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Sunday, Jan. 23, 2011 0 Comments

Brown leads way in Lancers' win

BY STEVE KORTE - News-Democrat

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O'FALLON -- As Alexis Brown goes, so go the Belleville East Lancers.

And, everything was going well for Lancers on Saturday afternoon as Brown scored a career-high 28 points in a 69-61 overtime win over the O'Fallon Panthers in a Southwestern Conference girls basketball game.

East coach Andrea Seipp said she talked to Brown at halftime about how she was the tone-setter for the Lancers.

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"When she plays hard or she gets steals or she takes the ball to the basket, everyone responds to that," Seipp said. "She did a great job of stepping up and hitting those free throws at the end. She's really matured into a good varsity player."

The 5-foot-7 junior guard scored 17 of her points in the second half and overtime. She scored the final five points in overtime on three free throws and a steal that she converted into a breakaway layup.

"I wanted to make sure that we got the win," said Brown, who was 12-for-15 from the free-throw line in the game. "I wanted

to get the win for my team, so I played really hard."

The Lancers (9-8, 7-3) won for the fourth time in their last five games.

They also got 15 points from Stacy Hodge and nine points from Jasmine Finley.

The Panthers (11-8, 4-6) were led by Taylor Klingelhoef with 18 points. She was 12-for-16 from the free-throw line.

Kaitlin Kendall added 16 points and Katie Roustio had 11 points, 12 rebounds and seven blocked shots.

The Panthers were without Klingelhoef when they lost 66-37 to the Lancers earlier this season, but this time the two teams looked evenly matched.

"It was a nicely played game for both teams as far as their effort and intensity," O'Fallon coach Ryan Massey said. "I thought Belleville East played extremely hard, and I thought my girls left it all on the floor. You can't ask for anything better than that as two high school basketball coaches."

The score was tied seven times in the second half.

A 3-pointer by Kaitlin Kendall with 28 seconds left knotted up the score for the final time in regulation.

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"Kaitlin Kendall did a great job of stepping up with confidence, and she knocked that down," Massey said. "She's a tremendous shooter. When she gets wide open, I want her to let it ride."

O'Fallon's Taylor Underwood scored the first basket of overtime, but Hodge gave the Lancers the lead for good with a 3-pointer.

Hodge had missed four straight 3-pointers before connecting in overtime.

"We tell her, 'Keep shooting,' because her percentages are great," Seipp said of Hodge said. "I don't ever tell her to back off. If she feels like she has her legs under her, then she's got the green light to go."

Hodge scored on a layup to give the Lancers a three-point cushion.

Kendall scored the Panthers' last points on a layup with 2:21 left in overtime.

East's Megan Holl hit a shot from just inside the 3-point stripe and then Brown closed out the win.

In the overtime, the Panthers missed several shots from close range and were 0-for-4 from the free-throw line.

"It was one of those deals where we didn't execute in all facets of the game down the stretch, and they came down and hit big shots and they made free-throws down the stretch," Massey said. "That's why the score looks like it does."

The Panthers led 8-2 in the early going, and they stretched that advantage to 15-7 on a steal and layup by Klingelhofer.

Mariah Sunkett got the Lancers within a point on a rebound basket off a missed free throw, but Klingelhofer hit two free throws with 39 seconds left in the second quarter to put the Panthers ahead by three points, 27-24, at halftime.

Contact reporter Steve Korte at skorte@bnd.com or 239-2522.

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