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By Theo Lawson of the Tribune | 0 comments

When Matt Whitling overheard the chatter on Logos' team bus Friday, he was vaguely concerned.

And he probably had a right to be - hours before his Knights would give Kendrick a 23-point cushion, rally to score 43 in the second half and come out with an improbable 64-60 win to claim second place at the Idaho 1A Division II District II boys' basketball tournament.

"We're runners, so my guys were talking about their track cleats in the bus on the way to the game tonight," Whitling said. "You know, talking about spring cleats and fall cleats."

Track ... cleats?

"Spikes, their spikes," he corrected himself. "I'm not a track guy."

A basketball coach, actually, and one who worried that his basketball players - many of them members of the Logos track and field team - had already gone into "track mode."

The first half against Kendrick indicated that much.

The Knights carved out an early 10-8 lead, before the Tigers went on a 28-3 run to lead by as many as 23 points in the second quarter. Kendrick's Wyatt Hardin looked to be an unsolvable mismatch for Logos, coasting to 21 first-half points.

The Tigers, behind their 6-6 sophomore, shot 53 percent from the field in the first half, while Logos was held just under 35 percent.

"We had a terrible first half," Whitling said.

But the same Logos group that spent its bus ride talking spring spikes vs. fall spikes, rather than zone D vs. man D, finally reverted back to "basketball mode."

Behind Paul Ryan - a standout distance runner for Logos during the fall and spring - the Knights used a 15-5 run to close the gap to seven at the end of the third quarter. A three-point play from Ryan tied the game at 57-57 and in the final minute of the fourth, the senior gave a glimpse of the stamina that landed him a cross country/track scholarship at Washington State.

Standing at a respectable 6-1, but still dwarfed by Kendrick's tall trees, Ryan set himself up on the low block, not expecting to get the ball. Danny Bradley delivered a pass into his teammate nonetheless.

"I thought it wasn't going to be a good look," Ryan said.

The initial look wasn't. Ryan went up with the ball, but his shot fell off the other side of the rim. Instead of hoofing it down the court to play defense, he snuck around a few Kendrick defenders to come up with the rebound and convert the putback.

"Coach always says to make sure to see it go through the hole," Ryan said.

Ryan and Levi Wintz then made free throws to seal the win.

The Knights will take on Cascade at 2 p.m. PST today at McCall for a play-in game.

The winner of that contest will move on to State.

"I love track, but right now I love basketball more so I had to help the team out, get the W," said Ryan, who skipped out on Logos' first track practice of the season for Friday's game.

He scored 17 second-half points to finish with a team-high 23. Hardin managed just six points in the second half to finish with 27.

KENDRICK (11-14)

Hunter Jones 4 0-0 11, Caleb Olson 3 0-0 6, Blake Marker 3 3-5 9, Wyatt Hardin 11 5-9 27, Brian Lawrence 0 0-0 0, Braden Smith 2 1-2 7, Logan Blair 0 0-0 0, Cody Taylor 0 0-1 0, Billy Candler 0 0-0 0. Totals 23 9-17 60.

LOGOS-MOSCOW (16-6)

Jonny Handel 2 0-0 5, Levi Wintz 6 1-2 13, Paul Ryan 9 5-7 23, Danny Bradley 6 0-0 16, Cotton Whitling 1 0-0 2, Brennon Costello 0 0-0 0, Alec Engerbretson 2 0-0 5. Totals 26 6-9 64.

Kendrick 20 20 10 10-60

Logos 10 11 22 21-64

Three-point goals - Jones 3, Smith 2, Handel, Bradley 4, Engerbretson. Total fouls - Kendrick 12, Logos 15. Fouled out - none.

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