

By JOHN HENSON

Harlan County Schools

While the varsity team is waiting a week to open its schedule, the Harlan County junior varsity squad started the year Thursday with a solid performance in defeating visiting Harlan 55-34.

Tyler Miller led the 1-0 Black Bears with a 23-point performance.

Sophomore guard Will Slusher and junior forward Nathan Young led Harlan (0-2) with 11 points each.

Miller, a 6-5 freshman forward, set the tone for the game early as he scored twice on putbacks in a nine-point first quarter that was capped by a 3-pointer. Freshman forwards Zach Caldwell and Fred Massey also had baskets in the quarter and Caldwell found Miller for a layup as HCHS built a 17-9 lead.

Young kept Harlan within striking distance as he scored seven points in the opening period.

Trey Sanders hit a 3-pointer for Harlan County to open the second quarter, but Slusher and Dylan McNeil answered as the Dragons pulled within five. Massey scored four straight points and Miller scored on another offensive board as Harlan County closed the half with a 6-0 run to build a 29-18 advantage at the break.

Two more baskets by Miller pushed the Bears' lead to 16 before baskets by Mark Duff and Young, on a pass from Leighton Piper, cut the deficit to 37-25 heading into the final period.

Dallas Howard had two three-point plays in the fourth quarter as HCHS stretched its lead to as many as 24 points. Slusher had two 3-pointers and McNeil added one to account for Harlan's points in the quarter.

Harlan County returns to action Monday with a freshman/junior varsity doubleheader at Whitley County.

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Harlan County (55) — Cody Bumgardner 4, Trey Sanders 9, Tyler Miller 23, Zach Caldwell 2, Fred Massey 4, Derek Akal 2, Cole Wilson 1, Dallas Howard 7, Zach Wilson 3.

Harlan (34) — Will Slusher 11, Mark Duff 3, Leighton Piper 3, Dylan McNeil 8, Nathan Young 11.