

Ollinger stars as Lions bop Indianola

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 02 March 2016 18:08 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 March 2016 19:12



DES MOINES - Amanda Ollinger always wanted to play in the state basketball tournament at Wells Fargo Arena, but she didn't make it as a freshman, sophomore or junior and time was slipping away.

Ollinger finally got her chance Wednesday and seized the opportunity with a monster game in the first round of the Class 5A tournament in Des Moines.

Ollinger scored 25 points and snared 22 rebounds as the Linn-Mar Lions stomped Indianola, 60-38, after blasting to a 20-point lead in the first half.

Ollinger tied the Linn-Mar school record for most rebounds in a single game, matching a performance by Kiah Stokes in 2011, and came within two rebounds of tying the record for a state tournament game.

Ollinger also blocked four shots, made four steals, dished out two assists and played a strong defensive game against Indianola star Grace Berg.

She loved every second of her first state tournament appearance.

"It's indescribable," she said. "You can't really put into words how much playing here means to a player, especially to a team and a school."

Ollinger stars as Lions bop Indianola

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 02 March 2016 18:08 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 March 2016 19:12

"Our student section was great, our coaches were great, our bench was great. The whole day has been awesome. It's been amazing."

Ollinger was a beast on the boards all day, grabbing 10 offensive rebounds and 12 defensive rebounds. She did most of her scoring around the basket and also helped with the ballhandling.

"She affects the game in so many ways," said Linn-Mar Coach Jaime Brandt. "Defensively, on the boards, obviously offensively. She's very hard to guard. I'm just proud of her."

Ollinger climbed into a tie for third place in Metro history with 22 rebounds along with Stokes, former Washington star Tia Dawson and former Cedar Valley Christian star Shelby Hembera. Hembera holds the No. 1 spot with 24 rebounds and the No. 2 spot with 23.



Linn-Mar was sitting on a 15-14 lead early in the second quarter when the Lions took complete control of the game with a 16-0 spurt. Kamryn Finley fired in two 3-pointers during the 16-0 run and Alie Akers also hit a pair of triples to account for 12 of those 16 markers as the Lions zoomed into a 31-14 lead.

Indianola scored to make it 31-16, but Finley made another 3-pointer and Ollinger scored in the final seconds of the second quarter to finish a 21-2 spurt and make it 36-16 at halftime.

"We came out strong on the defensive end," said Finley, a talented sophomore who has Division I scholarship offers from Northern Iowa and Drake. "In our practices, that's what we really worked on."

Ollinger stars as Lions bop Indianola

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 02 March 2016 18:08 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 March 2016 19:12

"Once we got our defense rolling, we knew our offense would start clicking."

Finley sometimes defers to Ollinger and other players in terms of launching shots, but she had the hot hand Wednesday and let it rip.

"We all believed our shots were going to fall," she said. "I'm a very passive girl and I like to get my teammates involved. But when the shots were wide open I believed in that shot. And I knew it was going to go in."

Ollinger transferred to Linn-Mar from Jefferson during the middle of the 2014-15 campaign and it took awhile for everyone to get adjusted last year. That's ancient history now.

"She's a stud," said Finley. "I love playing with Amanda. She's just so positive and I love being out there with her."

Ollinger has said she transferred to Linn-Mar for family reasons, but admits getting to play for Brandt was an added attraction. Brandt starred at Iowa and that's where Ollinger will play next season.

"She was a big star at Iowa, and it's always good to learn from her," said Ollinger. "She's a great coach and she's going to continue to get better. It really is a bonus to play for her."

Brandt is confident Ollinger will enjoy a good career with the Hawkeyes.

"I think she'll fit in right away," said Brandt. "I think offensively, she's perfect. She can post people up, she can play on the outside, she can guard bigs. I think she'll fit in pretty well."

Ollinger stars as Lions bop Indianola

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 02 March 2016 18:08 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 March 2016 19:12

Brandt appreciates the way Ollinger has molded into the program at Linn-Mar.

"Our whole team loves each other. You can tell that on the court," said Brandt. "They have fun together, they're unselfish. And she's a big part of that."

Brandt, who played in three state tournaments during her all-star career at Linn-Mar, did her best to lighten the mood of her team heading into Wednesday's game to make sure they were loose and ready to play.

"We practiced at Carver-Hawkeye Arena and Coe this week to get used to a different gym, a different environment and all that," she said. "So mentally that was good."

"On the way down to Des Moines, we were playing music and dancing. In the locker room, we were kind of joking around before the game. Just trying to keep them loose and keep them on their toes."

"There's a fine line between being loose and being kind of silly," said Brandt, "but we were focused, so it was good."

Finley finished with 14 points for the Lions.

Berg scored 17 points for Indianola, but shot only 6 for 17 from the field.

LINN-MAR (60): Akers 20-0 6, Frese 0 0-0 0, Lancial 0 0-0 0, Finley 4 3-4 14, Ollinger 9 6-8 25, Johnson 2 3-5 8, Murphy 1 0-0 3, Larson 0 4-6 4. Totals 18 16-23 60.

INDIANOLA (38): McGraw 2 4-4 9, Kuehl 1 0-0 2, Glascock 1 0-0 3, Vesey 3 0-0 7, Berg 6 5-7 17, Jensen 0 0-0 0, Nicholson 0 0-1 0, Hoyman 0 0-0 0. Totals 13 9-12 38.

Ollinger stars as Lions bop Indianola

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 02 March 2016 18:08 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 March 2016 19:12

Halftime - Linn-Mar 36, Indianola 16. 3-point goals - Linn-Mar 8 (Finley 3, Akers 2, Ollinger 1, Johnson 1, Murphy 1), Indianola 3 (McGraw 1, Glascock 1, Vesey 1).