

DEFENSE SMOTHERS POPES

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THE BASICS

- ❖ **Final Score:** Wisconsin Lutheran 70, Pius XI Catholic 29
- ❖ **Rankings (Coaches Poll | Media Poll):** Wisconsin Lutheran: D1 #1 | #1
- ❖ **Records:** Wisconsin Lutheran: 15-0 (6-0 Woodland West) / Pius XI Catholic: 4-10 (2-5 Woodland West)
- ❖ **Location and Date:** Wisconsin Lutheran High School / January 22, 2026

HOW IT HAPPENED

- ❖ The Wisco offense took a bit to get going, but the defense was locked in from the start. The Vikings held Pius scoreless for the first 8:12 of the game. On the other side, the team began to find its rhythm in the latter part of the half. A Xavier Zens triple started a stretch in which the blue-and-white scored on eight of nine possessions. A pair of steals and dunks from Kager Knueppel and buckets from Kinston Knueppel and Nathan Tranberg helped the team open up a 28-8 lead.
- ❖ The Vikings took a 38-16 lead into the locker room on the strength of a defense that held the Popes to just 5-22 (22.7%) shooting in the first half. In the second half, the defense picked up right where it left off. Wisco held Pius without a field goal for the first 9:34 of the second half. Meanwhile, five different Vikings scored as the

lead ballooned to 57-18. The team finished strong, keeping the visitors to just four baskets in 17 tries(23.5%) in the second half.

KEY NUMBERS

- ❖ Xavier Zens led a balanced scoring attack with 15 points and a team-high six rebounds and five assists. Kager Knueppel was right behind him with 14 points, 4 rebounds, 3 assists, and a career-high five steals. Kinston Knueppel added 13 points and Jamail Sewell gave out a career-high five assists to go along with four points and four boards.
- ❖ The Vikings shot 58.3% from the floor while limiting Pius to 23.1%. They defeated the Popes 34-21 on the glass and forced 14 turnovers in 52 possessions.

LOWER LEVELS

- ❖ The JV team defeated Pius 78-62 to improve to 12-0 on the season and 6-0 in conference..
- ❖ The JV2 team also moved to 12-0 and 6-0 with a 68-56 win over the Popes.

UP NEXT

- ❖ The Vikings finish the first round of conference action on Tuesday, January 27, when they travel to New Berlin Eisenhower for a 7 PM contest. Tickets can be purchased on [Bound](#).

HISTORY

- ❖ [All-Time Series](#): Pius XI leads 26-25. The Vikings have won 20 straight matchups and are 22-2 vs. the Popes in the 21st century.
- ❖ Wisco won its [25th consecutive game](#) overall, which ties them for the third-best streak in school history. They also extended their school-record home winning streak to 39 games.