

Jan. 27 Boys Basketball



Bret Stroman tallied 15 points to help Hamilton take an easy victory over West Windsor-Plainsboro-North tonight (Photo by Ken Weingartner)

Quayson coming of age quickly as he helps 'Stars get by Steinert

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

Jan. 27: Quayson Williams was tearing things up at the freshman level, averaging well over 20 points per game for Nottingham.

But the coaching staff wanted Williams, brother of sophomore guard Shaquan Worthy, to pay his dues before moving up.

Since paying them, Williams has ridden an express train through the next two levels.

During his promotion to JV, the 9th-grade guard scored in double figures every game, including 15 in the first half against Robbinsville Tuesday night.

He got promoted to varsity that same night and helped the Northstars to a nice win.

Tonight, Williams took it a step further, teaming with sophomore Kevin Alexis to lead Nottingham to a 51-45 victory over visiting Steinert. The Northstars (6-7) snapped a two-game winning streak by the Spartans (4-10) and won their second straight.

After shooting 0-for-4 in the first half (including 0-for-3 from 3-point range), Williams scored 12 second-half points while Alexis scored nine of his 12 after intermission.

Gerald Alexis chipped in with eight points while Zach Mesday and Jamir Jenkins each had six, with Mesday hitting two clutch free throws in the waning minutes.

But it was the freshman who made the biggest impression with Nottingham still missing two players due to suspension.

"In his first real varsity experience he did a great job against Robbinsville's zone," coach "Irish" Mike Walsh said. "He sees the court extremely well, which is what you want the point guard to do. He's mature beyond his years."

He also enjoys beating his Klockner Road rival.

"This feels good," Williams said. "It's a rivalry. They beat us last year and we had to get it back. We can build a lot from this."

The game was a grind-it-out affair, featuring 10 lead changes and four ties. Steinert rolled to a 16-8 lead early in the second quarter behind James Locklear (22 points) and Jarrett Varanyak (8), but Nottingham was within 18-16 at halftime.

The final lead change came when a 3-pointer by Kevin Alexis gave Nottingham a 36-35 advantage with six minutes remaining Kevin Alexis then came up with a steal that led to a floater in the lane by Williams.

Locklear, who provided a scare when he left in the fourth quarter with a knee injury but later returned, hit a lay-up to make it 38-37 with 4:40 left.

The Northstars then ran over a minute off the clock against Steinert's 3-2 zone before Williams drained a three to make it 41-37.

Ryan LaMarca (8 points) answered with two foul shots to pull Steinert within 41-39, but Quayson Williams drove the lane and dished to Tevin Williams for a lay-up to regain a four-point cushion for Nottingham.

Nottingham then got a huge break. The Stars were whistled for a foul then hit with a technical foul, giving the Spartans four free throws and the ball.

What could have been up to seven points for Steinert became just two when LaMarca's two foul shots were all they got.

Nottingham took advantage, getting a lay-up from Tevin Williams and two foul shots from Quayson with 57.2 seconds left to build a 47-41 lead. Mesday, who had struggled from the line, made two foul shots with 43.3 left to make it 49-42.

Steinert got within 49-45 when Shane Plunkett converted a three-point play, but two more free throws by Kevin Alexis with 20.3 seconds left sealed it.

Walsh was happy with how his team stayed calm down the stretch (outside of the technical).

“I was concerned with our poise and composure, especially against Steinert,” the coach said. “We almost lost it there on the technical foul, I was disappointed in that. We recovered, we were able to run our stuff, we hit our foul shots.”

Walsh’s biggest concern was dumb mistakes on defense.

“I was very happy with our defense,” he said. “Against Hightstown our defense was atrocious. We wanted to re-commit ourselves on defense. We haven’t worked on any offense for a week now.

“We had to have patience on defense. When we’re up I didn’t want us taking chances, overrunning the ball and giving up driving lanes. We kept our man in front of us, made them work and it was a good win.”

A win that saw a freshman in just his second varsity game making tons of big plays at crunch time.

“He played with us all summer, so he got varsity experience then,” Walsh said of Williams. “He went to all our practices and games. He’s a dedicated kid, teachers love him, his grades are good.”

Williams said the summer experience helped.

“I’m already used to this from playing against guys who were like, 17, in the summer,” he said. “I just had to get my intensity up. I didn’t have a choice, I just had to do it.”

There was no doubt in Quayson’s mind he would be on the big team before the season was out.

“I expected to be here the first week, but I had to do what I had to do,” he said. “I had to get everything taken care of, my school work and everything, and then go with basketball.”

And he’s going with it just fine so far.

Stroman, Squire and fast start propels Hamilton West past WW-P North

Hamilton started strong and stayed strong in taking a 59-46 win over visiting West Windsor-Plainsboro North.

The Hornets rolled to a 20-7 lead after one quarter and upped it 33-16 at halftime against the winless Northern Knights (0-15).

Bret Stroman led the Hornets (6-9) with 15 points while Lenwood Squire added 10. Josh Giddens and Brandon George, finally back from injury, added eight apiece while Dan Garcia and Willie Leach (6 each) helped round out a balanced attack.