

By Pastor Vince Carrig

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Plainsmen defenders tipped a Swedes' entry pass, but right into the hands of Gothenburg forward Brandon McMichael, who wasted no time in putting the shot and Perkins County away by a 56-43 count Saturday night in Grant.

Perkins County struggled mightily to shoot the ball accurately from the three-point line, missing their first five attempts; guard Quinton Hite hit the only two of the 17 they jacked up.

The Plainsmen survived the stale shooting for one quarter, huddling up with a 9-9 tie. But a McMichael up-and-under in the second quarter and two "threes" either side of halftime from guard Brett Dockweiler swept the Swedes to a 32-21 lead.

"I thought we played well enough to win, but just could not get the easy shots to fall. We need to take care of that part of our game.



It cannot be a continually-happening thing with us. Again, we had a stretch at the end of the game where we didn't score [at all]," Plainsmen Head Coach Shawn Cole said after the game.

Admirably, Perkins County hiked back into the game—even after a dreadful sequence that contained two missed fast breaks, two missed free throws and a clanking “three.” Hite got a friendly roll inside the arc and did the deed from outside the arc to leverage the Plainsmen to within four points at 40-36.

But Swedes swing forward Jack Dudley kept moving to the basket with a pass, popped a short floater off an offensive rebound and made no mistake on a fast break to shoot visiting Gothenburg to a late 52-41 lead.

Forward Alex Johnston went “automatic” on free throws, hitting all five awarded to him. His steal in the Gothenburg end with an “and one” tacked on closed the Plainsmen gap to seven at 48-41, but his mates had no more help for him.

Johnston put up 13 points, and Hite 12. McMichael led all with 14, and got Swedes support from flying guard Cody Ostergard with 11, Dudley with 10 and Dockweiler (nine).

Ostergard spun around to get in the back door, and pumped in a mid-range jumper while hanging in the air. He hit two free throws off of the backboard, looking like he actually intended to hit the glass first.

Ironically, with an offense designed to kick the ball out beyond the arc, the Plainsmen found more success with mid-range shots and going to the basket. Big men Tyler Brott, Blake Poppe and Austin Gaston divided 14 points among them from close range.

Two Plainsmen shooters who can demoralize opponents with deadly accuracy scored just four points between them. Perkins County shot 30 percent from the field overall, a figure that will land most teams on the short end of the score for most games.

“I think we are getting better, but we need to improve on all fundamental parts of our game: shooting, rebounding and taking care of the ball,” Coach Cole said.

Goth.            9 20 13 14—56

P. C.            9 12 15 7—43

### Next Action

The 1-3 Plainsmen will have to endure the predictably-loud crowd in Sidney when meeting the 1-3 Red Raiders on Friday night. They return home to seek revenge on the 3-1 Dundy County-Stratton Eagles, who ended their playoff run last February.

### PC vs. Kimball

Kendall Ferguson's ability to hang in the air and smoothly glide a shot into the net, a supporting cast who hit three pointers and occasional front-court pressure steered the Longhorns past Perkins County 69-42 Friday night in Kimball.

Ferguson hung in the air before pumping a jumper from the foul line that softly trickled down, and crossed over his dribble with lightning-fast hands to collect 17 points for the Longhorns.

Guard Brady Land stood ready to take balls that Ferguson would kick out, and burned the nets with two three pointers. Fellow Kimball guard Jeff Greenwood put the game well out of reach, stroking two of his own "threes" in the fourth quarter.

The Plainsmen looked competitive in taking a 4-0 lead on Jeremy Hagan's turnaround jump shot from 14 feet away and Alex Johnston's cleaning up of a fast break miss.

Hagan struck again from 12 feet away over on the left wing to almost equal the Longhorns' score at 10-9.

But looks can deceive, and Land hit a couple of free throws and Ferguson kept on chugging for a 16-9 first quarter Longhorns lead.

"I thought we played as well as we could have considering that our shots were not falling," Plainsmen Head Coach Shawn Cole said after the game. "To be in the game at half was good for our team. We had a stretch in the third quarter that we need to get better at. We did not score for the first five minutes. We can't have that."

Hilarious scoring drought afflicted both teams in the second quarter as well, with the teams taking almost 5:00 to score one basket apiece. They both added another one faster, and after 6:40, both teams had added four points to their first quarter score.

Calm before the storm, Ferguson spun like a top and decorated the scoreboard with five quick points: he put a shot off the glass and hit the "and one," before a spin move and a full-arm extension ran the score to 25-15 in Kimball's favor.

With the Plainsmen struggling to find their range and shooting accuracy, Kimball began pressing their ball carriers. The press worked the first time and turned the game into a full-court one.

Ferguson flashed by a defender with a crossover dribble just before he kicked out a ball to Land for a "three." Those quick points inflated the Longhorns' third quarter lead to 37-15.

With Perkins County ball security miscues and shots bounding off rim and board, Kimball continued to score.

Jake Sexson hit consecutive three pointers in the third quarter and led the Plainsmen with 10

points on the game.

Guard Quinton Hite plunged four consecutive free throws in for Perkins County in the fourth quarter and finished with eight points.

Kimball received balanced scoring behind Ferguson, getting 14 from Land and 10 from Greenwood. Forward Dalton Lockwood went to the basket with more boldness in the third quarter and scored 10 points as well.

P. C.    9   6   12   15—42

Kimball   16   9   22   22—69