sacrifice sometimes to make the team better."

Hall paced Harrison with 16 points and eight rebounds. Jack Mathew added 12.

Trey Griffin had 19 points for Richmond.

CULVER ACADEMY 60, WEST LAFAYETTE 33



SHAUN EDMISTEN/FOR THE JOURNAL & COURIER  
West Lafayette's Nelson Mbongo splits two Culver Academy defenders.

## Red Devils run into 2nd-half buzzsaw

Aaron Martin  
For the Journal & Courier

Spent emotions. Off-court distractions. A seriously good opponent.

On a night that could have become overwhelming, the West Lafayette boys basketball remained focused and hung with Class 3A No. 4 Culver Academy.

For a while.

Thanks to a 16-0 run early in the third quarter, the Eagles erased a brief one-point deficit and pulled away for a 60-33 victory over the Red Devils on Friday night at Berberian Gymnasium.

Culver Academy outscored West Lafayette 37-11 in the second half, including 20-6 during the pivotal third quarter.

"I don't think focus was a problem. We were very focused at the start," West Lafayette coach David Wood said. "It was a buzz-saw in the second half. I didn't think we had the fire that we had to have to play with a good team like that. They're too good a team."

Friday's game came at the end of a tumultuous week for the Red Devils.

The game came just one day after a controversial Op-Ed column written by Wood appeared in the *Journal & Courier*. In his column, Wood was critical of President Donald Trump and voiced what he sees as a disturbing and shameful rise in bigotry and intolerance, both locally and in American culture at large.

The game also came four

days after the team celebrated Wood's 300th career coaching victory with an emotional home win over North Montgomery.

Furthermore, West Lafayette and Culver Academy collectively honored the late Christian Burns prior to Friday's game and played it in his name. Culver, like West Lafayette, has raised significant scholarship money in Burns' honor due to his connection with that school through youth summer camps.

Burns, a multi-sport athlete at West Lafayette, died in a car accident last May.

"There has been a lot going on, but I don't think focus was an issue," West Lafayette senior Charlie Nycz said. "(Wood's column) isn't a distraction for us. We support our coach for backing us. He's standing up for our team and we're proud of that. He's one of us."

Distracted or not, West Lafayette was bound to have a difficult time beating Culver. Almost everyone else has.

Culver Academy has now won 11 times in 12 games this season, with its only loss coming at the hands of Class 4A No. 4 Forth Wayne North. The Eagles also entered Friday's game on a five-game winning streak.

The two teams battled through four ties and four lead changes during a stingy first half, with Culver Academy emerging with a 23-22 halftime lead.

Munson scored 21 points, including six in the fourth quarter that put Guerin up 48-37 with just more than three minutes remaining.

"Those guys are all giants down there. We just fight," Tharp said.

Rather than wilt, the Knights shot their way back into the game again.

Carson Barrett's three-point play was followed by 3s from Page, Tharp and Avery Denhart's triple from the top of the key — CC's ninth 3-pointer — to tie the score with 32 seconds left.

CC almost came away with a steal in the final 10 seconds, but the Eagles recovered and called a timeout, setting up Sills' heroics.

this is another opportunity to demonstrate improvement with the state tournament about a month away.

"It will be fun," Peckinpaugh

KOKOMO 51, LAFAYETTE JEFF 48

## Wildkats' Sparling nails 3 in closing seconds to top Bronchos

Clyde Hughes  
For the Journal & Courier

Kokomo's Ty Sparling knocked down a 3-pointer from the left corner with 1.8 seconds left to lift the Wildkats to a 51-48 boys basketball victory over Lafayette Jeff at the Crawley Center Friday night.

The shot was the conclusion of what seemed to be an improbable loss for the Bronchos (8-8 2-4 North Central Conference), who appeared to be cruising with an 11-point lead (42-31) with seven minutes to go, their second double-digit lead in the contest.

But Sparling, who led all scorers with 24 points, got red hot for the Wildkats (10-6, 3-3), sparking a 16-0 run with two 3-point shots and 11 in the quarter. What also sparked the dramatic fourth-quarter turnaround was Kokomo's full-court press, which resulted in three Jeff turnovers during that stretch.

"We froze up against the press," Jeff coach Scott Radeker said. "It's the same press breaker we've been running for weeks, but we never got to the right spots. We never saw the

ended the run, giving the Wildkats' their largest lead, 47-42, and changing the complexion of the contest.

"We were guarding, percentage-wise, pretty well," said Kokomo coach Matt Moore, who noted that the Wildkats held the Bronchos to 39.1 percent from the field (18 for 46). "I knew if we could clean up our rebounding, I thought our defense would hold strong. It has all year long."

The Bronchos, though, appeared to pick up the pieces and fight back, starting with a James Burns put-back with 3:35 left. Burns flexed his muscle in the paint for Jeff, scoring 10 points and grabbing nine rebounds while blocking four shots.

"I do think we did a good job after they took the lead gathering ourselves and tying it up and executing what we wanted to execute," Radeker said. "James was able to get to the basket and finish, which he hadn't been doing this season. This should give him some confidence for the rest of the season."

David Hanyard, who led the Bronchos with 18 points, made two free throws to trim the Wildkats' lead to one. After Barnard



ERIC SCHLENE/FOR THE J&C  
Bronchos senior David Hanyard drives the lane through Kokomo's Anthony Barnard and Keenen Wheeler on Friday night.

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Go online to see a photo gallery from the game.

out with 12.6 remaining.

"That was a play we just drew up on the fly," Moore said. "We never ran that play before but

## KNIGHTS

Continued from Page 1C

cause they've got five guards on the court," Guerin coach Pete Smith said. "Even though we have good size and can score inside if we don't miss some bunnies, at the same time, they are very hard to guard with our height."

Ben Tharp was 4-of-11 from 3 and led CC with 13 points, but his biggest impact came on the defensive end, where he was tasked with trying to stop 6-7 Jack Hansen. Hansen finished with five points, but 6-6 junior Zach Munson provided the combo down low the Eagles (11-6) needed.

## MAVS

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