

Tigers' shooters go cold against Eagles

East Linn Christian advances to semifinals round

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PENDLETON — The Stanfield Tigers, who relied on 3-point magic to run away with a victory against Oakridge last week, found out what happens when the well dries up on Thursday.

A wintry cold Tigers team shot 26 percent from the field and just 17 percent from beyond the arc as the East

Linn Christian Academy Eagles flew past Stanfield 69-42 in the quarterfinals of the Class 2A boys' basketball state tournament from the Pendleton Convention Center.

Stanfield (18-10) made only one 3-pointer in the first half as their best weapon from the season nearly disappeared entirely. Sharp-shooting

Devin Bailey connected on the team's first long ball at the seven-minute mark of the second quarter, but by that time, the Eagles (26-3) were already ahead 15 points.

There wouldn't be another made shot for three points until the end of the third quarter, long after the game's outcome was well established. Senior Bryce Linker credited the Ea-

Inside

• For more tournament coverage, see Page 2B

See TIGERS/6B



TIGERS: 15-1 run to start second half put game out of reach

Continued From 1B

gles' 6-foot-7 post Austin Bates for stripping the Stanfield team of any balance.

"We weren't able to attack the key as much as we could have wanted with a 6-7 standing in the key," he said. "It's really hard for 5-9 or 5-10 to get a shot over that ... so we had to rely on that outside shot. And they weren't falling for us, so there's your outcome in the game."

The Tigers tried to drive at Bates on offense — which led to four hammering blocked shots — but did take the big man out of the game with fouls for a short stretch in the second quarter. With him gone, the Tigers scored regularly from inside, but still trailed 36-19 at the half.

At halftime, the Eagles readied their talons for a kill shot. The top-ranked team in the state, East Linn Christian looked to put the game away before the final period, senior guard Chaz Hooley said.

"We wanted to go out and get stops, get a bucket and do it again," said the game's high scorer of 17 points. "We tried to change the defense more to hedge them out and keep them from getting inside anymore."

The change — along with an even chillier streak from the Stanfield shooters — contributed to a 15-1 Eagles run. Now holding a 51-20 lead, the rest of the game

was just damage control, Hooley said.

Linker led the Tigers in scoring with 11 points and Devin Bailey scored only eight while shooting 3-of-15 from the field. Stanfield, a normally strong free throw shooting team, also shot poorly from the line at just 6-of-15.

East Linn Christian got a 15-point performance from Cole Horner and big Austin Bates scored seven while grabbing 14 rebounds.

The Eagles' big win is a real confidence booster, Bates said, proving that this year's East Linn team is a true contender. The team from Lebanon plays today at 3:15 p.m. against Days Creek.

Stanfield's state-title aspiration disappeared with the loss and the Tigers head for the consolation side of the bracket. They will face Weston-McEwen at 9 a.m. today after the TigerScots fell to Days Creek 43-39 Thursday.

Today's will be the fifth meeting between the Blue Mountain Conference rivals this season. The team's are 2-2, with Weston-McEwen winning the last two.

Stanfield coach Daniel Sharp challenged his team going into today's game to keep fighting.

"I felt like the last couple years we've gone into this morning (consolation) part of the tournament and just quit and we're off to baseball season," Sharp said.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Stanfield's Devin Bailey collides with East Linn Christian's Josh Gerig as Chaz Hooley gets in on the play Thursday in the Tigers' 69-42 loss to the Eagles in Pendleton.