

Game Recap-- 12-13-19

Wayne at Centerville

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Game Start: This was a showdown between two of the top teams in the SWO Region. Wayne is led by the calm and steady Malcolm Curry, lock down Cam Fancher and the young but talented Lawrent Rice. We came in knowing that Wayne has the coaching and experience to give Centerville a run for their money but were unsure how they would stand up to Centerville's size. For Centerville, the biggest question mark was how this team would gel given the departure of multiple leaders and battle tested veterans. For the answer the Elks turn to their lone returning starter, Mo Njie, the freshmen and coach's son, Gabe Cupps, and Rich Rolf, a player who we knew had lots of talent but who lost last season due to an injury.

This game got underway with a very clear note, Wayne was not about to be bullied into submission down low by Njie and weren't going to let Gabe Cupps get free looks from range. Centerville's game plan was very clear, feed Njie and let the attention he demands free up others and look to find Cupps on the perimeter. The Warriors started out with #5 Elijah Brown and #21 Aamil Wagner rotating in on Njie. Between the two of them, they had the physicality and athleticism to make Njie work for everything. Cam Fancher drew the defensive assignment on Cupps and kept him in check. Centerville countered quickly by bringing Mo Njie's "little" brother Kebba of the bench; he only plays at 6 '8. Both teams methodically worked around the other, poking and prodding for weak spots in the Defense. Centerville was able to maintain a slight lead by the end of the 1st thanks to a couple inside buckets and a spot up 3 by Kebba Njie.

End of Q1

Wayne 12

Centerville 17

The 2nd quarter got going just as both team got into more of a groove. Centerville kept force feeding Njie and Cupps utilized his driving ability to counter the fast close out to him on the perimeter. Wayne countered by letting Curry slow the game down and getting their up and coming freshmen, Lawrent Rice find a rhythm. Rice was able to utilize his speed to his advantage and has a sweet lefty shot to counter that speed. Njie got some room down low and hammered a few dunks home and end the half with an emphatic block.

Halftime:

Wayne 25

Centerville 34

Coming out of the locker room it was clear that both teams made some adjustments. Centerville got two quick buckets off of the same inbounds play to Rich Rolf, who ended up with wide open layups. Wayne called a quick timeout to settle down and then they locked in. They upped their pressure on the ball forcing Centerille to keep the ball moving around the perimeter and having no luck driving into the lane. They added onto that by picking up their offensive pace, getting out in transition as fast as possible, negating Njie's presence as he often trailed behind and tired quickly. Curry got it going hitting a few mid range shots and Cam Fancher added to it by getting going himself, contributing a big 3 while continuing his lockdown defense on Cupps. By the end of the quarter, Wayne had drawn within two, both teams were in the bonus, and we knew that FT's were going to play a major factor in determining the outcome of this game.

End of Q3

Wayne 38

Centerville 40

The final frame provided just that. Wayne's pressure finally started to wear on the Elks. Centerville got frustrated and forced some bad shots up and committed sloppy undisciplined fouls. Wayne took advantage at the line and used that to keep pace. While the rest of his team looked frustrated, Njie was determined to keep his team afloat. Multiple times down the court Centerville capitalize on overly aggressive post denial and got the ball to Njie over the top, where he mercilessly slammed the ball home time and

time again. The crucial moment game with about a minute or so to play. When Cupps went to the line and had a chance to push the lead to 3. Instead, he went 1-2 and then Wayne hit two FT's at the other end to tie the game up. Njie got fouled with under 30 seconds to go and the Senior stepped to the line in a tie ball game with a chance to but the pressure back on Wayne. That was somewhat true although not in the way he would have liked. Njie went 0-2 at the line and Wayne's Damiene Boles went to the line shortly after with roughly 15 seconds left. He on the other hand calmly sank both FT's to give the Warriors the edge. Centerville got one last chance and drew up an inbounds play for Rolf from the baseline. Rolf got the pass and had 2 attempts amidst a multitude of bodies. The ball finally careened out to the top of the key where Cupps gather it and dribbled to the far corner before putting up a fall away shot to try and tie the game. The shot looked good but just came up just too long as it bounced off the far side of the rim. The comeback was complete and Wayne (Div. 1, #2) upset Centerville (Div. 1, #1).

Final:

Wayne 52

Centerville 50

Overall Notes

Centerville will need to get more offense from other players outside of Njie. Rich Rolf had a good game and we look for him to continue to play second fiddle to Njie. Cupps will need to get back into the form that he had during AAU with Blue Chips (L.A) and will need to be more assertive as the season goes on. We also look for Kebba Njie to get more playing time as the season goes on. Kebba had a good 1st quarter but played less and less as the game went on. While he doesn't have quite the bulk that his brother has, Kebba is very fundamentally sound with his foot work, has a much more natural shot and has some of the coordinator that Mo sometimes lacks. As a team, they need to work on limiting their turnovers and hitting their FT's. That certainly played a larger factor in this game and other teams will look to exploit that weakness if the issue persists.

Wayne came out and showed everyone that they aren't to be trifled with. Their physicality in the post and bend but don't break attitude in the 1st half allowed them to stay within striking distance and take advantage when the opportunity arose. Curry and

Fancher led the team by playing good defense and keeping the rest of the team calm. Freshman, Lawrent Rice will certainly be one of the best players, if not the best player on Wayne's roster for the next 3 ½ years. The kid plays with a skill set and demeanor that one would expect from more seasoned and experienced player. The battle between Cupps and Rice will be one to watch closely as their careers progress.