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Klingelhoefler steps up for O'Fallon

She pours in 24 points in win over East

BY DEAN CRIDDLE NEWS-DEMOCRAT - O'FALLON -- O'Fallon coach Ryan Massey has been waiting for sophomore Taylor Klingelhoefler to have a breakout game. Massey's wait now is over.

In the Panthers 53-34 win over Belleville East on Friday, Klingelhoefler scored 17 of her 24 points in the first half. Stephanie Copelin added 15 points as O'Fallon remained undefeated in Southwestern Conference play as it rolled to a win over the cold-shooting Lancers.

"Taylor is capable of having big games like that. I've been waiting for her to break out and the older she is the more consistent she'll get," Massey said. "She's young. She's only 10 games into her sophomore year and with the addition of some other of our younger girls and our seniors, we've got some firepower."

The win is the ninth in a row for O'Fallon after an season-opening one-point loss to Mascoutah.

"We're pleased at where we are and how we're playing. But we know we've got a tough stretch in front of us starting with Highland at the Mascoutah Tournament in eight days," Massey said. "We've got some time to work on some things and hopefully improve heading into the second half of the season."

The loss is the fourth in a row for East (4-6, 1-4 SWC), which got a 19-point effort from senior Charliesha Westbrook.

But despite the performance of Westbrook, the Lancers struggled committing 17 turnovers and often being outthusted by the Panthers.

"We just didn't come out ready to play and that's disappointing because we had played well the last couple of times out. Right now we're inconsistent," Lancers coach Andrea Seipp said. "Chaliesha (Westbrook) is capable of taking over a game every time out and she played well, but I wasn't happy with the way we played. We're a much better team than what we showed tonight."

Klingelhoefler scored nine first-quarter points while East's Westbrook had eight as both players started fast. An offensive rebound and basket by Copelin and a short jumper by Klingelhoefler at the end of the period gave the Panthers a 15-10 lead.

Copelin, who along with senior Camihya Tally, combined for 17 rebounds, then started a 10-0 run with a 3-pointer as O'Fallon opened a 28-15 lead with under a minute remaining in the first half.

"I thought the job that Tally and Copelin did on the boards was a big part of us winning tonight," Massey said. "They did a tremendous job."

Trailing 30-19 at halftime, East would get no closer than eight points the rest of the way.

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