

Kortokrax's 400th Career Win Has One Big Meaning to 'Cat Coach

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What was Kalida Coach Dick Kortokrax's greatest feeling about picking up win No. 400 Friday night? Well, it wasn't the fact his team shot a torrid 61 percent, or that it was played at Fort Jennings, the same place he recorded his varsity victory way back in 1959.

"I think the fact that all of my family was here is the best feeling of all," he said. "I have a daughter that lives in Chicago and she made it and a son who lives in Upper Sandusky. It means a lot to me that they all made it."

All eight of his children were present including son, Randy, who poured in a team high 26 points while lifting the Wildcats to an easy 81-58 triumph. "My son Rick played when I won my 300th game, I remember that too," he said.

Quick Start Gives Kortokrax No. 400

Randy Kortokrax and Dave Warnecke teamed up to make 20 of 24 field goals and the Kalida Wildcats won their sixth Putnam County League game without a loss Friday 81-58 at the expense of Fort Jennings.

It gave Kalida its 15th win of the season and Coach Dick Kortokrax his 400th as a varsity mentor. "When you can win 400 games in a league like the Putnam County league I think it is just great," said Kortokrax who has a career mark of 401-131 following Saturday's victory.

Coach Kortokrax's son, Randy, dropped in ten of 12 fielders and was a perfect six of six at the foul line for 26 points Friday. Warnecke made a fantastic 11 of 13 floor shots for 22 points, most of those attempts ten to 15 foot jumpers.

While the two seniors carried the winners, two more seniors got the team out of the starter's block. Mark Gerding and Joe Verhoff scored the team's first ten points and gave Kalida a 10-2 lead with four minutes gone in the game.

The lead was 16-4 after one quarter and with five minutes left in the first half the visitors had a 24-6 spread.

Ron Landwehr got a three point play for Fort Jennings to pull the team within 15, 24-9, but watched as Kalida stretched it to 22 points, 35-13.

Warnecke hit eight points in that spurt to key Kalida and it looked like another Wildcat rout.

But with only 1:47 left before intermission the Musketeers reeled off ten unanswered points to get within 12, 35-23. Guard Keith Norbeck dropped in six of those points, his first buckets of the game. He finished with a game high 27.

FJ never got closer than 12 in the second half. The two teams traded baskets most of the third period but the hosts hit a dry spell late in the stanza and that told the story.

Kalida hit six straight points to widen a 45-33 edge into a 51-33 gap and the contest was over.

Going into the last frame Kalida had an 18 point lead and Verhoff quickly hit three buckets that put the team up 24 markers.

Verhoff had nine points that last round to finish with 15. Kortokrax added 12 points in the stanza, six at the foul line.

Fort Jennings, who did not substitute until the fourth quarter, just ran out of gas the last eight minutes.

Norbeck had 17 points in the final frame hitting seven of ten field goals and three of three free throws. For he night he hit 11 of 27 attempts. He missed his first seven tries, unable to shoot over the much taller Wildcats.

Forward Neil Wittler had a nice game for the losers with 22 markers before fouling out. The Muskies made a dismal 24 of 65 floor shots (37 percent). They were only two of 12 in the first quarter.

Kalida made a fantastic 32 of 51 fielders (63 percent), 15 of 20 in the first half. At the foul line the winners sank 17 of 23 (74 percent) to Fort Jennings ten of 15 (67 percent). The 'Cats had six more rebounds, 27-21 and two more turnovers, 16-14.

The reserve game was a similar landslide fashion 57-21 in Kalida's favor, the team's 12th win in 17 games.

Kalida 32 17 81

Gerding 5-4-14. M. Stechschulte 1-1-3. Verhoff 5-5-15. Warnecke 11-0-22. Kortokrax 10-6-26. G. Stechschulte 0-1-1. Maag 0-0-0. Siebeneck 0-0-0. Nartker 0-0-0.

Fort Jennings 24 10 58

Wittler 8-2-18. Landwehr 2-2-6. Schuerman 1-1-3. Norbeck 11-5-27. VonSossan 2-0-4. Vorst 0-0-0. Krietemeyer 0-0-0. German 0-0-0.

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| Kalida | 16 | 19 | 18 | 28 | 81 |
| Fort Jennings | 4 | 19 | 12 | 23 | 58 |

At the time, it was thought that this was Coach Kortokrax's 400th win during his 24th season of coaching and 9th at Kalida. The actual 400th win came the next game against Bluffton when Kalida won 68-36. The Wildcats were 20-3 in 1983, losing to Delphos St. Johns in the Districts. Dick was named the PCL Coach of the Year in 1983 at Kalida for the 3rd time and 8th overall.