

## Jan. 3 Boys Basketball – Tough Night



*Hightstown's Chad Preston and Hamilton's Lenwood Squire go up for a rebound during tonight's tight game at the Hornets Nest (Photo by Ken Weingartner).*

### **Lack of depth and consistent execution hurts Nottingham in loss to WWPS**

By Rich Fisher  
Fish4Scores.com

**Jan. 3:** Sometimes "Irish" Mike Walsh sees the positives in losses and sometimes he doesn't.

A glum Walsh did not see many tonight after West Windsor-Plainsboro took a 66-49 victory in the 'Stars Galaxy.

The Pirates (6-1), whose only loss came when they blew a 10-point lead against Rancocas Valley in a holiday tournament, went nine deep throughout the game while the Northstars went no further than seven.

In the first quarter, only five played as two starters were benched for discipline reasons.

“We need more guys to step up in practice so I can put them in the game and sub more,” said Walsh, whose team began to wear down in the second half. “I’m only playing seven.”

The Northstars (2-4) were coming off a win over Hamilton but got into a deep hole at 18-6 and 21-9. When the regular starters returned the “Stars reeled off 11 straight to pull within one, but West Windsor used a blocked shot and three straight steals to produce four layups and regain control at 31-22.

Nottingham trailed by double figures for most of the second half, but still drew praise from WWPS.

“I give Mike and their boys a lot of credit,” Pirates coach Bob Schurtz said. “They’re a scrappy team. They fought back and made it a game and I think it showed a little character on our kids’ part to compose themselves and to go execute and finish the deal.”

“They were tough,” said guard Zavon Johnson, who led all scorers with 17. “They were in our face, but we just executed.”

Which is something Walsh feels his team is not doing enough of.

“If you decide not to execute the plan when the rest of the guys are counting on you to, and you decide you’re not going to for whatever reason, that’s bad,” he said. “We’re too inconsistent with our execution. That happens at the sub-varsity level, maybe we’re going through some growing pains.

“But I told them I’m not saying we’re young anymore. It’s 2012, the sophomores have been on the varsity for a solid year and the juniors have been here for two-and-a-half years, so I’m not saying we’re young.”

Zach Mesday led Nottingham, scoring all 12 of his points in the second half while grabbing eight rebounds. Nabil Jemal had 10 points and six boards.

## **Hamilton falls to Hightstown in another close one**

**By Ken Weingartner**

**Fish4Scores.com**

If Hamilton West, Hightstown and a close game collide, chances are it will tip in the favor of the Rams.

Hightstown won two games within five days over the Hornets last year on last-second lay-ups, and tonight it took a 39-36 win at the Hornets Nest.

Hamilton led 30-25 in the final moments of the third quarter, but Hightstown's Freddie Fitch hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to make it 30-28. The Rams then drained a three to begin the fourth quarter on their way to a 33-30 lead.

“From that three at the end of the third, they went on an 8-0 run,” coach Jason Malloy said. “That’s been our problem all year; we haven’t been able to close out quarters the way I like.

“We closed out the first and second quarters pretty well. He made the shot at the end of the third. We battled back again, but we weren’t able to close that. We start four seniors, but we’re still very inexperienced in terms of the seniors having varsity experience.”

Josh Geddens' basket with 3:50 to go gave Hamilton a 34-33 lead and Lenwood Squire's bucket a minute later made it 36-33.

But, as Malloy noted, the Hornets couldn’t close it out.

James Parrish got Hightstown to within 36-35 on a drive with 1:45 to play and was fouled, but missed the free throw. Hamilton couldn't control the rebound and it went out of bounds to the Rams. Fitch hit a 3-pointer to give Hightstown the lead, 38-36.

Cole Fusik's steal with seven seconds remaining looked to seal the game for the Rams, but Hamilton fouled and Hightstown converted only one free throw, leaving it a one-possession game.

Hamilton called timeout with five seconds to go after the missed free throw. The Hornets got the ball up court for a final shot, but were unable to get a clean look and the attempt came up short.

(Rams coach "Doctor" Don Hess) switched to the zone, which I thought he might," Malloy said. "We wanted to get the ball up court as much as we could on the inbounds pass so we would have more time to attack with the dribble and kick out. We got a shot off – a contested shot – but you can't ask for much more."

Despite dropping to 1-5, Malloy is still optimistic.

"It's going to come," he said. "Hopefully, we learn from these games. Hopefully next time around we'll be able to go four quarters."

### **LaMarca scores 21 but Spartans fall at Robbinsville after long layoff**

Playing its first game in 12 days, Steinert dropped a 59-52 decision at Robbinsville, as the Ravens earned their first win in six games.

Steinert rallied from a 17-12 deficit after one quarter to pull within one at halftime, but Robbinsville slowly added some distance in the second half.

Ryan LaMarca had a game-high 21 for the Spartans (1-3), who return to action Wednesday with a home game against Northern Burlington. Jarrett Varanyak and Devon Smith added 10 apiece. The trio combined for seven 3-pointers.