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NEWS - O'FALLON HIGH SCHOOL

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2011 0 comments

Panthers finally click on all cylinders in girls win over East

BY DEAN CRIDDLE - News-Democrat

O'FALLON -- To coin a familiar baseball phrase, the O'Fallon Panthers picked up their first complete-game victory of the season on Friday at the Panther Dome.

Seniors Katlin Kendall and Taylor Klingelhoefner combined for 49 points and the Panthers' defense kept high-scoring Belleville East senior Mariah Sunkett in check as O'Fallon waltzed past Belleville East 72-59 in a Southwestern Conference game.

Picked to be one of the top teams in the SWC before the season, O'Fallon had played well in spurts in its first four games.



But against the Lancers, O'Fallon put everything together for an entire game.

"We played 32 minutes for the first time this year. We played 16 minutes last Thursday against Collinsville and that didn't work out too well for us," O'Fallon coach Ryan Massey said. "We decided to come out and play a second half tonight and it worked out well.

"We had a game plan and the girls executed that game plan."

East (5-5, 2-3 SWC), which got a combined nine 3-point baskets and 38 points from guards Alexis Brown and Brittany Hodge,

forged a 42-all tie after three quarters.

Hodge, who connected on four 3-point shots and had 16 points, got East to within 46-45 with her final 3 of the night with just under six minutes left in the game.

East then had two possessions to take the lead, but missed four shots, two coming from short range after grabbing offensive rebounds.

The Panthers' Ciara Jones then hit a free throw, Kendall drilled her fourth 3-pointer of the game and Klingelhoefner nailed two free throws in a 45-second span as the Panthers took a 52-45 lead.

East would get no closer than four points the rest of the game, as Kendall, Klingelhoefner and Katie Roustio combined to hit 12 straight free throws to clinch the win for O'Fallon.

"This is a big win for us. Belleville East is an excellent team with good players up front, guards who can shoot it and guards who can penetrate." Massey said. "I just thought our guards did a great job of staying in the game plan, playing hard and staying together as a unit.

"It was also nice to have some shots fall for us tonight."

Kendall led O'Fallon with 26 points, while Klingelhoefner, a four-year varsity player, chipped in with 23. They also combined to sink six 3-point baskets.

"They were very good tonight. I just couldn't find anyone who could stop them," Lancers coach Andrea Seipp said of the Panthers' duo.

"I just told the girls that we're too inconsistent. We'll do a good job on defense two or three straight possessions, then we'll give up an easy basket.

"I'm trying to get through to the girls that you can't be this inconsistent and expect to beat a good team like O'Fallon. That's not going to get it done."

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With Brown scoring eight of her 22 points early, East was tied with O'Fallon at 16 after a quarter. But with Kendall, a 6-foot senior, leading the way with eight second-quarter points, O'Fallon led 33-25 at halftime.

Kendall and Klingelhoefler didn't slow any in the final two quarters, either.

But O'Fallon managed to slow down East.

"We controlled the tempo and kept it slow," Massey said. "East is just so athletic that we didn't want to get into a horse race with them, because we couldn't win that way.

"I also thought we did a good job on (Mariah) Sunkett. She has hurt us in the past and so she was one of our focal points on the defensive end tonight. I thought we did a great job on her."

Sunkett scored just six points in the contest.

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