

Eagles dumped by Blackhawks, 75-63

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 13 December 2018 07:04 -



The Kirkwood Eagles shot poorly, committed 19 turnovers, got pounded on the backboards, missed too many free throws and struggled on defense much of the night.

"That's just a recipe for disaster," Coach Bryan Petersen acknowledged Wednesday night.

Southeastern Community College surged to a 22-point lead in the first half and dumped the Eagles, 75-63, in a non-conference game at Johnson Hall.

Kirkwood (10-2) has lost only two games all season and both setbacks have been to the Blackhawks, including an 86-84 verdict Nov. 3 in the second game of the campaign.

The Eagles had won nine straight games before running into a buzz-saw in the first half when SCC soared to a 34-12 advantage with seven minutes left in the stanza.

Petersen said the biggest problem was a lack of mental toughness.

"They came out and kind of took it right to us in a lot of ways," he said. "We couldn't finish around the rim, we couldn't get the ball across halfcourt against their pressure, and defensively we couldn't guard the paint. So a lot of things went wrong in the first five or 10 minutes."

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Kirkwood switched from a leaky man-to-man defense to a disruptive zone in the latter stages of the first half and pulled within 10 points at 40-30 at intermission.

The Eagles kept pecking away and eventually drew within five points at 58-53 on a three-point play by Luke Appel, but that's as close as they could make it. The Eagles also drew within six points on two occasions, the final time at 66-60 with 2:58 remaining.

"We'd get it to that point, but then we'd revert to the things that got us in a hole," said Petersen. "Being soft with the basketball, not guarding the rim, not rebounding when we could have."

The zone defense, especially a 1-3-1 with All-American Doug Wilson at the top of the key with his long arms, helped disrupt the Blackhawks and gave Kirkwood a path into the game.

"They don't shoot the ball typically well," said Petersen "They're a particularly good driving team and put pressure on the rim. I don't like to go to it (the zone) exclusively, but we had no other chance."

Wilson got into foul trouble and played only 26 minutes, but still led the Eagles with 18 points. Wilson has been hitting nearly 70 percent of his shots, but was only 4-for-12 against SCC.

Devonte Thedford scored 12 points off the bench for Kirkwood. The Eagles shot 41.3 percent from the floor, including just 20 percent on 3-pointers with 3 of 15. The Eagles got pounded on the backboards, 34-22, and missed 11 free throws.

Kirkwood is ranked No. 3 in NJCAA Division II. Southeastern is not ranked in NJCAA Division I.

Kelvon Fuller scored 14 points for Southeastern (12-2) in a balanced attack.

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SOUTHEASTERN (75): Maye 4 3-4 12, Cox 2 3-5 7, Lightfoot 4 0-0 8, Barton 1 0-0 2, Myles 2 2-2 7, Cager 5 2-2 12, Moses 1 1-3 3, Massner 4 0-0 10, Fuller 6 2-4 14. Totals 29 13-20 75.

KIRKWOOD (63): Sims 0 5-8 5, Pickens 3 1-2 9, Kasperbauer 3 0-0 7, Wilson 4 10-15 18, Appel 3 1-2 7, Thedford 5 2-2 12, Stephenson 0 2-2 2, Gosnell 0 0-0 0, Arrington 1 1-2 3. Totals 19 22-33 63.

Halftime - Southeastern 40, Kirkwood 30. 3-point goals - Southeastern 4 (Massner 2, Maye 1, Myles 1), Kirkwood 3 (Pickens 2, Kasperbauer 1).