

CIAA

HIGHLIGHTS

Spartans junior varsity off to quick start

By SAM DAVIS
THE CHRONICLE Sports Editor

Despite a slow start to the 1997-98 pre-season due to the school's participation in the State 4-A playoffs, Mount Tabor's jayvee basketball team is rolling along.

The Spartans came back from an eight-point deficit to take a 68-56 victory over Carver last Friday at Mount Tabor.

The Spartans trailed 49-41 going into the final quarter, but outscored Carver 27-7 to take the victory.

Coach Dennis Ring said the team didn't play its best, but came through when it needed to to get the win.

"We played pretty well," Ring said. "We had a pretty good fourth quarter."

The Spartans started the season with a 76-72 loss to North Forsyth. But in that game several of the team members had only been in practice for two days. Mount Tabor had several players step up to make that game close. John Land scored 28 points and Joel Justus scored 20. Since then the team has reeled off four consecutive wins.

"To be 4-1 at this point isn't bad," Ring said. "North Forsyth has a real good team. We've won more games now than I thought we'd have won at this point."

"We don't have any players back from last year's team," Ring added. "We have four or five from the ninth grade team and that's really helped us. We have a of players that are learning the plays."



Dennis Ring

Land, Justus, Sidney Minter and Derrick Webster have been the team's most reliable players. All of them were on the ninth grade team last year.

The trio of Land, Justus and Minter have been the team's scoring leaders thus far.

The three combined for 34 points in the team's first win of the season, a 52-48 victory over Greensboro Smith. Land led the way with 13, followed by Justus with 12 and Minter with nine. They continued their scoring leadership in a 75-49 win over Parkland. Justus led the way in that game with 21 points, Land added

15 and Minter chipped in with 14. And in their 76-64 win over Bishop McGuinness, Minter had a team-high 18, Justus added 16 and Land tallied 12.

Against Carver, Minter scored 21 points to lead the Spartans. Justus had 11 and Land added 10.

In addition to the experienced players, the Spartans have been boosted by the play of several newcomers. Anthony Scott has given the team a solid inside scorer. He had 12 points against Carver and added 16 against McGuinness.

Another spark for the Spartans has been the play of Aaron Salley on the defensive end of the court.

"Aaron is really the key out there," Ring said. "He doesn't score many points out there, but he's a key piece to the puzzle. He's not a zone-type player. But when the game becomes man-to-man, he's a factor even if he doesn't score one point. When he's in the game someone's going to have a tough time scoring points."

Ring said his team has a lot going for it, but it will be difficult to duplicate last season's success. The Spartans were 20-3 last season and captured the Central Piedmont 4-A Conference championship. It was the team's fourth consecutive season winning the title outright or sharing it.

"We've shown some good signs," Ring said. "But we've also shown some bad signs. It's going to be hard to live up to that success."



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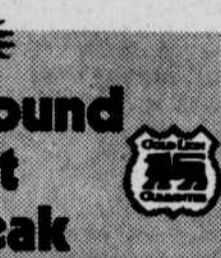
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