

## Sellers lifts No. 1 Cougars by J-Hawks

Written by Jim Ecker  
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Somebody forgot to tell the girls from Cedar Rapids Jefferson they were supposed to tremble at the sight of the top-ranked Kennedy Cougars on Friday night.

"There was no doubt that we would give them everything we had," Jefferson coach Jason Edwards said.

The Cougars had Lela Sellers, however, and that made all the difference in the world.

Sellers poured in 29 points and snared 14 rebounds as Kennedy slipped away from the J-Hawks in the final 75 seconds, 61-49, in an entertaining Mississippi Valley Conference game at Kennedy.

Jefferson rallied from a 17-point deficit and pulled within four points at 51-47 on a bucket by Erin Kuba with 1:39 remaining, but the Cougars kept their cool and drilled 10 straight free throws to avoid the upset.

Kennedy climbed into the No. 1 spot in the Class 5A rankings Thursday afternoon, but Jefferson did everything it could to try to knock the Cougars off their lofty perch.

"I thought we were a little uneven tonight," Kennedy coach Tony Vis said, "but at the same time I give more credit to Jefferson, because they wouldn't give up, they wouldn't go away and they really attacked us inside and had some success."

The Cougars, riding a 14-game winning streak, raised their record to 14-1. Jefferson, a much

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improved ballclub, fell to 6-7.



Sellers made six straight free throws in the final 75 seconds to help lift the Cougars out of danger. Her final two free throws came with 11.4 seconds left and gave her 1,001 points in her high school career, counting her points at Lakeville South High School in Minnesota and the past two years at Kennedy.

Sellers was a little apprehensive when her family decided to move to Iowa two years ago. She had lived her entire life in Lakeville, Minn., and was not sure about making such a big change in high school.

"It was scary, but it also was an adventure at the time," she said. "I was nervous, but I was excited about it, too."

Sellers contributed three blocked shots and three assists Friday and made a series of sleek moves to the basket. Her prettiest move came late in the second quarter when she grabbed a defensive rebound, dribbled up the court, dribbled between her legs, analyzed the defense, brushed off a screen and drove for a left-handed layup.

"She does things out there that are just unbelievable," Vis sai. "She's a great talent and had another really good game tonight."

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"You could tell the defense was keying on her and she still put up the numbers that she had. She's a joy to coach."

Sellers said the Cougars are not obsessed with being the new No. 1 team in Class 5A, but they certainly enjoy the view from the top.

"It's a great honor. It's awesome," she said. "We're not really focused on that, but it's a cool honor. It's getting more fun as it goes."

Sydney Hayden popped in a pair of 3-pointers and scored 13 points for Kennedy.

Kylie Wise hit three 3-pointers and led Jefferson with 14 points. Emily Oler added 10 points for the J-Hawks.

"I thought the effort we played with was really good," Edwards said. "They played hard, they play poised, they played hard for each other and with a lot of heart."

**JEFFERSON (49):** Kitterman 0 0-0 0, Guy 2 1-2 6, Donner 1 0-0 3, Wise 5 1-1 14, Melton 0 0-2 0, Kuba 2 2-2 6, Erica Oler 1 0-2 2, Thurmond 0 0-0 0, Dighton 3 2-2 8, Emily Oler 5 0-0 10. Totals 19 6-11 49.

**KENNEDY (61):** Langhurst 2 1-2 6, Hamilton 1 0-0 2, Hayden 3 5-7 13, Sellers 9 11-12 29, Timmerman 0 0-0 0, Vaske 0 0-0 0, Hellweg 2 0-0 4, Dolphin 1 2-2 4, Runels 1 0-0 3, Meier 0 0-0 0. Totals 19 19-23 61.

Halftime - Kennedy 34, Jefferson 21. 3-point goals - Jefferson 5 (Wise 3, Guy 1, Donner 1), Kennedy 4 (Hayden 2, Langhurst 1, Runels 1).