

No. 1 KCC women make regional final

Written by Mike Condon

Friday, 10 March 2017 06:10 - Last Updated Friday, 10 March 2017 06:18



You don't win six national championships by settling.

Kim Muhl has coached the Kirkwood women to the pinnacle six times in his 28 years as head coach and his current Eagles' team has the potential to be his best yet.

Kirkwood won for the 32nd time without a loss Thursday night, steamrolling Southwestern, 79-52, in the Region XI tournament semifinal at Johnson Hall.

The win allows the top-ranked Eagles to host Saturday's 1 p.m. tournament final. The opponent will be NIACC (19-12), a 90-80 upset winner over No. 11 DMACC in Thursday's other semifinal.

One would think Muhl would be happy with Thursday's outcome.

Guess again.

The veteran Eagles' coach was disappointed in the play of his bench, which logged more minutes than usual when sophomore center Simone Goods injured her ankle less than two minutes into the game and had to head to the training room for treatment.

"It's obviously not good, she's your leading scorer and rebounder," Muhl said of seeing Goods go down. "We had to have somebody step up and want to play and we didn't have anybody do

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it tonight.

"It aggravates me right now," he continued. "You have a choice to make in this program, either you get after it or it's a short-lived (time on the court)."

Goods was able to return late in the first quarter and sparked the Eagles through the middle two periods.

"It was scary, very scary," Goods said of her injury, which came as she landed on the foot of a Southwestern defender going for a rebound. "I knew exactly what it was so I just had to get through it. It's fine, I'll be ready to go Saturday."

The Kirkwood starters, led by Goods' 23 points and 11 rebounds, were able to build the lead to 40 points with 3:11 to go in the third quarter.

"They passed the ball, they shared it well and moved it so we could get some shots," Muhl said of his first unit. "We also guarded well and that was a big key tonight because they can really shoot the ball."

At that point, Muhl turned to his bench and Southwestern was able to shave several points off the margin.



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"Don't get me wrong, this was a great win," he said. "I was just disappointed we didn't get a little more juice from our bench players. We had a drop-off and that just can't happen."

Shaneequah Watkins added 12 points and nine rebounds for Kirkwood. Deleyah Harris and Tay Tay Wilson each finished with 11 points.

Eriayana Frazier led the Spartans, who close at 17-15, with 11 points.

Saturday's foe in the title game has given the Eagles their closest calls of the year. NIACC lost 93-81 at Johnson Hall on March 1 and dropped a 71-65 decision last month in Mason City.

"This is what we have been aiming for all year," Muhl said. "(The team) knows what's on the line. If you can't win it in your place, that's on us."

SOUTHWESTERN (52): Alford 1 3-4 5, J. Carter 3 0-0 8, Frazier 3 5-6 11, Sams 1 0-1 2, Washington 1 0-0 3, M. Carter 0 2-2 2, Bronner 1 2-3 4, Spivey 3 1-2 9, Beemer 0 4-4 4, Bailey 1 1-2 4. Totals 14 18-24 52.

KIRKWOOD (79): T. Wilson 3 3-3 11, Watkins 5 0-0 12, Goods 7 9-11 23, Harris 3 3-3 11, Usher 2 0-0 6, Axcell 2 2-2 8, Cotton 1 1-2 3, Voss 0 0-0 0, Achenbach 1 0-0 2, Taylor 0 1-2 1, Puok 1 0-0 2, Hedges 0 0-0 0, C. Wilson 0 0-0 0. Totals 25 19-23 79.

Halftime - Kirkwood 40, Southwestern 17. 3-point goals - Southwestern 6 (J. Carter 2, Spiver 2, Washington 1, Bailey 1), Kirkwood 10 (Axcell 2, Watkins 2, Usher 2, T. Wilson 2, Harris 2).