

Prairie girls stun No.10 Linn-Mar, 63-43

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 16 December 2011 23:57 - Last Updated Saturday, 17 December 2011 02:42



Steve Doser has been saying for several weeks that the Cedar Rapids Prairie girls basketball team will be fun to watch this season.

They certainly were Friday night.

Sophomore Madison Dellamuth popped in 25 points as Prairie stunned 10th-ranked Linn-Mar, 63-43, in a Mississippi Valley Conference game in the Prairie gym.

The Hawks jumped to a quick 13-0 lead and held the Lions scoreless for the first six minutes of the game. "We had to come in with intensity, just more than what they had," Dellamuth said after the surprisingly easy triumph. "I think we did that tonight."

It was a significant victory for Prairie, which won only four games last season. The Hawks are 5-3 overall and 4-2 in the Valley with lots of time to do even more damage.

"I think it was really big," Dellamuth said. "We trust each other. We have a lot of confidence in each other. We played like a team and a family."

Prairie swarmed all over the court, forcing turnovers and converting Linn-Mar's mistakes into points. The Hawks were the quicker, more aggressive team.

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"We really wanted to beat them," said junior Courteney McCrary, who scored 12 points. "We knew we could beat them, and it happened. We knew we had to come out strong. We were making our shots and playing good defense."

Linn-Mar (6-2, 3-2) won the Class 4A state title in 2010 and reached the semifinals last season, but Kiah Stokes graduated and other teams - like Prairie - are catching up. Doser thinks Friday's victory could be a turning point for his club.

"Absolutely," he said. "You match yourself up against Linn-Mar. They have a great program and Mike (Brandt) does a great job. You have to match yourself up against the best and that's how you see where you're at."

Doser said it's the first time Prairie has defeated Linn-Mar since the pre-Stokes era five years ago. "It's been awhile," he said.

Linn-Mar pulled within 17-12 in the second quarter after its miserable start, but Dellamuth hit two straight 3-pointers for a 23-12 advantage. McCrary scored on a putback and hit a triple of her own, and suddenly it was 28-12 with an 11-0 run against the No. 10 team in the state.

Doser liked his team's aggressive, hard-nosed approach.

"That's what I told them: The most aggressive team is going to win tonight," he said. "And I thought our kids were really aggressive and did a nice job."

Dellamuth poured in 18 of her game-high 25 points in the first half to help Prairie grab a 37-19 cushion at intermission. The margin reached 22 points at 48-26 midway through the third period and climbed to 24 points late in the game.

Doser stresses dominating the first three minutes of each quarter, and that was the case in each of the first three periods Friday. Linn-Mar never got closer than 13 points in the second

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half.

"We've been telling them: The first three minutes of every quarter, you've got to own it or we'll get owned," he said. "And I thought tonight they really owned the first three minutes in each quarter really well."

Dellamuth was Prairie's starting point guard last season as a freshman, but she focused mostly on her passing and playmaking while averaging 9.7 points. She's raised her scoring average to 12.6 this season without neglecting her point-guard duties.

She hit a series of big shots Friday night, especially the consecutive 3-pointers after Linn-Mar rallied within 17-12. "This year compared to last year, I'm a little more relaxed and that helps a lot," Dellamuth said. "I've gotten used to it."

Dellamuth is being watched by Division I college basketball programs and still has 2 1/2 years left in her prep career. She's an adept ballhandler, passer and shooter.

"She looks like she's having a lot more fun than last year," Doser said. "I think she doesn't feel as much pressure. She's adding to her game, and that's trying to score more. She's always been a great distributor of the ball."

Dellamuth finished with four 3-pointers.

Courtney Major led Linn-Mar with 11 points.

LINN-MAR (43): Shanice Cheatham 1 0-0 2, Rachel Thrune 0 1-2 1, Courtney Major 4 1-2 11, Mykaela Brandt 1 4-4 7, Sara Strauel 2 1-4 5, Hannah Yearling 3 2-4 8, Kristen Eiles 2 0-0 5, Alexis Libenguth 0 0-2 0, Kelsey Duggan 0 0-0 0, Jenna Harms 0 2-2 2, Lauren Koelker 0 0-0 0, Carly Ryder 1 0-0 2. Totals 14 11-20 43.

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PRAIRIE (63): Katilyn Yanacek 3 2-2 8, Cyerra Hutchins 1 0-1 2, Courteney McCrary 5 0-0 12, Alisa Weiland 3 0-0 7, Madison Dellamuth 8 5-6 25, Emilie Rotter 1 2-2 4, Mackenzie Serbousek 1 0-0 2, Abby Ganske 0 0-0 0, Allison Neuhaus 0 0-0 0, Josie Wagner 0 0-0 0, Taylor Sanders 1 0-0 3, Haley Meyer 0 0-0 0. Totals 23 9-11 63.

Halftime - Prairie 37, Linn-Mar 19. 3-point goals - Linn-Mar 4 (Major 2, Brandt 1, Eiles 1), Prairie 8 (Dellamuth 4, McCrary 2, Weiland 1, Sanders 1).