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Knights need a late surge to post win over O'Fallon

BY DEAN CRIDDLE - News-Democrat

MASCOUTAH -- For just the second time this season, the Mater Dei Knights were pushed to the limit Wednesday at the Mascoutah Girls Invitational.

And for the second time, someone stepped up as a difference maker. Only this time, it wasn't senior standout Brooke Schulte.

Junior Emily Koelling scored eight of her 22 points to spark a 17-0 Knights scoring burst to end the game as Mater Dei outlasted O'Fallon 59-42 in a quarterfinal contest.

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O'Fallon (5-3), getting 10 points apiece from Katie Roustio and Taylor Klingelhofer, led twice in the second half, the last time coming at 36-34 late in the third quarter following a 3-pointer from Katlin Kendall.

Klingelhofer then tied the score at 42 with 6:57 with a short jumper. But those points proved to be the final ones of the game for O'Fallon.

Koelling scored the next six points as Mater Dei slowly pulled away.

"It was a battle," Knights coach Dave Kohnen said. "It was a game where both teams had mismatches they tried to take

advantage of and fortunately we were able to come out on top.

"Emily (Koelling) has been scoring a little more for us lately. We were able to get her the ball down low and she was able to convert."

Schulte led the way for the Knights with 23 points. Mater Dei (13-0) advances to the semifinals at 1 p.m. today where it will play Central.

Mater Dei edged Central by three points earlier this month.

For O'Fallon it was a near miss at a huge upset.

"We had some chances. It seemed like there was a lid on our basket for most of the first half," Panthers coach Ryan Massey said. "I don't think the final score was indicative of how close this game was. We just didn't get any breaks to go our way."

Central 53, Belleville West 32

The Cougars (12-2) played a near flawless first half and had little trouble in dismantling the cold-shooting Maroons in the quarterfinals.

One of the shorter players on the court at 5-feet, 4-inches, junior April Gebke connected on four 3-pointers in the first 10 minutes while the physical presence of 6-0 senior Taylor Voss helped the Cougars dominate inside against the cold-shooting and error-prone Maroons (6-7).

"We came out and played very well from the start. We want to play four good quarters each time we take the floor. Tonight, I thought we played well for 28-29 minutes," Central coach Nathan Rueter said. "What (April) Gebke did out there tonight is the way she's capable of playing every time she takes the floor."

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Gebke led Central with 22 points, 20 of which came in the first half when the Cougars built a 33-13 lead.

Voss added 16 for Central. Samantha Voegtler led West with 14 points.

Althoff 68, Highland 61

Four good quarters of basketball was just enough for the Crusaders, who survived a Bulldogs fourth-quarter rally to move into the semifinals against undefeated Nashville.

Alece Shumpert led a balanced Althoff attack with 17 points and Kymber Hill was a perfect 6-of-6 from the foul line in the final 90 seconds to help seal the win.

"It was a good win. We played four full quarters today," Althoff coach Todd Hill said. "We've had games where we play well in the first half then we have that third quarter where teams get back into the game.

"We didn't have that today. We actually extended the lead in the third quarter and that was good to see. We had five players in double figures and I'm very happy with the effort."

Highland (7-6) was sluggish for the first three quarters. Badly beaten on the boards, Highland trailed 50-39 midway through the second half and by 14 points early in the fourth quarter.

But three straight Althoff turnovers and a 7-0 Bulldog scoring run later and Highland was down by just seven with over two minutes remaining.

Highland would get as close as 57-54 with 1:34 left on a basket by Emily Michael, but Jasmine Stubblefield went the length of the court to score on a layup and Hill made two free throws to stretch the lead back to seven.

"Let's give Highland some credit. For what was at stake, they weren't going to go home," Hill said. "We persevered and got the win."

Nashville 52, Mount Vernon 23

The Hornettes' trademark defense was on display in the first half as they held the Rams scoreless in the first quarter and to just four first-half points as Nashville breezed into the semifinals.

Erica Brown scored 11 of her game-high 21 points in the first nine minutes as Nashville built leads of 18-0 after one quarter and 27-4 at halftime.

The first-half effort was in sharp contrast to Nashville's lackluster 42-40 win over Carlyle on Tuesday.

"We were ready to play today," Hornettes coach Wayne Harre said. "We talked about it and I didn't think we played very good position defense against Carlyle. We did a much better job of it tonight."

Nashville (13-0), also got nine points apiece from Jolie Woll and Jordi Harre.

Freeburg 56, Okawville 42

Taylor Poindexter and Caitlin Busch combined for four 3-pointers in the first five minutes and the Midgets took an early lead they would never relinquish in moving into the consolation semifinals.

Kelsey Mueller paced Freeburg with 19 points, while Busch added 18. Poindexter chipped in with 10. Megan Wienstroer paced Okawville with 19 points.

Belleville East 75, Carlyle 40

Alexis Brown led a trio of Lancers into double figures with 23 points and East made eight of nine free throws in the final three minutes as the Lancers rebounded from a tough first-round loss.

Anecia Brewster added 17 and Mariah Sunkett added 16. Indians junior Paige Rakers led all scorers with 31 points.

Mascoutah 59, Riverview Gardens 27

Nearly everybody got into the act as the Indians rolled to an easy win.

Twelve Indians -- led by 12 points apiece from Jessica Scinto and Emily Knowles -- scored points for Mascoutah.

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