

Krissi Tow sparks Xavier by Decorah

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 24 November 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Saturday, 01 January 2011 22:29

Tom Lilly spoke. Krissi Tow listened.

For the Xavier girls' basketball team, it was almost as simple as that.

Tow poured in 17 points in the second half Tuesday night to help the Saints defeat Decorah, 45-34, in their season opener at Xavier.

Xavier trailed, 21-15, at halftime, prompting Lilly to give a halftime speech.

"Motivating," Tow said.

It must have been. She personally outscored Decorah, 17-13, in the second half and finished with 19 points.

Part of Lilly's "motivational" speech was directed at Tow and Alex Saxen, two experienced seniors.

"There are some kids that you can lean on," he explained. "We just emphasized that we have kids with experience that have to start acting like it."

He also instructed his guards to feed the ball inside. If they didn't, they'd be benched.

Saxen scored 12 points, including four free throws in the final minutes.

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Tow, a 6-foot post player, poured in 10 points in the third quarter to help the Saints grab a 29-27 lead. She added seven more points in the fourth period, including five in a row as Xavier's lead grew from 34-32 to 39-32.

"We certainly found a kid that paid attention to what we wanted to do," Lilly said. "That made a big difference."

Tow picked up her third foul with 7:16 left in the second quarter and had to sit, giving her time to think about what needed to be done in the second half.

"We knew what we wanted to do," she said, "and we came out and did it."

Tow did all of her damage near the basket, taking advantage of her size and strength. Lilly, in his 26th year, said she's one of the strongest players he's ever coached.

"She doesn't mind the weight room," he said.

Katlyn Andersen scored six points for Xavier. Katelyn Winker scored four points, Annie Dale had two points and Emily Walvoord scored two points.

Elly Arend led Decorah (1-1) with 10 points. Moran Lonning scored nine points, all during a hot stretch in the first quarter.

DECORAH (34): Arend 3 4-4 10, Lonning 3 1-2 9, Strand 1 0-0 3, Sa. Klimesh 1 1-2 3, Shindelar 0 1-3 1, Broderick 2 0-0 4, Kregel 1 0-0 2, Blanchard 1 0-0 2, Si. Klimesh 0 0-0 0, Kuehner 0 0-0 0, Madrigal 0 0-0 0. Totals 12 7-11 34.

XAVIER (45): Dale 0 2-2 2, Saxen 4 4-4 12, Andersen 2 2-4 6, Walvoord 1 0-3 2, Bartz 0 0-1 0,

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Tow 8 3-3 19, Winker 2 0-0 4, Dickes 0 0-0 0, Boomgarden 0 0-0 0, Murtha 0 0-0 0, Noonan 0 0-0 0, Sampson 0 0-0 0, Wiltgen 0 0-0 0. Totals 17 11-17 45.

Halftime: Decorah 21, Xavier 15. 3-point goals: Decorah — Lonning 2, Strand 1; Xavier — none.