

Butler Eagle

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Getting Offensive

Butler, SV pile up points as Tornado get win

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🕒 February 6, 2019 📁 High School Basketball 🗨️



Butler guard Ethan Morton soars over Seneca Valley's Brendan Koken during the Golden Tornado's 86-81 win over the Raiders. Morton scored 44 points and is one point shy of the school career scoring record.

NATE BLACK/ SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

BUTLER TWP — Like offense?

You would have loved spending Tuesday night in the Butler High School gym.

Six players scored in double figures, the teams combined to shoot 61 percent from the field, 80 percent at the foul line and sink 16 3-pointers in the Golden Tornado's 86-81 Section 1-6A boys basketball win over Seneca Valley.

"Not a whole lot of 'D,' I guess, but if you like offense ... yeah, it was a great game," Butler coach Matt Clement said.

And at the head of it, as usual, was Ethan Morton.

Butler's junior guard struck for 44 points, eight assists and seven rebounds. He sank 13 of 17 shots from the floor, 16 of 18 from the free throw line. He now has 1,465 career points, one shy of Shawn Bellis' school-record of 1,466.

Morton missed a free throw with 1.2 seconds remaining that would have tied the record.

"I guess I'm saving that for Friday night," Morton said, grinning.

The Tornado (15-4, 8-2) host Obama Academy in a non-section game Friday.

"Winning is always important to me, first and foremost, but yeah, it (scoring record) means a lot to me," Morton said. "It's because of the kind of player Shawn Bellis was.

"He was a winner. His teams won championships. I can't match him in that regard."

Bellis graduated in 1994 and was a high school teammate of Clement's.

"Shawn's record deserves to stand as long as it has. And Ethan deserves to break it," Clement said. "But that kid would gladly give the record back in exchange for a section, WPIAL or state championship.

"That is the absolute truth. That's just who he is."

Butler overcame a five-point deficit entering the fourth quarter to win Tuesday. Morton scored 14 of the Tornado's 27 points in the final quarter. Mason Montag came off the bench to score 12 points for Butler, nine in the fourth quarter.

"Mason hit some huge shots," Clement said. "Ethan did a good job of reading this game. They (Seneca Valley) came out and took away Mattix (Clement) and Devin Carney because those two hurt them last time.

"Mason and Luke (Patten) have had huge games hitting 3s, too, and they were open tonight."

Montag said he's felt more confident shooting the ball of late.

"I hit more shots when I don't think about it than when I do think about it," Montag said.

"Everything's just feeling more natural now."

Patten hit a pair of treys and scored nine points. Carney scored nine points and had four assists.

The score was tied six times and the lead changed hands on 13 occasions. A trey by the Raiders' Mason Bush knotted the game at 74 with 3:38 to play. Morton hit a pair of free throws 19 seconds later to give Butler the lead it never lost.

Neither team ever led by more than seven points.

"We don't believe in moral victories, but our kids know they became a better basketball team tonight," SV coach Kevin Trost said. "They can leave this gym with their heads held high in that regard.

"This game played out the way we wanted it to. They just made a few more plays than we did down the stretch. We knew we couldn't stop Morton, but some of their other guys stepped up and made some big plays."

The Raiders (9-10, 4-6) finish in fourth place in Section 1-6A, qualifying for the WPIAL playoffs.

"I wouldn't want to see any team in our section (in postseason), including them," Clement said of Seneca Valley. "They are a very good basketball team."

Butler extended its lead to 80-74 on a three-point play by Morton with 1:35 left. Gabe Lawson countered with consecutive layups for the Raiders And a free throw by Bush pulled SV within 81-79 with 48 seconds left.

Morton hit three free throws and Patten two in the final 30 seconds to secure the Tornado win.

Marcus Might scored 22 points, had seven rebounds and three assists for the Raiders. Bush had 19 points and four assists, Zac Zajacs 18 points and seven assists, Lawson 12 points and eight assists.

Lawson fouled out with 30 seconds to play.

"We tried to extend their zone and find Marcus down low," Trost said. "Gabe made a lot of great passes in there to him."

Clement agreed.

"Teams don't usually have an inside presence like that," the Butler coach said. "Their big guy hurt us tonight and Lawson's passes were outstanding.

"This was a hard-fought game, a good team win."

SENECA VALLEY 81

Tre Russell 1-2 0-1 2, Gabe Lawson 4-5 4-4 12, Trey Berringer 3-4 0-0 8, Brendan Koken 0-1 0-0 0, Marcus Might 10-11 2-3 22, Mason Bush 7-13, 4-5 19, Zac Zajacs 6-11 2-2 18. Totals: 31-47 12-16 81.

BUTLER 86

Devin Carney 2-8 4-4 9, Mattix Clement 1-3 2-2 5, Luke Patten 2-6 4-4 9, Ethan Morton 13-17 16-18 44, Isaiah Scribner 1-1 0-0 2, Colby Anderson 1-2 0-0 3, Charlie Kreinbucher 1-1 0-0 2, Mason Montag 4-6 1-2 12. Totals: 25-45 27-30 86.

Seneca Valley 21 19 24 17 – 81

Butler 17 24 18 27 – 86

3-point goals: Berringer 2, Bush, Zajacs 4; Clement, Patten 2, Morton, Anderson, Montag 3, Carney

JV: Seneca Valley, 61-44 (SV: Cole Brooks 11, Connor Lyczek 10, Ethan West 10; B: Raine Gratzmiller 18, Anthony Malloy 9)

Friday: Obama Academy at Butler

Saturday: Blackhawk at Seneca Valley



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I graduated with a Journalism degree from Ohio University in 1979. I started at the Eagle on August 24, 1997. My awards include 2nd place in feature writing from Ohio Associated Press (while working for the Steubenville Herald-Star), media award from Lernerville Speedway and 3rd place in a Pennsylvania AP contest for story feature.