

Bouncing Back

Derek Pyda

© January 14, 2022 Last Updated: January 14, 2022 11:02 PM  High School

Seneca Valley basketball continues surge with critical 70-64 victory over Butler

JACKSON TWP – At the start of the week, Seneca Valley's boys basketball team was facing the prospect of being buried in the incredibly tough Section 1-6A.

SV began the season 0-4 in section play and had North Allegheny and Butler looming on the schedule.

A pair of wins, however, have pushed the Raiders into the thick of the hunt for a WPIAL playoff spot.

First came a 63-61 win Tuesday against North Allegheny, earned with a late 3-pointer on the Tigers' home floor.

Friday night, SV outscored the Golden Tornado 22-13 in the final quarter to pull out a 70-64 win at William Paul Gymnasium.

"I really felt we needed to win these games to stay in the mix," SV coach Kevin Trost said. "We had more time off (after Christmas) than most teams and really focused on defense and rebounding in practice. We've really improved in those two areas."

The Raiders (6-6, 2-4) trailed Butler 51-48 entering the fourth period, but Beaux Lizewski's two free throws with 5:06 remaining gave SV the lead for good at 59-58.

Ten of SV's 22 points in the quarter came from the line. Butler made just two attempts from the stripe in the final eight minutes.

“That was the difference in the game,” said Butler coach Matt Clement. “We felt pretty good about our foul situation at halftime, but Seneca got to the bonus quicker than we did.”

Senior point guard Caiden Oros led the way for the Raiders, scoring 23 points.

“Eleven of those came in the first quarter,” said Trost. “Caiden is a scoring point guard, can get into the paint, but also does a good job of getting the ball to the other guys. He’s driving us right now.”

Oros, whose right ankle was wrapped in ice after he injured it late in Friday’s game, was one of SV’s top players off the bench last year and is relishing the expanded role. His latest effort included four treys.

“It feels good,” he said of contributing to the team. “When I start hitting shots, I feel like I can make anything.”

Raine Gratzmiller paced Butler with 22 points. Devin Carney added 14 and Madden Clement 13.

“We had all the open looks we wanted tonight, just didn’t make the shots,” Matt Clement said. “As a team we need to make more than we did.”

Butler (8-4, 2-4) held a 37-32 lead late in the second quarter before Oros drained a trey at the buzzer to cut his team’s deficit to two points.

Luke Lawson added 16 points to SV’s winning effort.

“We got a late start compared to a lot of teams because we have a lot of multi-sport guys,” Oros said. “I think we’re starting to jell.”

BUTLER 64

Braylon Littlejohn 4 0-0 9, Raine Gratzmiller 8 3-7 22, Devin Carney 4 3-3 14, Madden Clement 5 1-1 13, Colin Patterson 1 0-0 2, Charlie Kreinbacher 1 0-0 2, Ryan Porch 1 0-0 2, Kaleb Proudfoot 0 0-0 0. Totals: 24 7--11 64.

SENECA VALLEY 70

Aiden Lyczek 2 0-0 4, Connor Oros 1 2-2 5, Luke Lawson 7 1-2 16, Beaux Lizewski 0 2-2 2, Jameson Grieco 3 1-2 9, Jackson Wetzel 1 0-0 3, Andrew Roy 2 3-4 8, Caiden Oros 8 3-6 23. Totals: 24 12-18 70.

Butler 14 23 14 13 – 64

Seneca Valley 17 18 13 22 – 70

3-point goals: Butler 9 (Gratzmiller 3, Carney 3, Clement 2, Littlejohn); Seneca Valley 10 (Ca. Oros 4, Grieco 2, Lawson, Co. Oros, Wetzel, Roy).