

Geise leads Jays in win over Big Green

Written by Bob Weber

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OTTOVILLE — Tuesday night, an old rivalry was renewed during the regular season as the Delphos St. John's Blue Jays traveled to the L.W. Heckman Gymnasium to take on the Big Green of Ottoville.

The teams have squared off over the past years in tournament play but with the addition of two extra games on the schedule this year, both teams were able to find a spot in their schedules to play against each other.

The game was a very low-scoring and defensive struggle for most of the night but the Jays outscored the Big Green 23-15 in the second half to come away with a 48-33 non-league win.

The first quarter found both teams struggling to find their shooting touch as the Jays went 0-6 from behind the arc but still struggled to a 1-point lead at the quarter break.

Seniors Curtis Geise (5 points) and Ryan Buescher (4 points), highlighted by a steal and a breakaway dunk at the 3:55 mark, led the Jays.

The Big Green was led by junior Luke Schimmoeller's four points for the period.

The second quarter started strong for the home team as Schimmoeller connected on a long-range three from the left side, giving the Big Green an 11-9 lead. The quarter was a see-saw back and forth, with both teams' shooting still very cold and the turnovers piling up for both squads. The last 30 seconds of the half saw both teams exchange turnovers on player-control fouls. With 14 seconds to go, the Jays ran an excellent play that left junior Ryan Koester open from the right side and he buried the 3-point shot, giving the Jays a 7-point lead heading into the locker room, 25-18.

Big Green head coach Todd Turnwald knows the importance of every possession for his squad: "It's been the same story the last three games. It's not a lack of trying out there; it's more a lack of execution at crunch time when we really need it. It's frustrating because when we do execute, we get easy baskets and we just can't consistently do that for long periods."

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In the third, both teams continued to struggle offensively but the Jays edged a little further ahead by outscoring the Big Green 10-8 in the stanza and leading 35-26 going into the fourth quarter. The Jays received a spark off the bench in sophomore Tyler Conley's three points in the quarter, helping head coach Aaron Elwer overcome some foul trouble amongst his starters. The Big Green used a strong scoring quarter from senior Ryan Honigford as he chipped in six of his team's eight points of the period.

For the third straight game, the Big Green was faced with a fourth-quarter deficit in which they needed to foul to get back into the game. The story remained the same as the previous two chapters, as the Jays used clutch foul shooting down the stretch to extend their lead and come away with a 48-33 win over the Big Green.

Geise was 10-12, Conley 3-3 and senior Seth Bockey, junior Eric Clark and sophomore Evan Hays all 2-2 from the stripe. As a team, the Jays made 20-24 (83.3%) from the stripe.

Coach Elwer continues to see a trend in his team's shooting but was relieved to get the win over a well-coached and hard-working Ottoville team: "It's been kind of a trend for us this year; for the first three games, we've not shot the ball well from the perimeter. We continue to talk about not just settling for the outside jumper but to look to become more balanced inside-outside. We've got some young guys seeing their first varsity experience and we need to work through that and nights like tonight from the field. It was good we made some free throws to help. Our offense is behind our defense right now, which is not unusual for the beginning of the year, but we just hope will get over that curve and gain some confidence and start making some shots."

Coach Turnwald has seen this same scene play out too many times this year: "In the game tonight with Delphos, the Geise kid is a player. I really thought we made him work for his shots tonight but he's a senior and he's pretty good. Clutch foul shooting - that's what good and well-coached teams do. As far as our half-court defense, we were good for three and a half quarters but when we're down six, we can never get it down to 4 or 2. It always goes to 6 to 10, then that's where the fouls come in."

The Jays (2-1) were led by fourth-year letterwinning senior Geise with 21 points for the game.

Elwer knows it's nice to have that senior leadership in Geise: "Curt has been through a lot; he's been here four years. He's like a security blanket; you feel good that Curt has seen almost every defense thrown at him and he accepts the challenge and is a great ballhandler in the late minutes of a game. He's strong and a good free-throw shooter, as evidenced in tonight's game, and has been there before."

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The Jays will be back in action Friday night as they open their Midwest Athletic Conference schedule with a home game against Fort Recovery for a 6:30 JV start.

The Big Green (1-3) had two players in double figures as (Luke) Schimmoeller and (Derek) Schimmoeller had 11 and 10 points, respectively, for the hosts. Luke Schimmoeller added seven boards. The Big Green will next play Friday night as they travel to Fort Jennings for a 6 p.m. JV start.

The JV game had to be cancelled this night due to an injured player on Ottoville's squad which only left 10 players for the Big Green.

VARSITY

St. John's (48)

Ryan Buescher 3-0-1-7, Eric Clark 0-0-2-2, Ryan Koester 1-1-0-5, Curtis Geise 4-1-10-21, Seth Bockey 0-0-2-2, Andy Grothouse 1-0-0-2, Tyler Conley 1-0-3-5, Evan Hays 1-0-2-4. Totals 11-2-20/24-48.

Ottoville (41)

Derek Schimmoeller 2-1-3-10, Ryan Honigford 3-0-0-6, Luke Schimmoeller 2-1-4-11, Cory Fischer 0-0-0-0, Brandt Landin 2-0-2-6, Tyler Roby 0-0-0-0, Austin Honigford 0-0-0-0. Totals 9-2-9/15-33.

Score by Quarters:

St. John's	9	16	10	13	—	48
Ottoville	8	10	8	7	—	33