

Roy Johnston earns 700th boys' basketball victory as No. 2 Beaverton improves to 18-0

Updated: Thu Feb 26, 2015, 10:25 am.

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Beaverton High School junior varsity coach Shad Woodruff, right, tosses the game winning ball to varsity coach Roy Johnston after Beaverton defeated Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart 69-47, earning Johnston his 700th victory in boys basketball. Johnston is the second coach in Michigan to achieve 700 wins.

BEAVERTON — Legendary Beaverton basketball coach Roy Johnston earned an historic victory on Wednesday. And his Beavers gave him the milestone win by playing the game the way it should be played.

Led by Johnston's grandson, senior point guard Spencer Johnston, Beaverton moved the ball nicely on offense, crashed the boards, and played solid defense in a 69-47 win over visiting Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart.

The victory, which came in the gym named after Johnston, made the Beavers, the second-ranked team in Class C, 18-0 on the season, and it gave Johnston his 700th career victory as a boys' coach — most of them coming at Beaverton.

Johnston becomes only the second coach to reach the 700-win milestone in boys' hoops in the state of Michigan. He trails only longtime River Rouge coach Lofton Greene, who finished with 739, although some of those came in Kentucky.

Combined with his 55 victories as Beaverton's former girls' varsity coach, Johnston now has 755 total wins.

"It was cool," said Spencer Johnston, who finished with a game-high 22 points and eight assists, of helping his grandfather pick up win No. 700. "We won the 700th total (boys and girls combined) in my sophomore year, and that was cool. I didn't expect to get the 700th for the boys (during my career), so that was pretty fun.

"... It's crazy how many wins he has," Spencer Johnston added with a smile. "But he's been here for 80 years, he says, so it makes sense."

Actually, Roy Johnston has been Beaverton's varsity boys' coach for 41 years, to be exact. Prior to arriving in Beaverton in 1971, he coached varsity boys at Yale (Mich.) for a couple of years and for another year at Howell. After serving as the Beavers' junior varsity coach for three years, he took over as the varsity coach in 1974.

Asked what the milestone means to him, Roy Johnston, who's 72, broke into a big grin.

"For one thing, it means you're still coaching and you're still alive," he joked. "As far as (the state record) goes, I have the most Michigan high school wins now. Lofton Greene's got (739), but (some) of those were in Kentucky, so I look at it that way."

Beaverton left little to doubt against Sacred Heart, building a double-digit lead by early in the second quarter and shooting 54 percent through the first three quarters while continually extending its lead.

Spencer Johnston was the catalyst, penetrating into the lane and dishing to open teammates under the basket or to open shooters on the perimeter time and again before eventually starting to rack up the points himself.

As a team, the Beavers collected 14 assists on their 24 field goals.

"We've got some kids who will move the ball and get it to each other, and that helps," said Roy Johnston. "They're not very selfish. Sometimes you get a player like Spencer who is your scorer and team leader, and they'll shoot a lot more. But Spencer's thing is (that) an assist is equal to a bucket (in his mind).

"... That's the way (our kids) play, and that's good," he added. "... They understand the game."

Senior forward Ronnie Remer added 21 points and seven rebounds for Beaverton, while junior center Braedon Wolfe had 13 points and nine boards. Sophomore guard Carter Johnston chipped in 11 points and three assists.

The emergence of other players following the loss of second-leading scorer Hogan Hayes to a broken hand a few weeks ago has been a key to the Beavers remaining undefeated, according to Roy Johnston.

"That was a big loss for us (when Hayes went down), but a lot of guys stepped it up," he said.

Spencer Johnston agreed, noting that both Wolfe and Remer have steadily improved in Hayes's absence.

"Braedon Wolfe is our center now, and he's playing a heck of a lot better than he was at the start of the year," Spencer Johnston said. "He's been playing a lot more and just getting better.

"... And we turned (Remer) into a shooter about halfway through the season, since Braedon's playing center now, and he's really stepped up," Johnston added.

Remer hit a pair of 3-pointers and scored 12 points in the first quarter, while Spencer Johnston had four assists in the period, and Beaverton took a 21-14 lead into the second.

Wolfe opened the second with a 3-point play to make it a double-digit lead, 24-14, and the Beavers went on to lead by 12 before the Irish hit a pair of 3's in an 8-0 run to cut it to 31-27. Carter Johnston answered with a 3-pointer, however, to start an 8-2 quarter-ending run for Beaverton, giving the Beavers a 39-29 advantage heading into the break.

"I thought we were playing a step or two slow tonight," admitted Sacred Heart coach Pat Theisen. "... Every time we made a run, we'd do something (to take a step backward). ... Every time I thought we were right back in it, we'd give up an easy (bucket), and that really hurt.

"... They're very good. There's a reason they're No. 2 in Class C," Theisen added of the Beavers. "They are a legitimate, legitimate team come tournament time. And Spencer Johnston's unbelievable. Staying in front of him is a challenge. He did a great job tonight of penetrating and (passing to open teammates)."

Beaverton opened the second half on a 14-6 run capped by Remer's third 3-pointer which made it 53-35. The Beavers went on to outscore the Irish 20-9 in the third quarter to take a 59-38 lead into the fourth, where they increased their lead to as much as 25.

Beaverton shot 44 percent (24 of 54) from the floor to Sacred Heart's 41 percent (17 of 41) and outrebounded the Irish 35-25.

Ben Goenner led Sacred Heart (13-4) with 18 points, while Tomas Krepostman had 11 points.

"I don't know what it takes to get that many wins, truth be told," Theisen said of Johnston's milestone. "But it's quite an achievement, and he's a great coach, so congratulations to him. They played well tonight."

Beaverton heads to Gladwin on Friday, then concludes the regular season at Houghton Lake next Thursday with the possibility of finishing 20-0 for the third time during Roy Johnston's tenure. For his part, Johnston downplayed the possibility.

"We've (gone 20-0) twice before, but if you don't (do it), you don't; it's no big deal," he said, adding with a smile, "... I don't mention it (to the team). It's not that critical. It's nice, but it's not that critical."

Beaverton also won the junior varsity game, 37-26.

Sacred Heart	14	15	9	9	—	47
Beaverton	21	18	20	10	—	69

SACRED HEART — Perez 3-0-7; Schafer 0-0-0; Kornexl 0-0-0; Goenner 7-0-18; Neyer 0-0-0; Reetz 0-0-0; Lustosa 0-0-0; Krepostman 3-4-11; Evans 0-0-0; Szymanski 4-0-9; Ervin 0-2-2; Totals 17-6-47. 3-point field goals — Goenner 4, Perez, Krepostman, Szymanski.

BEAVERTON — C. Johnston 4-0-11; Taylor 0-2-2; O'Brien 0-0-0; Beierschmitt 0-0-0; Whitmer 0-0-0; S. Johnston 6-7-22; Duvall 0-0-0; Rottman 0-0-0; Wolfe 6-1-13; Remer 8-2-21; Shaffer 0-0-0; Totals 24-12-69. 3-point field goals — C. Johnston 3, S. Johnston 3, Remer 3.