

Springfield loses close one to Wayne

Former Springfielders help Warriors get best of Wildcats in early GWOC Central showdown.

By [Brian Plasters](#), Staff Writer

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SPRINGFIELD — The biggest rivals are often the best friends, and the Springfield and Wayne high school boys basketball teams are definitely linked by more than just baggy shorts.

About 1,700 fans turned out to see the Warriors beat the Wildcats 60-56 on Friday, Dec. 18, at Springfield High School. The Greater Western Ohio Conference Central Division game featured close friends on both sides, starting with Wayne junior Travis Trice Jr., a Springfielder until his freshman year, who scored a team-high 19 points and hit three critical free throws in the final minute of the game.

Travis Trice Sr., Wayne's head coach, was an assistant coach at Springfield South and helped the Wildcats win four league titles. Wayne junior Braxton Miller also attended Springfield schools until his freshman year. He scored two points and just missed an acrobatic rebound-and-dunk.

"It definitely has a factor in the game, because these are all guys who grew up together and played against each other," Trice, the coach, said. "They call each other and they're on the phone; they're hanging out. You always look forward to grudge matches, but I guarantee these guys will be talkin' on the phone later tonight."

The game was played like close friends who knew each other's moves — neither team led by more than six points, and that margin (32-26 Wayne) was in the first half. The difference turned out to be Wayne's defense. Springfield hit only five buckets in the second half and no 3-pointers.

"(The Wildcats) rely on their defense and being scrappy and getting loose balls," Trice said. "Of course we have guys that can play that same way."

Springfield (3-2, 1-1 GWOC Central) had its chance to put the Warriors (4-0, 2-0) away late in the third quarter with a 46-41 lead. But a couple of Springfield turnovers led to a basket from Miller and a buzzer-beater from Trice to close the gap to 46-45.

"We had 'em right where we wanted 'em," Springfield head coach Darnell Hoskins said. "If we're mentally tough enough to push that to seven ... the complexion of the game might be a little different."

Wayne used a seven-point run to take a 54-51 lead midway through the fourth quarter. Up 56-54, Wayne played a long game of keepaway that ran the clock down to 1:50.

Springfield missed four 3-pointers in the final minute, and Wayne hit four free throws to maintain its lead.

"There was nothing that (Wayne) did to bother us in those situations, those were good looks that we didn't capitalize on," Hoskins said.

Springfield's Rob Moss scored a game-high 22 points, including eight in the third quarter.

Xavier Jones scored 18 for Wayne.

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