

## Lady Panthers continue winning ways

By Steve Oliver - Progress Sports Writer

Buoyed by their successful run in the Taylorville Thanksgiving tourney, the OTHS girls' basketball squad continued their winning ways on the road this past week in Granite City. Behind the double digit scoring of Stephanie Copelin (15), Taylor Klingelhoef (14), and Katie Roustio (10), the OTHS girls withstood a fourth quarter rally by the host Warriors to collect a 49-44 victory.

After the two teams matched baskets in the first period which ended in a 10-10 tie, the Panthers turned up the offensive heat a notch in the second stanza. Relying on the offensive punch of their baseline and post players, O'Fallon began to expand a lead that resulted in a 28-17 halftime advantage. Copelin, Klingelhoef and Roustio did the most damage during the Panther run.

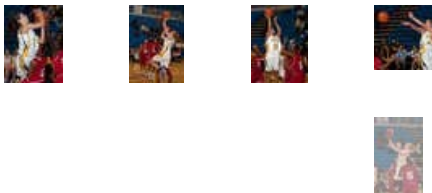
Staked to an 11-point advantage as the second half began, the OTHS girls did not slow their offensive production while shutting down the Granite City offense even more effectively than they had done in the second quarter.

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Panther guard Taylor Klingelhoef (32) drives to the basket for a layup on Tuesday night.

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A bucket by Roustio and a 3-point basket by Klingelhoef got the O'Fallon girls off on the right first as the second half began, but it was an excellent defensive effort that allowed the Panthers to significantly increase their lead. O'Fallon allowed only five points during the frame, expanding their lead to 43-22.

"Our girls did a great job in the middle two quarters in denying the ball to their scorers and controlling the boards on both ends of the floor," said OTHS coach Ryan Massey. "We were able to convert enough on the offensive end to give us some breathing room as we began the fourth period."

As it turned out, the O'Fallon girls would need the point cushion as Granite City mounted a furious comeback, scoring the same amount of points (22) that they had produced in the first three quarters. In the final minutes of the contest, the clock couldn't tick off the seconds fast enough as the 20-plus OTHS lead began to evaporate.

Clutch free throw shooting helped hold off the Granite City charge with Klingelhoef connecting on four out of four charity tosses and Copelin finishing the game a perfect 6-for-6 from the free throw line.

The Panther girls repeated their recipe for success on Tuesday evening in a home game against the Alton Redbirds. Dominating the paint with just enough scoring from the perimeter, Coach Ryan

Massey's squad broke a 10-10 tie at the end of the first quarter with a power surge during periods two and three that sealed O'Fallon's seventh victory in eight outings.

Once again, the Panthers' three post players proved the difference. Sophomore Taylor Klingelhoef scored nine of her team high 14 points in the first half while freshman post player Katie Roustio added eight points to take a 27-14 lead by the halftime break.

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