

Gallup rolls over Window Rock, 68-45

Written by By Bernie Dotson For the Sun
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Joaquin Ortega, Tyrell Begay dismantle Window Rock

The Window Rock Scouts hung with the Gallup Bengals for most of the first quarter, before junior guard Quincy Smith and eighth-grader forward Joaquin Ortega proved too much to handle and Gallup rolled over the Scouts 68-45 in a boys third place consolation basketball game of the Gallup Invite played Jan. 6 at Gallup High School.

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The consolation game was played after the tournament championship because Artesia and Sandia Prep were attending the tournament from far away locales. Artesia won the championship game over Sandia Prep, 58-48.

The other tournament teams were Artesia, Sandia Prep, Wingate, Tohatchi, Miyamura and Deming.

“We were competitive in the first quarter, but just couldn’t sustain that momentum,” Window Rock head coach Joel Harper said. “We played a good team. Had we hit a lot more shots, we’re talking a different outcome.”

The Scouts took possession of the ball at the outset of the game, and it was the versatile Smith that put the Bengals up 2-0. That was answered by a 3-point shot by junior guard Burk Williams of Window Rock. The offensive and defensive pace of the game was up and down for both teams, with Gallup ultimately surging ahead on shots by Smith, Ortega and junior guard Tyrell Begay.

Gallup (9-6) went up 13-8 on a long jumper by Begay and never relinquished the lead after that. The Bengals ended the first quarter leading 19-8.

“Good job. Good defense,” Gallup head coach James Voight told his players after the end of the first half. “Way to go,” Voight said, simultaneously slapping hands with players. “Way to go,” Voight repeated.

The Scouts came out in the second quarter with a slightly different offensive team than the first quarter. Window Rock senior point guard Dereny Long settled in to trying to run some plays, but senior forward Zakarri Fields of Gallup and pesky junior guard teammate Seth Manuelito weren’t going for it. The tough defensive play by Fields and Manuelito set up the free-wheeling Ortega for back-to-back drives in the first few minutes of the second quarter for a 23-10 Gallup cushion.

The Third Quarter

The previous quarter wasn't completely lost on Window Rock, as the Scouts outscored the Bengals 14-12. But the Scouts could not stay with the roving Ortega and every time Window Rock (4-9) got close to getting on a roll, Manuelito — at times he'd go from one side of the court to the other — was there with a steal or to disrupt a pass.

Window Rock junior guard Trevor Herbert scored 11 points in the first half, which included some deep 3's. Senior forward Kalem Roanhorse of Window Rock hit some key baskets early in the third, but the Scouts still trailed 33-26 at one point in the quarter. Senior Tristan Nez hit a turn-around jumper with 3:44 left on the clock in the third for Window Rock, but Fields, who made the Gallup Invite all-tournament team, was there for two consecutive steals.

The Fourth Quarter

The Bengals led 52-34 at the end of the third quarter. Williams fired up a few errant 3-point shots to start the fourth quarter, but at that point Gallup was already in its prevent defense. Additionally, Ortega seemed to have barely broken a sweat. Not only was Ortega scoring big points, but he was grabbing rebounds, getting out on the break and mixing it up inside with the Window Rock big men.

The Scouts cut the lead to six points at one juncture in the second quarter, but that was as close as Gallup's defense permitted. A 7-0 run in the third pushed the Bengals closer to the win column. In that run, senior big man Asa Holyan scored four points.

Williams and Herbert of the Scouts each scored 11 points in the loss. The Scouts were 1-2 in tournament play.

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Ortega scored a game high 17 points for Gallup in the game. Begay put in 11 and Smith chipped in 10 as did junior forward Josh Lynch. Gallup outrebounded the Scouts, 50-26 and that was a stat that made a difference as well, Harper lamented.

In the championship game, Chaney Hardt scored 16 points in the win for Artesia. In the other tournament games, Miyamura beat Wingate 53-33 for fifth place and Deming beat Tohatchi 64-46 for seventh place.

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