



TOP

Puxico Indians Rally Back for the Win Against Holcomb

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BERNIE - The Puxico Indians remain in contention to take home the top prize at the Bernie Invitational.

Top-seeded Puxico trailed by nine points early but eventually rallied past the No. 8 seeded Holcomb Hornets 68-29 in the first game at the varsity boys basketball tournament Monday afternoon.

“We started out slow,” Puxico coach Bryant Ferneti said about playing Holcomb Monday. “We weren’t making a whole lot of shots early and I didn’t feel our defensive effort was where it needed to be in the first half. But we picked it up as the game went on. Hopefully, tonight is a learning lesson that you cannot ease into any game.”

Holcomb went on a 9-0 run to jump out to an early 13-4 advantage. Puxico tied things up at 20-all by the 2:58 mark of the second quarter before moving ahead of Holcomb 32-24 by halftime. The Indians took completed control early in the second half as it outscored Holcomb 28-3 in the third quarter to pad its lead to 60-27 by the start of the fourth quarter.

“One thing that helps us is we are so deep we don’t really wear down,” Ferneti said. “As games go on, we can continue to push the pace. Tonight we talked at halftime about hitting Holcomb with a run in the third quarter to put the game away and I thought our

kids did a pretty good job of executing what we talked about.”

Eight players recorded at least one field goal for Puxico. Sophomore Landon Burchard and junior Scyler Zimmerman paced the Indians in the scorebook with a dozen points each. Sophomore Jett Hancock also scored in double figures for Puxico with 10 points. Senior Thomas Burch added nine points, senior Jaydon Mitchell tallied eight points, junior Kaysen Long contributed seven points, junior Mason Parsley put up seven points, and junior Jerrett Powell finished with three points for the Indians.

Bryce McNabb and Jacob Reeves-Crittendon paced Holcomb with eight points each. McNabb and Reeves-Crittendon both scored all of their points in the first half.

“We did a better job of not giving up layups on our press after the first quarter,” Ferneti said. “I also thought we forced more turnovers after we switched to man to man. We also rebounded a little bit better as the game went on. Once we got our effort where it needed to be things went a lot better for us defensively.”

There were no upsets in the first round on Monday at Bernie. No. 4 seeded Twin Rivers edged No. 5 seeded Campbell 78-72 in double overtime, No. 2 seeded Neelyville outlasted No. 7 seeded Bernie 32-22, and No. 3 seeded Risco snuck past No. 6 seeded Bloomfield 42-41 in nightcap.

Puxico will take on No. 4 seeded Twin Rivers in the first semifinal at the tournament Thursday at 6 p.m. The second semifinal will feature No. 2 seeded Neelyville and No. 3 seeded Risco Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Semifinal winners square off in the championship Friday at 8:30 p.m.

Twin Rivers beat Puxico 60-55 at the tournament last season.

“Twin Rivers is a big, physical team that is well-coached,” Ferneti said. “We cannot ease into [Thursday’s] game like we did Monday. We’ve got to be ready to go from the tip. You’ve got to be thinking about what you need to do to succeed from the time you step onto the bus. But Twin Rivers will provide us with a tough challenge and we are looking forward to playing them Thursday night.”

No. 1 Puxico 68, No. 8 Holcomb 29

PHS 12 20 28 8 - 68

HHS 16 8 3 2 - 29

PUXICO (68) - Landon Burchard 12, Jaydon Mitchell 8, Jett Hancock 10, Mason Parsley 7, Jerrett Powell 3, Kaysen Long 7, Thomas Burch 9, Scyler Zimmerman 12. FG 26, FT 9/15, F 9. (3-pointers: Burchard 2, Mitchell 1, Hancock 1, Parsley 1, Burch 1, Zimmerman 1; Fouled out: None).

HOLCOMB (29) - Noah Kenner 2, Jesus Valdez-Castro 2, Landon Smith 6, Devin Kelley 2, Sam Jacobs 1, Bryce McNabb 8, Jacob Reeves-Crittendon 8. FG 12, FT 3/9, F 8. (3-pointers: Smith 2; Fouled out: None).

Article by Dustin Ward

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