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Torrid Colts rock Canyon

By Tom Purfield

In a flash, the South High School boys basketball team went from somewhat stagnant to simply spectacular.

The Colts exploded out of the locker room following halftime Friday to run away from Rock Canyon 74-46 in the second round of the Class 4A state playoffs at Massari Arena on the Colorado State University-Pueblo campus. In the fourth quarter, dunk-fest was back and South provided the electrified crowd plenty of highlights.

South protected its No. 1 seed in the Jim Baggot Region and will host the Sweet 16 and Great 8 rounds next weekend. The Colts (22-2) play D'Evelyn (18-6), a 66-61 winner over Longmont, at the Central High School gym on Friday at a time to be determined. The Great 8 game will be played Saturday at Massari.

Rock Canyon hung around for a half before South buried the Jaguars with a 19-2 run in the third quarter. What was a seven-point lead blew up to 53-29 after the blitz.

"We came out in the third like we're capable of playing," South coach Dave Lockett said. "It was one of those games where you feel your way and we got lucky and got on a roll. We ran them, their shots stopped falling and we took advantage."

Sophomore forward Tyrel Williams had a big night for the Colts with game-highs in points (19 on 7-of-12 shooting) and rebounds (eight). Kameron Wilhite had 14 points, six rebounds and six assists, and Josh Dome added 12 points, seven rebounds and three steals. Wilhite and Dome were a combined 9-of-11 shooting from the floor.

The Jaguars never had the lead but they remained within striking distance in the first half thanks to nine South turnovers and getting off 15 more shots than the Colts. But when South got going in the third, it was a quick fade to black for Rock Canyon.

"We've got to be able to take their first punch and we just couldn't respond. They jumped on us," Rock Canyon coach Jim McClurg said. "They're a tough team to defend because they can do some things in-to-out and they're going to go a long way because of that."

Dome started the run with a 3-pointer followed by a Wilhite bucket and another 3 by Williams. After a pair of free throws by Williams, Brody Lockett took over.

Lockett tapped and chased down a steal and at full speed, spun and flipped a pass over his shoulder in stride to Dome for a layup. He had two more steals on consecutive possessions, capped by a three-point play on the break that brought the house down.

"We had momentum and it kept going and going. It's fun because it seems like it never ends," said Brody Lockett, who had four assists and three steals. "We got on the boards, pushed the ball and got some easy baskets that got the rhythm going."

As the lead pushed near 30, South flashed its considerable athleticism. Wilhite lofted an alley-oop pass back-door to Williams, who skyed and flushed it two-handed. Two possessions later, Lockett whipped a pass to DaQuan Cartwright for another dunk.

"It was exciting. I just wanted to get the crowd in it" Williams said. "Coach told me to just be aggressive tonight. That's what I did and it worked out fine."

South was more careless with the ball than usual with 17 turnovers, but controlled the boards 28-23. The big difference in the game was shooting percentage - South hit 61 percent of its shots (25-of-41) while the Jaguars could only convert 28 percent (17-of-60).

As the lead grew, the Colts showed their depth and there was little drop-off when the reserves hit the floor. All of South's players scored in the game.

South 74, Rock Canyon 46

Class 4A second round

Rock Canyon-Dorcheus 3 4-4 10, Wekkenmen 1 0-0 2, St. Pierre 3 0-0 6, Bennett 1 2-2 4, Solita 4 0-0 11, Brunhoffer 2 0-0 5, Carlton 0 2-2 2, Puccini 3 0-0 6. Totals: 17 8-8 46. 3-point goals: Solita 3, Brunhoffer. Fouls: 19.

South-D.Cartwright 2 3-3 7, Hall 0 1-2 1 Wilhite 5 2-2 14, Clark 1 0-3 2, Williams 7 3-4 19, Dome 4 2-4 12, K.Cartwright 1 2-2 4, Kliesen 2 0-0 4, Lockett 2 2-3 7, Zufall 1 2-4 4. Totals: 25 17-27 74. 3-point goals: Wilhite 2, Williams 2, Dome 2, Lockett. Fouls: 12.