CRYSTAL FALLS—After getting a big win at Carney-Nadeau the week before, Coach Chris Nocerini hoped his Forest Park boys team could get another one Feb. 1 at home against North Central, another rival for the Skyline Conference title. __PUBLIC__

But it wasn't to be. The Jets broke out with a big first quarter and stayed in front all night, earning a 67-56 win in FP's only game last week.

"I'm disappointed," the coach said as the Eddie Chambers Gym emptied out. "I shouldn't be. We kept battling. It's just one of those nights."

A Jan. 29 game at Mid Peninsula was postponed and is now an ultra-rare Wednesday night game on Feb. 6, as FP's schedule gets more and more backed up. The Trojans play three games this week and three more next week. They have 10 games in the last four weeks of the regular season.

FP enters this week at 6-4 overall, 3-2 in the Skyline.

Quick strike: The Jets came out strong and took flight right away. Baskets by Josh Granquist, Trevor Ekberg, Travis Vincent and Ekberg again prompted Nocerini to call a time-out less than four minutes after the opening tip.

It didn't help. Granquist, Ekberg and Vincent all scored again, and the Jets led 17-6 after one. With 24 minutes still left, could the Trojans scratch and claw their way back?

They battled. Two baskets by Austin Carlson and an Austin Snell lay-up cut the gap to five in the second quarter—before Granquist converted a three-point play and scored again for a 10-point lead just before halftime.

Getting even: Forest Park rallied again in the third quarter. Raymond Tomasik's rebound hoop, Lee Graff's three from the top and then his steal and lay-in cut the Jets' lead to 34-30. Jeff Johnson cut the gap to one with another triple, prompting the Jets to call time.

It stayed close. Granquist and Tomasik traded baskets. The Jets scored off an intercepted inbounds play. Graff was fouled while shooting a basket and added the free throw—the three-point play tied it at 38-38.

But FP never got in front. The Jets scored the next 10 points to lead 48-38 early in the fourth quarter. FP later got within four, but NC's Granquist dominated the final minutes, scoring 12 of his game-high 24 points in the fourth quarter and going 6 for 6 at the free throw line down the stretch.

Shooting woes: The Trojans struggled outside the three-point arc, making just 4 of 22 tries (18%). They were 41% inside the arc, but just 34% overall. North Central shot 48% combined from the field.

"I tell them all the time," said Nocerini. "If the threes aren't dropping, you've got to take the ball to the hole or you've got to create.

"The difference in the last three games," he said. "We hit shots [against West Iron and Carney], and tonight we didn't. The little things we talk about each night, we didn't do."

He gave credit to the talented Jets and Coach Adam Mercier. Granquist and Vincent, he said, "just seem find gaps, hit them nice and they are great passers."

As for his team, Nocerini liked Raymond Tomasik's hard work (nine points, nine rebounds). "He gave us the most energy on the glass." So did Austin Carlson, who had eight points and seven boards. But FP's top scorers never got into a groove against the Jets.

"We need to improve as a team. Simple as that."

Numbers: FP team: 19-46 2's (41%), 4-22 3's (18%), 6-6 FT, 41 rebounds, 17 fouls. NC team:

23-45 2's (51%), 3-11 3's (27%), 12-18 FT (67%), 37 rebs, 9 fouls.

FP stats: Lee Graff, 14 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists, Raymond Tomasik, 9 pts, 9 rebs; Austin Snell, 9 pts, 3 asts; Austin Carlson, 8 pts, 7 rebs; Derek Aberly, 6 pts; Jeff Johnson, 5 pts; Chris Hilberg, 5 pts, 7 rebs. NC stats: Rob Granquist, 24 pts, 9 rebs; Travis Vincent, 15 pts, 8 rebs; Trevor Ekberg, 8 pts, 6 rebs; Josh Granquist, 7 pts; Tyler Polfus, 7 pts, 2x3.

Jets	17	9	18	23	--	67
Trojans	6	12	20	18	--	56

Coming up: Barring more bad weather, the Trojans will be really busy this week, with three games in four days: Feb. 5, home vs. North Dickinson; Feb. 6, the makeup game at Mid Pen; and Feb. 8, home vs. Rapid River.

Three more next week, all on the road: Feb. 11 at Florence, Feb. 12 at Republic-Michigamme and Feb. 15 at Bark River-Harris.