

sports

Hawks will grow from narrow loss

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With hands on heads, shirt collars held by teeth, hands slapping on outstretched arms, and calls for a foul, Red Hawks players and head coach Paul Longo exhibited their disbelief at a lack of foul call on the eventual final possession play of 43-42 loss to the undefeated Wildcats of I.E. Weldon on Thursday, Jan. 16 in Haliburton.

The commotion was directed at the official closest to the play because of what the Hawks believed was a foul committed against Camden Marra, who scored on a circus shot, made after a missed three-pointer.

"It is what it is. It's basketball. You got to try and fight for everything, you know. It looked like a little bit of a foul on the last play of the game here, but I'm really impressed we were able to put a shot up," Longo said. "We designed a play for a three-point shot for Holden [Dupret-Smith]. Camden did a hell of a job getting in there to get that board and got that shot up and can't believe it went in, but it looked like a foul, but I'm not going to get upset."

The close loss hurts, but Longo believes the team will learn from the experience.

"I'm so proud these guys. Weldon [came in] 6-0 in our league right now and we gave them everything they can handle today. I thought we were the better team overall. I think we missed some easy layups and easy shots in the first half that could have been the difference. I'm really, really proud of our effort. Every single guy gave everything they have on both ends of the floor. To hold a team like Weldon to 43 points is pretty good, really good. I love our tenacity and our fight. We fight for everything. We don't give up on a play, even if we make a mistake. We come back and correct it. We just don't give up on anything. That's just the character of these guys. All 14 of them," he said.

The Hawks are 3-3 in league play as of Monday morning, Jan. 20. Longo points out the Hawks were dominated by the Wildcats earlier in the season, losing by 20 on Dec. 10 in Lindsay. He said this game shows how far the team has progressed in the past two months.

The Hawks were missing "big man" Joe Boice at the five and Mike Stephen.

Coming into the game, the team was on a roll, winning two league games in a row, beating the Titans of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary 64-46 and then the Brock Bulldogs 52-38.

The potential for success is looking good after this close game with the Wildcats.

"If we can take a good AAA [school] team to a one possession game like that then we should be able to use that as motivation in our A [school] games," he said.

The Hawks defence is relentless and easily translated into a dozen turnovers in each half.

Longo wondered aloud if the team could have won the game, if they could

have converted just one of these turnovers into two points.

Longo loved his entire team's effort, but made a point of acknowledging Ethan Glecoff, Ryan Mee, Carson Phillips and Brenden Newhook.

A tournament in Bracebridge at the end of the upcoming exams will be used as a tuneup for February.

The team has two league games left and one day of interlock action, which includes two games.

The Hawks are currently the No. 1 A seed in Kawartha West with a 3-3 as of Monday, Jan. 20. There are four league games left in the season.

There is a belief that resides with the team when it comes to success.

Longo said his team is never intimidated despite the majority of the team being in Grade 11. There is a long term goal for this young team.

"We have a goal. Our goal in Grade 12 [next year] is to try and get an OFSAA berth for A [schools]. So we're trying," he said.

Longo gave credit to the Weldon player who sank the three-pointer to tie the game 37-37 with 5:45 left in the game. Up to that point, both teams were struggling to score.

The rest of the game came down to which team could execute and turnover the ball less.

"Great game. Two, I thought, evenly matched teams and, you know, the basketball gods went the other way and that's OK," he said.

Red Hawks post player Ethan Glecoff collides with an I.E. Weldon defender who draws the charge during Kawartha High School Basketball League action on Thursday, Jan. 16 in Haliburton. The Red Hawks lost 43-42, but pushed the undefeated Wildcats on the Hawks' final possession, which led to two points scored by Marra from a miss (and what Hawks thought could have been an and-one scoring opportunity to tie the game). /DARREN LUM Staff



Red Hawks guard Camden Marra leaps to the net, as a Wildcats of I.E. Weldon defender looks for the block.



Red Hawks guard Camden Marra gets tangled with a Wildcats of I.E. Weldon defender.