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O'Fallon takes a go-slow approach in league win against Belleville East

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Belleville East's Montira Mosby (15) defends Kendall Butler of O'Fallon during Friday's Southwestern Conference game. (John Swistak Jr. | Journal) [Buy this photo](#)

O'FALLON, III. • Playing a slow-down game and working for every shot was the game plan for the O'Fallon girls basketball team Friday night.

The plan worked near perfection thanks to contributions from Kaitlin Kendall, Taylor Klingelhoef and Katie Rousio. With those three leading the way, the Panthers downed Belleville East 72-59 in the first game of a girls-boys Southwestern Conference doubleheader at O'Fallon.

O'Fallon improved to 3-2 overall and 3-1 in the league as Kendall poured in a game-high 26 points and Klingelhoef added 25. Roustio helped with 10 rebounds.

East fell to 5-5 and 2-3. Alexis Brown led the Lancers with 22 points. Brittany Hodge scored 16 off the bench.

"We watched them play the other night (Tuesday at home against Belleville West), and we noticed they played really fast," Klingelhoef said. "We feel like we play better when we slow it down and look first instead of always going fast. By slowing down, we got our heads up."

And it worked for most of the game. The first nine minutes of the game was played back and forth and the score was tied 16-16 after one quarter.

The Panthers grabbed the lead for good using an 8-0 burst in the second quarter to go from a 21-18 deficit to a 26-21 lead on a bucket by Kendall with 3 minutes 47 seconds to go in the first half. O'Fallon held a 33-25 halftime lead.

"The tempo of the game obviously worked to our advantage," Panthers coach Ryan Massey said. "Belleville East is so athletic and so good in transition that it's going to be to their advantage. Tonight our girls just did an excellent of executing our game plan. We made some mistakes. It's a learning lesson for our girls and it's a confidence-builder for our girls."

That confidence nearly took a hit late in the third and early in the fourth quarters when East used an 8-1 run to pull to within one point, 46-45, on a 3-pointer from the right corner by Hodge with 7:08 left.

But O'Fallon kept its cool and slowly pulled away. In fact, the Panthers sank 18 of 20 foul shots in the final quarter.

"I just felt (slowing down) was going to work," said Klingelhoef. "We have a saying 'Team Over Me.' We put that in our practices and put it in our game, and it really showed tonight."

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