

## Sports Update

---

### Undermanned, Overwhelmed: Marauders run down Wildcats

BY Matt Welch, [mwelch@acnpapers.com](mailto:mwelch@acnpapers.com)

Published: Wednesday, January 4, 2012 12:00 AM CST

Despite an unsettling cap to its tournament season, the Flower Mound Marcus boys basketball team (2-0 in district) picked up right where it left off in 8-5A play Tuesday night.

And while an upset loss to Richland in the Whataburger Tournament is forever engraved in the record books, the Marauders' near-three-year district winning streak grew one victory larger in a 58-44 win over Plano Senior (1-1).

"There's a reason why [Marcus is] ranked No. 1 in the state," said Phil Parlin, Plano head coach. "Great players and coached so well, but I was so proud of how my guys battled, undermanned, and how we played to the bitter end."

The Wildcats attempted to send an early message.

Senior **Austin Mitchell** netted a steal and layup just 10 seconds in, but 2-0 would be the only lead Plano mustered all night, despite its best efforts to keep the Marauders' hands off the ball. That meant slowing the pace and working around the perimeter. Plano proved its own worst enemy on that front, racking up seven first-quarter turnovers.

"We talked about trying to limit [Marcus'] possessions early," Parlin said, "but we just couldn't make a shot to stay close enough to continue to do that. It leaped away from us there and they brought some pressure that they don't usually do."

Marcus' notoriously-stingy defense hassled a Plano team already down seniors **Malcolm Mann** (mono), **Connor Pitts** (knee) and junior **Teekay Biti** (hand).

That meant extended time for junior varsity call-up sophomore **Chris Andersen**, whose baptism by fire took form early. Phil Forte ripped Andersen, who proceeded to foul the Oklahoma State signee for an and-1 that netted Marcus a 12-8 lead by the end of the first quarter.

That margin expanded from the second quarter on.

Thanks for that goes to the rebounding prowess of Nick Banyard, who nabbed three offensive boards in the second quarter en route to a 22-point, seven-rebound night, and a Marauder defense that held Plano scoreless for nearly eight minutes.

"I was the most pleased with Nick because he's running a fever," said Danny Henderson, Marcus head coach. "He's been sick and we didn't even know if he'd play. He came out and gave such a great effort, especially on the glass."

Banyard was not alone on the night, with Marcus Smart adding 17 points, five boards and three steals while Forte dropped in 11 points and five assists. Together, the trio combined for 86 percent of the Marauders' offense.

Trailing at the half, 26-12, the Wildcats only counter was Mitchell, who ran roughshod on the Marcus defense in the second half. Be it layups or looks from mid-range or beyond the arc, Mitchell befuddled Marcus for 20 of his game-high 27 points over the final two quarters.

"We pressed and didn't do a good job in the third quarter of locating [Mitchell] once they broke our press," Henderson said. "That just comes with intensity; we lost that intensity at halftime and we've got to do a better job at that."

"[Mitchell] played like a warrior today," Parlin added. "He played like the team leader that he is and I'm proud of him. We just need to try and get him some more help on offense."

A pair of Mitchell 3-pointers drew Plano within 35-23 with 3:30 left in the third frame, but Marcus' three-headed scoring monster didn't permit the lead to shrink any further, with Smart knifing through a Plano zone for eight third-quarter points and a 41-26 lead after three frames.

Mitchell added 11 points in the fourth quarter, but it was finding those additional options that proved tricky with Marcus' defense hindering any player not named Mitchell from creating offense.

Plano senior **Travis Warman** added six points and sophomore **Broderick Perkins** dropped in five. The Wildcats will travel to Lewisville at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

Marcus hosts Allen at the same time.