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## Two point win over West highlights Panther girls' week Lose to Edwardsville in Tuesday SWC action

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A 64-62 Southwestern Conference victory over Belleville West was the high point of the week for Coach Ryan Massey's OTHS girls' basketball squad. The local girls were able to put together four solid quarters to defeat the Maroons for the second time this season.

O'Fallon won the first encounter by three points. The two squads will meet for a third time next Tuesday in the Panther Dome in round one action of the IHSA Class 4A regional tournament.

The win could not have come at a more opportune time for the Panthers as they were coming off a three-game losing skid in the Webster Groves Winter Challenge. Conversely, Belleville West was riding on the crest of recent successes, having won seven of their last 10 games before the tipoff against the Panthers.

O'Fallon ended that victory run by the Maroons with a balanced scoring attack led by Taylor Klingelhoef, who pumped in 21 points. Kaitlin Kendall added 17, and Taylor Underwood contributed 10.

Kendall and Underwood picked up the scoring vacuum created by starter Katie Roustio's persistent foul problems throughout the contest that forced the sophomore scorer to spend much of the game on the bench.

The Panther girls demonstrated that scoring balance in the first period as they eased into a 15-11 lead, but Belleville West, behind leading scorer Erica McCaster, came roaring back in the second stanza, outscoring O'Fallon 23-13 to take a 34-28 advantage at intermission.

The Maroons continued their scoring run in the third quarter, extending their lead to as much as 11 before O'Fallon mounted a comeback. Defensively, the Panthers began to force the issue in the latter stages of the third period and into the fourth. Several steals resulted in baskets which began to cut into the Maroons' double-digit lead.

"Our girls showed a lot of determination in getting back into the game," said OTHS coach Ryan Massey. "It was a game of runs, and our squad had the last one."

The game ended dramatically when West's McCaster fired up a 3-point shot from the deep corner with four seconds remaining which would have given the Maroons the victory. The ball skimmed the rim and bounced harmlessly away, preserving the OTHS victory — their 15th of the season.

Coach Massey's charges were unable to extend their good fortune on Tuesday evening when they hosted the SWC front-running Edwardsville Tigers. In the first half, O'Fallon was able to keep pace with their visitors, trailing 14-12 after one period of play and 32-24 at halftime.

Both teams slowed their scoring pace in the final two quarters, but Edwardsville's defensive effort was a little better than the Panthers'. With scoring opportunities difficult to manufacture, O'Fallon was held to just 14 second half points and dropped a 53-38 decision. Taylor Klingelhoef was the only Panther player to hit for double figures, scoring 11.

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