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 Friday, Jan. 27, 2012 0 comments

Panthers rally past Collinsville

BY STEVE KORTE - News-Democrat

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COLLINSVILLE -- Although he was having a hard time finding any beauty in it, O'Fallon coach Ryan Massey was glad to come away with a win.

Taylor Klingelhoefler scored 10 of her 18 points in the fourth quarter as the Panthers beat the Collinsville Kahoks 55-49 Thursday in a Southwestern Conference girls game.

"That was an ugly win, it really was," Massey said. "I would go as far as saying we probably had six or seven turnovers on traveling calls. And, they were travels. We can't have stuff like that. It's too late in the season. We have to tighten the screws a little bit."

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The Panthers (11-6, 8-3) committed 21 turnovers in the game, but they still picked up their fourth win in the their last five games.

"Obviously, a conference win, grinding it out like we did, I'll take that any day of the week, especially this time of the year," Massey said. "Obviously, I walk out of here happy to win, but (there are) so many things to take out of this that we need to work on."

The Panthers also got 11 points, eight rebounds and six blocks from 6-foot-2 junior Katie Roustio and eight points from Taylor

Underwood.

Klingelhoefler, a 5-6 senior guard, had eight rebounds. She was 8-for-9 from the free-throw line.

"She gets a lot from the line; she attacks the basket very well," Massey said. "She was very patient tonight. She didn't force it, she let the game come to her. It was a quiet 18 points, it wasn't anything flashy. Being a senior leader, she stepped up and made plays when she needed to."

The Kahoks (10-9, 3-7), who beat the Panthers 48-46 earlier this season, created havoc with their press in the first quarter.

However, foul trouble cost the Kahoks their early momentum.

"That's kind of been the tale of the season," Kahoks coach Lori Billy said. "We get into foul trouble, and it hurts us. It hurts us early, and then we have to claw our way back in (the game). We were able to get back in it tonight, tie it up. We had a shot, and then we got into some more foul trouble."

The Kahoks led 16-8 after a layup by Danielle Niepert early in the second quarter, but Karla Halde, Bell and Barrett would all pick up their second fouls in the period.

The Panthers scored 12 unanswered points during a 21-3 run that put them ahead 29-19 at halftime.

Roustio scored eight points in the second quarter to key the rally.

The Kahoks trailed by 13 points in the third quarter, but they fought back to tie the score at 46-46 on a basket by Tori Bell with 3:21 left in the fourth quarter.

Klingelhoefler sank two free throws with 2:26 left to put the Panthers back in the lead, and then she scored on a layup with 1:26 left to give them a four-point cushion.

"I was shooting from the outside, and it just wasn't going down." Klingelhoefler said. "I was

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taught when my shot isn't going down to take it (to the basket) or pass it out when I'm driving."

Ciara Jones added two free throws with six seconds remaining to give the Panthers a 52-46 lead.

A rebound basket by Katie McCarthy trimmed the Kahoks' deficit to four points with 39 seconds left, but they could draw no closer.

The Kahoks were paced by Niepert and Kayla Murphy with 14 points each. Shaye Barrett had eight points.

The Kahoks are seeded third next month in the Class 4A Belleville West Regional, which should be a battle royale with the top-seeded Panthers, second-seeded Belleville East and fourth-seeded West.

"There are four teams that are very similar, so it is going to be a tough regional, a very tough regional," Billy said. "It'll be interesting."

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

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