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Non-conference tilt a yawner

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Coming off of a close game at Waukegan the night before, the Niles West Wolves were hoping to avoid another nail-bitter Saturday night when they hosted the Mundelein Mustangs in a non-conference tilt.

The Wolves ended up taking the game by a margin of 18 points with the 61-43 victory over the Mustangs, who proved to be quite pesky but ultimately undermanned.

The Wolves, particularly senior guard Jarryd Loyd, got off to a good start. Loyd drained two early three-pointers to stake the Wolves to an early 6-0 advantage.

Mundelein would fight back; tying the game at eight, but the Wolves then went on a 7-0 run to end the first quarter. The run was capped off with a tip-in by junior guard Jackey Hunt, beating the buzzer to give the Wolves a 15-8 lead. Hunt would be heard from later.

Junior Sead Odzic hit a three

early in the second to restore a seven-point lead for the Wolves, and he would up the advantage even further the next time down the floor with a bucket and a foul. Odzic converted on the free throw and the Wolves led 21-11 with 6:30 remaining the second quarter.

West continued to pour it on, leading 27-13 when Hunt received an alley-oop and promptly threw down a powerful, one-hand slam, turning the Contest Gym stands into a scene from an *And-1 Street Ball* video.

Senior Jason Ang was one of the many on hand who enjoyed Hunt's slam.

"That dunk was amazing," Ang said.

Odzic's long distance shooting highlighted a third quarter that saw West extend its lead to 13 heading into the final period. Early in the third frame, Odzic drained back-to-back three-pointers to give his team a 15 point lead at 37-22.

Head Coach Dave Genis took advantage of the solid lead, giving his reserves lots of playing

time in the final quarter. The crowd also took the opportunity to go crazy one more time when senior Pratik Patel, a back-up guard, hit from long distance to put the icing on the cake for West, which improved to 9-3 overall.

After the game, Genis expressed pleasure with the progress the team has made since the beginning of the year.

"We're getting used to playing together. We're building chemistry and chemistry is very important on both offense and defense," Genis said.

The Wolves are in action again this Friday when they host the rival Trevians of New Trier at 7:30 p.m. to kick off a busy weekend that will see West play at Lincoln-Way East in southwest suburban Frankfort at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday and against city powerhouse Von Steuben at North Park University at 6 p.m. on Sunday.

The upcoming stretch will be pivotal in determining where the Wolves will be seeded when the state sectionals roll around and "March Madness" begins.