

## **Linn-Mar girls upset Prairie, 53-51**

Written by Randy Krejci

Wednesday, 13 February 2013 22:16 -

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Defense.

Rebounding.

Execution.

Those were the keys to Linn-Mar's upset victory Wednesday night when the Lions stunned Prairie, 53-51, in the quarterfinals of the Class 5A regional girls basketball tournament at Prairie.

Alexis Libenguth scored a career-high 23 points to lead Linn-Mar (11-12) into Saturday's semifinals against Cedar Rapids Washington at the Warriors' gym. The game tips at 7 p.m.

Libenguth said she gave it "everything she had" against Prairie (15-8). Her only two free throws near the end of the game sealed the victory for Linn-Mar.

Libenguth came into the game with a 4.9 scoring average with 103 points in 21 games.

She said she knew she was a role player before this year, "but I worked this summer on my outside shot and, though I love defense, I knew to get more time on the court I would need to be more of an offensive threat."

Mykaela Brandt added 10 points and hit all three of her free throws down the stretch for Linn-Mar.

"On defense we needed to stop their top three players, get back on defense, and get a good

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shot on the offensive end,” Brandt said.

Linn-Mar Coach Mike Brandt, Mykaela's father, said he was very pleased with the “huge win” on Prairie’s floor.

“Prairie has so many weapons and I was particularly pleased with how we executed defensively,” Coach Brandt said.

Sara Strauel, normally an offensive threat, had three points. But she was a huge factor on the glass, snagging 14 rebounds.

“Anyone can step up on this team. We spread their defense out, had a height advantage, and we were working to get it into the post,” Strauel said.

Seven Lions got in the scoring column.

Prairie put two players in double figures. Madison Dellamuth had a particularly strong second half and finished with 15. Courteney McCrary, the main threat in the first half for Prairie, chipped in with 12 points.

Prairie was down by two at the quarter, but led 23-20 at halftime.

Linn-Mar finally grabbed the lead back 36-35 with a Brandt 3-pointer. That bucket ignited 10-0 run and the Lions were never trailed.

Prairie continued to claw back and ended up hitting a 3-pointer at the buzzer to pull within two.

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Linn-Mar avenged a 53-34 loss to Prairie suffered back on Dec. 21.

LINN-MAR (53): Hannah Yearling 0 2-2 2, Mykaela Brandt 3 3-3 10, Sara Strauel 1 1-3 3, Jenna Harms 0 0-0 0, Aryn Jones 1 1-2 3, Kristin Eiles 0 0-0 0, Courtney Major 2 3-4 9, Alexis Libenguth 10 3-4 23. Totals 18 13-18 53.

PRAIRIE (51): Taylor Moenk 0 0-0 0, Cyerra Hutchins 2 3-4 8, Alisa Weiland 2 0-0 6, Courteney McCrary 6 0-0 12, Olivia Usher 2 2-2 6, Grace Gudenkauf 0 0-0 0, Madison Dellamuth 6 1-2 15, Rachel Shelangoski 1 0-0 2, Makenzie Stoffer 1 0-0 2. Totals 20 6-8 51.

Halftime - Prairie 23, Linn-Mar 20. 3-point goals - Prairie 5 (Hutchins, Weiland 2, Dellamuth 2), Linn-Mar 4 (Brandt, Eiles, Major 2).