

POSTED ON FEBRUARY 10, 2021 BY PORTSMOUTH DAILY TIMES

Falcons' fury: Minford scores season-high, bests Tigers

SPORTS

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Minford senior Elijah Vogelsong-Lewis (3) defends New Boston junior Grady Jackson (2) during the Falcons' 92-85 win over the Tigers in boys non-league play on Tuesday night.

Below:

New Boston sophomore Brady Voiers scored three first-quarter field goals during the Tigers' home contest versus Minford on Tuesday night.





Minford coach Josh Shoemaker draws up a play during a first-half timeout in the Falcons' 92-85 win over New Boston in non-league play on Tuesday night.

NEW BOSTON — As they've shown tendency to do, the Minford Falcons executed a furious offensive performance on Tuesday night.

In posting a season-high 92 points and shooting 63-percent from the field, the visiting Falcons were in fact mighty in their 92-85 road win over New Boston in non-league play.

The first half combined for 82 points at a 41-all tie, but the second half proved to be even more fiery.

Minford outscored New Boston 51-44 in the second 16 minute, becoming the first Scioto County club to defeat the Division IV state-ranked Tigers since South Webster — in NB's second game of the 2018-19 season.

As for the pace and points, Falcons coach Josh Shoemaker said after the win that his team's gameplan was to play right into the speed and pace NB's pressure typically dictates.

"We wanted to set a fast pace and run the entire game," Shoemaker said. "Our kids executed our gameplan perfectly by pushing the ball in transition and against their press."

Minford grew its lead to as large as 17 points at 71-54, but New Boston hardly laid down.

Instead, the Tigers posted a game-best 34 points in the fourth quarter — cutting their deficit to as few as five in the waning seconds.

The Falcons' offensive barrage — including the 60-plus percent mark from the field and a game-best 11 made threes — made it clear early they were on their game, Tigers coach Adam Cox said afterwards.

"Minford came to play tonight. Shot 63-percent for the game and hit 11 3s. They were hot and I give our kids credit — they laid it on the line down 17 and battled back to within five and scored 34 points in the fourth quarter alone," Cox said. "They (Minford) are a good Division III team and they played like it tonight. Hats off to (Elijah) Vogelsong-Lewis, he played lights out."

Both teams' all-district returnees were simply the stars — in one of the more highly-anticipated non-league games this season.

Minford senior Elijah Vogelsong-Lewis scored a career-high 38 points in the win, including 28 of the Falcons' 51 points in the second half.

In total, four Falcons reached double figures — Trenton Zimmerman had 18 with 12 coming in the first half, Skyler Knore scored 11 including a pair of third-quarter triples as they made their run, and Matthew Risner scored eight of his 10 in the second half.

Sophomore Adam Crank nearly reached double figures, splashing in a trio of second-quarter triples to help keep momentum in Minford's favor during the last stretch of the first half.

"Elijah (Vogelsong-Lewis) had a career game and completely dominated on the offensive and defensive ends of the floor," Shoemaker said. "He was laser-focused before the game. He is a perfect example of a senior that gives you his all and plays to win. Adam Crank had 22 points last night (Monday night) against Southeastern and continued his hot shooting today. We were struggling offensively in the second quarter and he stepped up and kept us at pace."

New Boston senior Kyle Sexton led the Tigers with a team-high 34 points, 22 of which came in the second half — as they made their comeback attempt.

Junior Grady Jackson scored 17 points with each of his four made field goals — coming on a trio of fourth period three-pointers and a two.

De'Von Jones added 16 and Tanner Voiers scored 10 as each of NB's four scorers who reached double figures.

In the third period, when Minford outscored New Boston 23-10, the Falcons limited the Tigers' offensive production to four made field goals by Sexton and a pair of FTs by Jackson.

That stark contrast in scoring as opposed to the rest of the game was a result of different looks the Falcons gave the Tigers on the defensive end coming out of halftime, Shoemaker said.

"At halftime, we made adjustments to tighten up our interior defense and push the ball more on offense and our guys executed it to perfection. We threw a ton of different looks at them in our match-up zone all game," Shoemaker said. "Our kids communicated great on defense and executed our gameplan to win. New Boston has so many offensive weapons and when we really focused on Sexton and Voiers, it was Jones and Jackson hitting shot after shot. (Skyler) Knore, (Matthew) Risner and (Trenton) Zimmerman really rotated well and Elijah had four steals in the second half with three of them leading to layups to extend our lead."

Although it was a home loss — their first since falling to Eastern in Southern Ohio Conference Division I play at the tail end of the '18-19 season — Cox believes the Tigers stand to gain more than they have in many results.

"We needed to be battled-tested and I bet we get more from this loss than we have a lot of wins," Cox said. "Great high school game at a very fast pace."

The Tigers will conclude their regular season with three home league games versus Symmes Valley, Ironton St. Joseph and Green — already having clinched the SOC I championship for the second straight season.

As for the Falcons, their hoping this result — now their third straight win and third win in four days as a result of prior postponements — can help buoy their chances in their upcoming Division III postseason tournament run.

Once they complete games against Northwest and Eastern to finish their regular-season slate, they'll welcome Crooksville to Muletown on Monday, Feb. 22 for a Division III sectional semifinal.

A win there would put them back into the sectional finals versus the winner of No. 8-seed North Adams and Nelsonville-York.

Just prior to the tournament seeding release on Sunday, the No. 9-seeded Falcons edged the Green Devils in a 59-57 double overtime thriller on their home court — as somewhat of a precursor to their possible upcoming postseason rematch.

“We had a tough loss on Friday. We had to turn around and play North Adams (12-5) the very next night. We had a team meeting in the afternoon to focus on the rest of the season. We set new goals and challenged them to regroup and do everything in their power to win and get better. It was a great meeting in that the kids were engaged and focused. We beat North Adams that night in double overtime, Southeastern on Monday 81-51 and now went into New Boston and came away with a win. Hopefully, we are peaking at the right time. I'm very proud that my players seem to be getting better this late in the season.”

* * *

Minford 20 21 23 28 — 92

New Boston 20 21 10 34 — 85

MINFORD 82 (11-8)

Trenton Zimmerman 7 4-5 18, Elijah Vogelsong-Lewis 13 6-12 38, Skyler Knore 4 1-2 11, Matthew Risner 3 4-4 10, Drew Skaggs 0 0-0 0, Devan Parker 2 2-2 6, Adam Crank 3 0-0 9; TOTALS 32 17-25 92; Three-point field goals: 11 (Elijah Vogelsong-Lewis 6, Adam Crank 3, Skyler Knore 2)

NEW BOSTON 85 (17-2)

De'Von Jones 5 4-8 16, Grady Jackson 4 6-8 17, Tanner Voiers 4 0-2 10, Kage Truit 0 0-0 0, Kyle Sexton 12 8-9 34, Sethe Perry 1 0-0 2, Brady Voiers 3 0-0 6; TOTALS 29 18-27 85; Three-point field goals: 9 (Grady Jackson 3, De'Von Jones, Tanner Voiers and Kyle Sexton 2 apiece)