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O'Fallon aims to build on strong finish

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By **Scott Marion** | STLhighschoolsports.com | [No Comments Posted](#) | Posted: Tuesday, January 4, 2011 5:00 pm



It wasn't quite as exciting as winning the championship, but coach Ryan Massey hopes claiming the consolation trophy at last week's Mascoutah Invitational will give the O'Fallon girls some momentum heading into the 2011 portion of the schedule.

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After a first-round overtime loss to Freeburg, the Panthers defeated Mount Vernon, Centralia and Carbondale to win the consolation title for the second year in a row. O'Fallon was 8-5 overall

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Mascoutah's Allison Wuebbels (33) is guarded by Althoff's Amarah Brooks-Williams during a recent game. The host Indians were 1-2 at last week's Mascoutah Invitational, losing to Althoff in a fifth-place semifinal. The Crusaders lost to Breese Central in the fifth-place game. (John Swistak Jr. / Journal)

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and 1-3 in the Southwestern Conference going into Tuesday's home game against Belleville West.

"I'm much more pleased than I was early on," Massey said. "It's been slow progress, but I think we've fixed some major problems. We're playing a lot harder, which makes a huge difference, and we've improved on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball."

Katie Roustio, a 6-2 sophomore who is averaging 9.8 points and 9.6 rebounds per game, missed the Carbondale game with a sprained ankle. She

was expected to be able to play on Tuesday.

Junior Taylor Klingelhoef, who also missed a game recently with an injury, leads the team in scoring with 13.3 points per game.

"She's having problems with inflammation and pain in the Achilles' tendon (in her right leg), but it's something she's going to have to play through," Massey said. "At Mascoutah, you could tell she was kind of hobbling on the floor, but she gutted it out."

Massey is equally pleased with several other girls, including freshmen Ciara Jones and Taylor Underwood, who have gotten significant playing time.

"Kendall Butler had a big game against Centralia with 16 points, including 4-of-5 from 3-point land," Massey said. "Kaitlin Kendall is a good shooter and her time will come."

Freeburg goes 1-2

Freeburg, meanwhile, lost 67-37 to Mater Dei in the quarterfinals and was ousted from the tournament with a 52-29 loss to Breese Central in the fifth-place semifinals. The Midgets, who were scheduled to play host to Central after Journal press time Monday in the teams' third meeting of the season, entered the week at 5-7 overall and 2-2 in the Mississippi Division of the Cahokia Conference.

"Entering that tournament, the first thing everybody understands is that it's brutal and the competition is so tough," Freeburg coach Fred Blumberg said. "The main thing is you don't want to go there and play two games and leave."

"That first game was a really good one for us and we did a lot of nice things to beat O'Fallon. Against Mater Dei, the kids knew they were undefeated and we were a severe underdog. You want to play well enough that you can hang with them into the second half and maybe have a chance to beat them, but very few teams are able to hang with them."

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"The big disappointment was that we didn't compete very well against Central. We were looking to give them a much better game. They beat us by 15 the first time (60-45 at Central on Dec. 2), but we didn't play very well in either game."

Freeburg has six more conference games, including the contest against Central.

"The conference is our main focus, but we also have some challenging non-conference games, including Centralia and Mater Dei plus the Highland Tournament," Blumberg said. "One of the worst things you can do as far as setting goals is to say something like 'we need to win seven of the next 10 games' because if you don't reach those numbers, you put even more pressure on the kids. We just want to keep getting better and hopefully play well in every game."

Althoff falls in fifth-place game

Althoff is another team looking to get back on the winning track after the Mascoutah tourney. The Crusaders opened with a win over Riverview Gardens, lost to Belleville West in the quarterfinals and defeated Mascoutah in the fifth-place semifinals before absorbing a 66-31 shellacking from Central in the fifth-place game.

The Crusaders were 8-5 overall and 4-0 in the South Seven Conference heading into Wednesday's home game against Mater Dei. They played the last two games at Mascoutah without senior guard Janel Whitworth, who tore the ACL in her left knee in the Belleville West game. She will have surgery and miss the rest of the season.

"We kind of crumbled and folded in those last two games without Janel, so that's something we have to work on," Althoff coach Lori Crunk said. "We'll be looking at changing things around and putting girls in different positions and using different lineups."

"(Freshman guard) Rachel Kaltwasser was kind of thrown into the fire at Mascoutah. But once we have a chance to work with her and she gets comfortable with the girls, it will help her."

With Whitworth out of the lineup, the team's only senior is 6-1 center Amarah Brooks-Williams, who is averaging 14.5 points per game. Alece Shumpert (9.2 ppg) and Jazmine Stubblefield (7.8 ppg) have also been key contributors.

"Jazmine and Alece know they have to step it up even more with Janel not playing, but you're talking about a sophomore and a junior, so it might take us a while," Crunk said. "I told the girls after the tournament to enjoy their time off and not to think about basketball, and when they come back this week, we'll break it down into fundamentals and see where it goes."

Belleville West finishes fourth

Belleville West, which beat Okawville in the first round, ended up in fourth place, losing 51-32 to

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Nashville in the semifinals and losing 57-29 to Mater Dei in the third-place game. The Maroons were 9-6 overall and 1-3 in the SWC heading into Tuesday's game at O'Fallon.

"With the schedule we play, 9-6 is not too bad and I'm certainly not panicking," West coach Clayton Fisher said. "I think we're right where we should be.

"In the second half of the season, we just want to continue to get better and there are a few more wins to pick up if we play well. We have a lot of home games and that should work to our advantage.

"We have found a way to win some games that we might have lost last year, when we didn't fare well against tough competition. We've beaten a good Althoff team twice and we had a nice home win against Belleville East. But we need to find a way to beat teams like Nashville, Mater Dei and East St. Louis."

West has been solid offensively, with senior Erika McCaster leading the way at 21.7 points per game. But the Maroons have been inconsistent on defense.

"We need to guard people a little better and we might play some

more zone in the second half," Fisher said. "We have to do a better job of stopping good teams from scoring."

Mascoutah wins one, then loses two

Mascoutah posted a 1-2 mark at the tournament. After beating Carbondale in the first round, the host Indians lost 32-15 to Nashville in the quarterfinals and were eliminated with a 61-56 loss to Althoff in the fifth-place semifinals. Mascoutah was 8-4 overall and 3-1 in the Mississippi Valley Conference heading into Tuesday's game at Centralia.

"We got closer the second time around against Althoff, but we also got off to a very poor start," Indians coach Terry Moeller said. "It was 7-0 before we even knew we were on the floor.

"I thought the tournament went off very well with some very good games. It was a classic championship game with two very good teams (Highland and Nashville) battling it out.

"It was also good for our team because we faced some tough competition. We have a lot of room for improvement, but one thing I've learned is that these girls work hard and they're willing to learn."

Senior Danielle Amann-Stewart, the team's leading scorer the past two years, is leading the Indians again this season with 13.4 points per game.

"Jasmyne Harris and Sierra McCoy have been very steady for us and they've had some good games," Moeller said. "I was pleased with the way Jessica Scinto stepped up against Althoff. If she continues to make that kind of improvement, we'll be fine.

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"Our defense has been solid every game. But we've got to find a way to increase our offensive production."

Belleville East drops a pair of games

Belleville East was 0-2 at Mascoutah, losing 64-44 to Centralia in the consolation quarterfinals after a 51-50 first-round loss to Central. The Lancers were 5-7 overall and 3-2 in the SWC heading into Tuesday's game at Alton.

"I thought we played pretty well against Breese Central, so it was deflating for the girls to lose by one point," East coach Andrea Seipp said. "Our intensity just wasn't there for the Centralia game, so we hope to bounce back with a couple conference games this week."

Mariah Sunkett, a 6-1 junior, has become a dominant force on the post, averaging 14.4 points and 10.3 rebounds per game.

"Mariah is playing the way we thought she could play," Seipp said. "I credit our guards for doing a good job of getting her the basketball. She's averaging 10 to 15 rebounds a game, but we need some other kids to step up.

"Alexis Brown has provided a spark offensively. She has the ability to take the ball to the basket and drive and dish to Mariah, but she's also a good shooter. Stacy Hodge has been very consistent from the 3-point line.

"We need to focus on getting in better shape because a lot of our mental mistakes and turnovers are the result of being tired. Defensively, we're giving up too many points and that puts a lot of pressure on our offense."

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