

**RICHARD MONTGOMERY 61,
CHURCHILL 45**

Highlights: Nick Brown had 11 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists.

RM (10-2, 4-2) — Stephens 16, Fitzgerald 15, Brown 11, Tendrich 8, Hansberry 6, Mensah 3, Liu 2. **Totals 19 15-20 61.**

C (5-6, 1-3) — Eskin 15, Edens 8, Ely 4, Lewis 4, Nichols 4, Askinazi 3, Bass 3, Geenen 2, Simon 2. **Totals 17 9-18 45.**

Halftime: Richard Montgomery, 35-22.

Three-point goals: RM 8 (Fitzgerald 3, Brown 3, Tendrich 2); C 2 (Eskin, Bass).

Rebounds: RM 10 (Brown 10).

Assists: RM 8 (Brown 8).

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MONTGOMERY 4A WEST BOYS

Seniors and defense lead R. Montgomery

BY ALAN GOLDENBACH

Nick Brown and Dominique Hansberry, two of the 10 seniors on Richard Montgomery's boys' basketball team, have been playing alongside the same cast of characters for so long that an easy rapport has developed off the court.

The seniors have such a familiarity that it has allowed them to buy into a system on the court that focuses on defense and selflessness — two things that admittedly not many high schoolers would seize upon.

But it's tough not to when the result is a 48-35 home victory over No. 16 Northwest in a Montgomery County 4A West game and an 8-2 record.

Northwest (6-3, 2-1) entered Friday night's game averaging more than 60 points, but the

RICHARD MONTGOMERY	NORTHWEST
48	35

Shut 'em down: Richard Montgomery held Northwest senior Willy Lee, who entered averaging 18.3 points per game, to just 12.

Eyes on the prize: Richard Montgomery has never won a region title, but "that's what we're shooting for this year," senior guard Nick Brown said.

Jaguars became the seventh opponent Richard Montgomery (8-2, 2-2) has held to less than 45 points.

"Everyone else wants to be Kobe Bryant and score 80 points, but that's-not going to win you games," Brown said. "Defense is what Richard Montgomery is all about. [Coach Scott] Spear has gotten that into

our heads and that's what's gotten us to 8-2."

Spear has needed time to sell his system to his players. The Rockets' five starters — Brown, Hansberry, Shawn Stephens, T.J. Fitzgerald and Jonathan Mensah — all played varsity as sophomores and were a little taken aback by their coach's emphasis.

"Back then, it was a long learning process to get them to buy into this," Spear said. "It's not easy to get everyone to play hard defensively, but even if our shooting isn't good, we can stick in the game."

Against Northwest, Richard Montgomery scored the game's first eight points and never trailed, eventually building a 37-20 lead late in the third quarter.

However, the Rockets' shooting went cold and they got sloppy with the ball, allowing North-

west to reel off 11 consecutive points to pull to within 37-31 with about six minutes left in the game.

But the Rockets fell back on their "bread and butter," as Spear called it.

Stephens made a solid box-out for a rebound and Brown finished with a nice midrange jumper off a curl. Then, Hansberry made a terrific stop in the lane to start a fast break that ended with a layup by Fitzgerald.

Northwest didn't score another field goal until there were 24 seconds left and the game was well in hand.

"If we held a team like that to 35 points, it's better than me scoring 20 or anything," said Hansberry, who had a game-high 13 points. "Man, I'd score zero if we could do that."

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