

# Wendinger pulls down school record

Ari Selvey

SLEEPY EYE - Landon Wendinger's dominant day on the glass for Sleepy Eye led to a school record and a 66-56 win for the Indians over Murray County Central on Saturday in a nonconference boys basketball game.

Wendinger scored 31 points and grabbed 27 rebounds, a single-game school record. The previous school record was held by Ryan Meyer, who had 22 rebounds in a game during the 1990-91 season.

Sixteen of Wendinger's 27 rebounds were offensive, leading to extra possessions and putbacks, including a few dunks by Wendinger, allowing the Indians to control the lead for a wire-to-wire win in the second day of the Sleepy Eye Tip-Off Invitational.

Wendinger, who also had three blocks, had a total of three dunks in the game, a career high for him.

"It's really fun," Wendinger said. "Something clicked between the summer. I don't know what it was, but it's been really fun these last two games already."

The 6-8 Wendinger was able to do this despite some size on the side of MCC, who had two players who were 6-5. Wendinger said that the size of the other team didn't matter at times, but rather the ball movement that Sleepy Eye was able to execute.

"I don't think it's about how big they are, it's about our team," Wendinger said. "When the team moves the ball and we use our high-low, it's about movement. Move the ball well, get them out of their rotation. Usually the baskets come from that, not just one-on-one post work."

Also for Sleepy Eye, Robert Romberg had 15 points and 11 rebounds, while Brayden Heiderscheidt had 14 points, five steals, three rebounds and three assists.

Sleepy Eye head coach Shane Heiderscheidt said the team was stronger on the defensive end in this game compared to the season-opener loss to Tracy-Milroy-Balaton on Friday.

"We communicated more and rotated better," coach Heiderscheidt said. "Just executed defensively. And we limited them to one shot. Landon obviously was huge. Landon had 31 points and 27 rebounds, and Romberg had 15 points and 11 rebounds. When we can hold them to one shot attempt and just get the extra possessions, that's all we want to get back to. Our identity of playing defense, we're starting to get back to that."

Coach Heiderscheidt added that the freshmen and sophomores in the rotation got some more practice in executing the defensive scheme, something that he expects to get better with every game.

While the defense had improved, coach Heiderscheidt said the team could have been more efficient on the offensive end, and he'd like to see more diversity in the offensive looks they got.

"There's going to come times where we can't just throw it to Landon," he said. "Or Brayden's not going to have a great game. Robert stepped up and had a double-double for us. And Eric played well for us yesterday. We have some guys for us that can put the ball in the hole, and once we get everybody on the same page and have four or five guys in double figures, I feel that we'll be tough to stop once we get our defensive situation figured out."

Sleepy Eye started the game with a 4-0 lead thanks to Wendinger. MCC was able to hit a 3-pointer, but the Indians continued the run to go up 14-3 on a driving layup by Lozano. The Rebels followed with a 11-0 run to tie the game at 14, but a putback by Wendinger put the Indians back on track to retake the lead for the rest of the game. Sleepy Eye pushed the lead up to 21-16 on a free throw by Wendinger, and the teams traded points for several possessions. An alley-oop from Brayden Heiderscheidt to Wendinger on an inbound play sparked a quick 6-0 run to extend the lead to 40-30, with a mid-range jumper by MCC's Gavin Gillette cutting it to 40-32 before halftime.

MCC switched out of its full-court trap defense in the second half, but Sleepy Eye continued to score down the stretch, with Wendinger getting his first dunk on a putback with a foul to put the lead at 47-39. Wendinger's second dunk came on a transition feed from Riley Voigt, punching it home with two hands to get the bench on its feet.

"It's so fun playing like that," Wendinger said. "The whole crowd goes wild and the bench is all hyped up. We get back and get a defensive stop and the momentum just continues. It's just really fun."

Wendinger got his final dunk on another putback to put the Indians up 58-50, and the Rebels began to foul to get back into the game. Romberg made a few free throws and a layup to put the game out of reach as Wendinger got one final rebound to get the win.

Sleepy Eye (1-1) travels to Cathedral on Thursday.