

Hornets sting Carver in matchup of past greats

Durham Hillside survives Yellowjackets' last-minute comeback with great play inside from Rogers

By RANDY PETTITT
Chronicle Sports Editor

It is rare when two schools with traditionally rich black heritages get to play each other these days. But a series between Carver and Durham Hillside High Schools was reminiscent of how neighborhood rivals used to go at one another some twenty years ago.

The Yellowjackets lost to Durham early this season and played host to the Fighting Hornets last Thursday night. Hillside was anything but polite guests, though, as they flexed their muscle inside and held on for a 67-63 victory.

Hillside's head coach, Michael Cherry, said he thought it was good for the two schools to renew some old ties.

"I think it's nice for two schools with such great black heritages to get together," he said. "We hope to keep it going. Not that many schools have the kind of great athletic traditions that these two do."

Carver's Alfred Poe agreed. "This is a good series," he said. "Both schools have a lot of tradition and tremendous talent."

Hillside gave the crowd at Carver's gymnasium a glance at the future by unleashing sophomore center Rodney Rogers. The 6-6 Rogers finished with 22 points and killed the much smaller Jackets on the inside.

According to Cherry, it was just an average performance from his big man.

"He's had a lot better nights," said Cherry. "We really expected a little more out of him considering Carver's lack of size, but they shut him down for a good stretch of the second half. He's just a sophomore, so we can't be too hard on him."

Poe said Rogers was one of

the best big men his team has faced -- including Glenn's Kevin Thompson and Bryant Foggins.

"He's well built," said Poe of Rogers. "The kid is 220 pounds and can put the ball in the hole real well for a sophomore."

"He's probably one of the best we'll see this year. A couple of times we didn't get weakside help and he just killed us. Their guards threw some good passes in there and he knew what to do with them."

Close, But No Cigar

Despite playing sluggishly throughout the entire game, Carver still managed to put themselves in position to win. The Yellowjackets trailed 61-51 when they made their move.

Tory Joyner, Carver's sopho-

rim, however, and Anglin hauled in the miss.

Though the Yellowjackets' Sam Puryear came up with two defensive gems in the final moments, Hillside put the game away by connecting on three opportunities at the free throw line.

Rogers' 22 points paced the Hornets, while James Hester added 16 and Kevin Green had 10.

Robert Scales was the high man for the Yellowjackets with 19 points, while 6-5 Fred Johnson added 12.

Cherry thought had Joyner's layup rolled in, the outcome could've been different.

"I'd say it would've made things interesting," said Cherry. "It seemed to shift the momentum just a bit when he missed and that was what we needed."

"He's as good as anyone we've faced. He's big, strong and knows what to do with the ball once he gets it."

-- Alfred Poe on Hillside's 6-6 center, Rodney Rogers

more guard who finished with 15 points in the loss, began the comeback by nailing a layup and stealing Hillside's next possession to cut the margin to 61-55.

The Hornets then turned the ball over on a traveling call and Chris Parks' wing jumper shrank the Hillside lead to four with 2:27 left in the game. Another Hornet miscue -- a lane violation -- resulted in a driving layup by Fred Johnson and a 61-59 contest with 1:49 remaining.

Joyner then made a play that appeared to break the Hornets' back. He outraced Hillside's Chris Anglin for an errant pass and drove the length of the court. His right-handed layup rolled off the

Poe said he couldn't pin the loss on any one player.

"They all played poorly at one time or another," he said.

"Tory is just a sophomore and he's going to be a great ballplayer. That could've been a big play, but it just didn't go in. We can only wonder what would've happened."

Poe was not consoled in the fact that his team nearly pulled off the win despite playing so poorly.

"Closeness only counts in horseshoes," reminded Poe.

Carver was even with Durham after the first quarter, but scored only six points in the second quarter to trail 30-24 at the half.

"We messed around and looked like a graveyard out there

most of the game. Then the last four or five minutes we suddenly decided we wanted to win the ballgame."

Cherry said Carver's guards brought them back in the game.

"Their guards killed us," said Cherry, who is in his second year as the Hornets' mentor. "They created a couple of steals and boom -- they were right back in it."

"I thought we played well most of the ballgame, but we could never quite put them away. It was the same thing the last time we played them. They have an excellent basketball team."

Despite the loss, Poe did like a few things he saw.

"As bad as we played, we were never down by more than 10," he said.

"I thought Chris Parks had a nice game and Roscoe Wilkins did a good job coming off the bench for us."

"It's a little disheartening, though, we've played pretty well our last couple of ballgames. This one reminds me of how we played early this season. We made some mistakes that are first game type errors. We shouldn't be doing that in our eleventh ballgame."

He said despite the setback, the 5-6 Yellowjackets hope to improve in time for Metro conference action.

"It's not that far away," said Poe. "We can't play like we did tonight -- that's for sure. The key for us is to get more production out of Fred Johnson."

"We feel like if we're going to beat the better teams on our schedule, then we must get it inside more often. We have to get some consistency in there."

"Fred can play, but he's on one minute and off the next. We need him to be a consistent scorer in the middle. If we can do that, then we might be okay."

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Jacket J.V.'s top Hillside From Page B1

Hargrove led all scorers with 17 points for the Jackets, while Piggott chimed in with an 11-point performance -- all of them in the second half.

Carver surprisingly outbounded the larger Hornets, 27-17. The Yellowjackets also forced 40 turnovers while only committing 18 themselves.

"We were a little sloppy at first," said Starbuck. "But once the game settled down, I was more than pleased. People usually hurt us on the boards because of our small lineup."

"Apparently we did a good job of boxing out. We're so small that we have to do that to stay in the game."

Starbuck said the philosophy of his team is much like a settled down version of a pickup game.

"We like to push it up the floor every chance we get," he said. "We have a lot of quickness on this team and we have to utilize it by running."

"It's like a very well organized pickup game you might say."

Coach's Son Shines

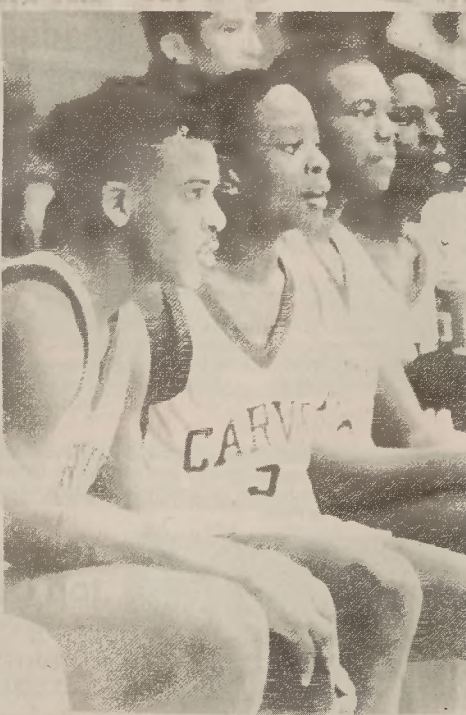
Danny Piggott did nothing to disprove the old notion that coach's sons usually make terrific ballplayers. His splendid second half was a big key in helping Carver put the game away.

The sophomore guard who is the son of Mount Tabor assistant principal and former coach, Daniel Piggott, is also a big reason why the Jackets run the fast break better than a lot of varsity teams.

Starbuck says when Piggott goes, then so goes the Yellowjackets. "I'd leave him in there if he never scored a point," said Starbuck. "He runs my ballclub -- period."

"There are a lot of cliches about being a coach's son, but I think it has definitely helped Danny. He makes some awfully good decisions to be just a sophomore. He's a smart kid and a terrific basketball player."

Carver principal, Robert Clemmer, said Piggott is a model student. "This is a very fine group of kids we have and Danny is one of the best of the lot," said Clemmer. "He is an excellent student and a



Junior Hargrove, Danny Piggott, Marlon Brim and Charles Forward watch as Carver coasts to another win (photo by Randy Pettitt).

great player for us."

Piggott himself admits that the influence of his father has helped.

"I know what to do in tight situations," said Piggott. "I've listened to my dad talk about some of his games and games on television. He's always telling me what to do in certain situations. That is a big help."

He said he feels no added pressure despite being the son of a coach.

"I guess some people expect me to be good or whatever," he said. "But I don't worry about it very much. There's no pressure or anything."

"My mom and dad are very sup-

portive. My mom pushes me the most. She makes sure I'm doing well in school first."

Alfred Poe, the head coach of the varsity boys team at Carver, said Piggott could be one of several members off the jayvee team to help his team.

"Some of those kids are going to help us a great deal," said Poe.

"Greg Starbuck and Tim Douthit (both former players for Poe when Carver was a 9-10 school) have done a tremendous job with these kids. They are playing with confidence and believe in what they are doing."

"They are really a pretty tough bunch of kids."

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