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ASHEBORO - High School basketball teams with a solid inside presence can be easy to defend. Pack the defense in, double-team or even triple-team the inside power and chances are the defensive team will be able to at least slow down any interior play.

Unless that team has an outside shooter who demands just as much attention as the inside player.

The Asheboro High School boys varsity basketball team certainly has a strong inside presence, but that inside presence is made even more dangerous because of the sharp-shooting talents of senior Cam Walker.

Walker's deadly shooting from the perimeter not only opens the inside for players like Jerquarius Stanback, but he can bring the Blue Comets back quickly from any deficit or help extend any advantage on the scoreboard.

"When Cam can make some shots, they can't run three people down there and surround him because someone has got to find Cam and guard him," AHS coach Brian Nance said after Thursday night's 60-47 Mid-Piedmont Conference Tournament semifinal win over North Davidson, a win that earned the Blue Comets a berth into tonight's MPC Tournament championship game against once-beaten Central Davidson.

Walker has certainly been doing his part to free up the inside by forcing the opposition to guard the perimeter. Walker has nailed 68 long-distance shots, including a key one in Thursday's win as his late 3-pointer pushed the AHS lead to 56-47 with 2:35 to play which took the air out of the Black Knights. He now has 68 3-pointers on the season after being a big part of AHS' 20-6 record and a MPC championship a year ago.

"I think I've been a pretty good shooter when I came to this team and when I made the team, I felt that hole was kinda missing, so I felt I could fill that role and work on my game to get where we are," said Walker, who will be a key ingredient tonight as AHS looks to claim a tournament title.



Asheboro senior Cam Walker. Photo by Carly Denise Shackelford.



Walker in Thursday night's semi-final action at Martin Smith Gymnasium. Photo by Carly Denise Shackelford.

"He could always shoot the basketball," Nance said. "Even when we first kept him as a sophomore. He has added so much to his game. He couldn't put the ball on the floor and attack, he wasn't a good passer. He would stand still and if he could get open, he could shoot it. He has really worked hard on coming off screens. It started at the end of last season and he's taken it to another level this season."

Walker is averaging 15.9 points per game this year. But Walker does far more than just fire up long-range missiles. He is a strong ball-handler who drives to the basket, has great court awareness in finding players underneath

for easy layups and his defensive quickness leads to numerous turnovers for the opposition.

Yet, his 3-point shooting is as key for the Blue Comets as any statistic each game.

"A big part of it is keeping your confidence up," Walker said of his shooting. "When the first shot of the game or the second shot of the game doesn't fall, that doesn't mean you quit shooting."

And in part because of just that, the Blue Comets keep on winning.