

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP - The Pleasantville High School boys basketball team made the most of its second chances Tuesday night.

The Greyhounds won their sixth straight with a 67-59 victory over Egg Harbor Township in a Cape-Atlantic League interdivision game.

Pleasantville scored numerous key second-half baskets off offensive rebounds. Greyhounds guard Michael Black scored 24 points. Pleasantville overcame 26 points from EHT guard Rahim Bunch.

"We've got talent," Pleasantville coach Kenny Johnson said. "But we've always had issues playing as a team. If we play together as a team, we have a chance to beat anybody. I think they're starting to get that. It's making a difference."

One play in particular typified Pleasantville's effort Tuesday.

Greyhounds guard Josh Evans (15 points) spun in the lane and made a move toward the basket in the third quarter. An EHT player blocked his shot.

Evans fell flat on his back. He maintained control of the ball and passed it to a teammate. A few seconds later, the ball was back in his hands and Evans sank an 8-foot baseline jumper.

"I was just trying to attack," Evans said. "Our coach always says play aggressive, attack and have fun. That's what we try to do. We work on a lot of defensive drills, a lot of box-out drills. All that comes in play during the game. We don't practice for nothing."

The game matched two of the hottest teams in the CAL. Pleasantville (8-4) hasn't lost since a 77-72 defeat to St. Joseph on Jan. 5. EHT (6-5) entered Tuesday's game having won five of its last six contests.

This is also a rivalry game. Egg Harbor Township and Pleasantville border each other, and many of the players grew up knowing each other.

"I played AAU with a couple of their guys, stayed over their houses," Black said. "I've got my family in the crowd. I couldn't let my family down."

Black didn't.

Pleasantville took a lead it never relinquished with a 13-3 run to start the second half. That spurt turned a three-point halftime deficit into a 39-32 Pleasantville lead with 4 minutes, 41 seconds left in the third quarter.

Black scored 10 points during the run. He sank two 3-pointers and scored on a putback and a fast-break layup. Black scored 10 points in the first quarter but spent most of the second quarter on the bench with two fouls.

"I had to come out in the second half and spark it back up," Black said. "My team expects me to do that."

EHT cut Pleasantville's lead to one point four times in the fourth quarter. Each time, Pleasantville responded with a basket, often after grabbing an offensive rebound. Neil Peters was particularly effective inside for the Greyhounds, with six of his 12 points in the final eight minutes.

EHT might have been taller than Pleasantville, but the Greyhounds were stronger.

"We didn't do a good job of getting bodies in the lane," EHT coach George McNally said. "They may not have made all their shots, but they went and got (the misses)."

Tuesday's victory and their current six-game winning streak has the Greyhounds feeling good about themselves. All six wins during the streak have come on the road.

"I think we have something special with this team," Evans said. "There's a lot of chemistry. We've been playing together since we were little. This time here is all together."