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NEWS - O'FALLON PROGRESS - O'FALLON SPORTS

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## East St. Louis gets past O'Fallon

Two Panthers did not play in game because of injuries

BY DEAN CRIDDLE - News-Democrat

EAST ST. LOUIS -- The East St. Louis Flyerettes awoke in the nick of time Thursday against the O'Fallon Panthers. Sophomore Joymesia Howard scored 10 of her 16 points in the fourth quarter to help the sluggish Flyerettes hold off the injury-stricken Panthers 49-40 in a Southwestern Conference game.

Playing without two of its top offensive threats in senior Stephanie Copelin (sprained ankle) and sophomore Taylor Klingelhoefler (concussion), O'Fallon still managed a 29-26 lead with under two minutes left in the third quarter following the final two of eight straight points from reserve Michelle Lay.

But East St. Louis (6-1, 13-2) responded by scoring eight of the final 10 points of the quarter to take a 34-31 lead.

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O'Fallon's Sabre Flager passes the ball away from East St. Louis' Alexas Brown. - Zia Nizami/BND

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The fourth quarter was all Howard as the gifted 6-1 forward scored on three short jumpers and combined with senior Tierra Snow to make six straight free throws in the closing 90 seconds to clinch the win.

"She (Howard) came up with some big plays down the stretch when we needed them tonight," a relieved Flyerettes coach Hubert Butler said. "We didn't look sharp, but we were able to get the job done."

Senior point guard Alexas Brown added eight points for East St. Louis, which remains one game behind unbeaten Edwardsville in the battle for the SWC title.

But playing for the first time since finishing second in the Peoria Manual Holiday Tournament, the Flyerettes were anything but sharp. O'Fallon (5-4, 12-6) committed 17 first half turnovers, but was still down only 20-19 at halftime as the Flyerettes turned the ball over 12 times.

"We hadn't played since the Manual Tournament and you could tell it. We were sluggish and O'Fallon played hard," Butler said.

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Lay, a seldom used reserve for much of the season, played like a seasoned veteran in the third quarter. Connecting on three 10 foot jumpers and then drilling a jumper from just inside the 3-point arc, she gave the Panthers a lead late in the third quarter.

But in the end, Howard made too many big plays down the stretch.

"We've got two of our top players out in Klingelhoef and Copelin. That's 26 points and for these girls to come down here and play a very good East St. Louis team to basically a five point game until they made some free throws down the stretch, is a great effort. They played hard to the end," O'Fallon coach Ryan Massey said.

Freshman Katie Roustio led O'Fallon with 14 points.

Contact reporter Dean Criddle at 239-2665 or [dcriddle@bnd.com](mailto:dcriddle@bnd.com).

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