

Cardinal comeback falls short

John Bednarowski

Published: December 21, 2008

sportseditor@mdjonline.com

MARIETTA - Chris Brasher scored a team-high 16 points as Etowah survived Osborne's second-half comeback to post a 61-55 victory in the opening game of Southeast Basketball Academy's Atlanta High School Hoop Festival on Saturday at the Cobb County Civic Center.

The Eagles used their size advantage to outrebound the Cardinals, 33-21 - including an 11-5 margin on the offensive end - and neutralize Osborne's quickness. "I thought a second-half switch on the defensive end really helped," Etowah coach Don Hurlburt said. "We were getting tired (trying to press them). When we went to the 2-3 zone, it helped our rebounding." It almost wasn't enough, however.

Trailing by a 46-36 margin heading into the final quarter, Osborne went on a 14-4 run, sparked by nine points from Devonte Thornton, who finished the day with a game-high 30 points. The Cardinals forced 11 of Etowah's 15 second-half turnovers in the first five minutes of the period. Thornton's final basket of the run gave him 20 points and tied the game at 50-all. The Cardinals had two chances to take the lead, but turned the ball over each time down the floor. From that point on, Etowah regained control.

Two baskets from Sam Mueller, a 3-pointer by Austin Miramonti and a layup by Will Mason capped a 9-0 run to push the Eagles' lead back to 59-50 with 50 seconds to play. "(Osborne was) quicker," Hurlburt said. "They get from one end to the other faster than anyone I've seen, but when they came back, it was more our doing than their's.

Etowah took the lead for good on two Reid Webster free throws in the closing seconds of the first quarter. Ahead 24-20, the Eagles went on a 13-5 run to close out the half, capped by Miramonti's 3-pointer just before the buzzer, with a 37-25 lead. The advantage stayed at 12 until Thornton's driving layup to beat the buzzer ending the third quarter, sending the game into the final quarter with Etowah on top, 46-36. Justin Browner scored 13 points and was the only other Cardinal in double figures.

Copyright 2008, Marietta Daily Journal. All Rights Reserved.