

Falcons face key test at William Monroe Friday

By EVAN BENTON

Central boys' basketball team is emerging from its Christmas break facing an uphill battle.

The Falcons lost four straight before the holiday break, the last one 51-49 at home against Skyline Dec. 22.

Central, 1-3 in the Bull Run District, will play at William Monroe Friday at 7:45 p.m.

William Monroe currently is holding down second place in the district behind Strasburg. Manassas Park is in third place.

If the Falcons hope to contend, they will need to im-

prove their performance in the weeks ahead.

Junior forward Travis Cooper is leading the Falcons' scoring stats with an average of 20 points per game. Cooper is connecting on 56 percent of his shots from the field.

Center Brandon Ritter, who struggled last year from the

field, is second in scoring with nearly 13 points per game and is making good 62 percent his shots, while fellow juniors Hayden Bauserman and Ricky Neff are knocking down about eight points a game.

The supporting cast helps out, but day in and day out the Falcons' success depends

on Cooper, who is collecting about eight rebounds and five assists a game, and his ability to get to the line. Cooper has made 38 of 51 free throws.

Cooper often plays a hybrid point-forward, especially when the team is trailing and so his turnover ratio is high, but the payoff—he's scored 164

points in eight games — is always potentially huge.

The offense will continue to run through Cooper, but the underperforming supporting cast—true center Zach Herbaugh, Neff, and seniors Eric Semones and Wyatt Hitt—will need to step up if the Falcons are to win consistently.