

Mustangs Give Pawnee Scare

By KYLE KENDRICK

News Sports Writer

RED ROCK — On Jan. 7, the Pawnee Black Bears crushed the Frontier Mustangs 87-30 in Pawnee. On Monday when Pawnee made the return trip to Frontier the Mustangs put a scare into the Black Bears before eventually losing 61-46 in a game that was much closer than the final score would suggest.

The first quarter of Monday's game was extremely even with Frontier leading for large portions of the frame. Pawnee finished the quarter with a flurry though taking an 18-16 lead headed to the second.

The biggest story of the opening quarter wasn't the score but the fact that Frontier's leading scorer Landon Norman picked up three fouls in the frame forcing Frontier coach Bob Weckstein to take him off the floor.

Norman's foul trouble also kept him out of action for the entire second quarter. Pawnee struggled to make shots in the second but did slightly take advantage of Norman's absence by outscoring the Mustangs 13-4 in the stanza allowing the Black Bears to push the lead to 31-20 at the half.

Norman returned to the floor in the third and immediately made an impact on the Mustangs' offense. Frontier managed to cut the Pawnee lead to as low as five points midway through the third, but a 6-1 spurt from the Black Bears to close the quarter left Pawnee up 45-35 with just one quarter to play.

The Black Bears never truly pulled away in the fourth however, spending much of the quarter simply holding the Mustangs at arm's length. Late in the game Frontier was forced to play more aggressively and gamble more on the defensive end leading to several easy buckets for Pawnee in transition helping the Black Bears make the game look more like the blowout many would have expected.

Norman led the Mustangs and all scorers with 20 points. Frontier point guard Talon Harris also finished in double digits with 11 points. Small forward Kyle Smith paced the Black Bears with 17 points on the night while forward Gideon Gardner chipped in 12 and guard Ryland Moore added 10.

Both Pawnee and Frontier will be back in action Thursday at the North Country Classic in Tonkawa.

Frontier will play its first round game at Tonkawa High School and take on the host team Tonkawa at 8 p.m. Pawnee will also lay at 8 p.m. Thursday but the Black Bears' game will take place at Foster-Piper Fieldhouse on the campus of Northern Oklahoma College. Pawnee is slated to take on the Ponca City junior varsity Thursday.

PAWNEE 61,

FRONTIER 46

Pawnee 18 13 14 16 — 61

Frontier 16 4 15 11 — 46

Pawnee: Kyle Smith 17; Gideon Gardner 12; Ryland Moore 10; Nathan Brock 5; Brandon Coltharp 5; Josh Big Bear Hand 5; Vargas Penny 5; Reid LeGrand 2

Frontier: Landon Norman 20; Talon Harris 11; Jaysen Ratliff 8; Triston Harris 4; Roy Childs 3