

Prairie girls trimmed by No. 2 City High

Written by Tom Fruehling

Wednesday, 05 December 2012 00:39 -

In a game of inches, the spunky Prairie Hawks played the Little Hawks of Iowa City High almost right down to the wire Tuesday night at home.

They lost at the end 50-42, but it was mostly because they didn't have the size to keep the second-ranked team in the state from getting rebounds and buckets under the basket.

Prairie's hard-nosed 5-foot-9 forward Courteney McCrary did her best to contain budding 6-foot-3 superstar Haley Lorenzen of City High. But she was forced to the bench in key stretches with foul trouble and eventually fouled out trying to keep the ball away from the towering Little Hawk post player.

"I thought Courteney played a great game defensively," said Prairie Coach Steve Doser. "She put a lot of pressure on (Lorenzen) and played her smart. She made it tough for her to get points."

As it was, the big junior (and daughter of former Hawkeye Al Lorenzen) scored 14 points on short-range shots and pulled down 12 rebounds. When McCrary wasn't guarding her, the task most often fell to freshmen Olivia Usher or Makenzie Stoffer. And Usher also fouled out.

"Obviously, we wanted to get the ball inside to Haley," said City High Coach Bill McTaggart. "But they did a good job throwing us off of our offense. They're a very scrappy team, and they're going to win a lot of ballgames."

In fact, the unranked Hawks (4-2, 2-1 MVC) came close to winning this one. In a seesaw affair, they took a 40-39 lead with 3:57 to go on two free throws by playmaker Madison Dellamuth, who had been held in check all night and scored just six points.

The Little Hawks' tiny but speedy Kiera Washpun came right back with a 3-point bomb, only to have Usher knot the score at 42 with 3:20 left. That was the last time Prairie scored.

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The Little Hawks (5-1, 3-0 MVC) went ahead on a chippy by Aliyah Gustafson on a slick dish from Washpun and closed the contest with six straight free throws.

"We had some 3's at the end that could have made a difference if they'd fallen," Doser said. "We had good looks, but they just didn't go in.

"But we battled the whole way. I'm real proud of our effort and our intensity. They played so hard.

"I really thought both teams played well enough to win. So the team that won earned it."

McCrary, who battled as hard as anyone all night, said her team knew they had to stop Lorenzen to have a chance.

"To win, we had to keep her from scoring. We didn't do that last year, and it was not good at all," McCrary said. "She's not only tall, but she's very physical.

"I thought I did pretty well, although I could have done a better job boxing out on rebounds. And we fought them from the start and played our hearts out. Our last shots just didn't fall. But that's life."

Mickey Hansche led Iowa City High with 17 points. Alisa Weiland topped Prairie with 14 points.

IOWA CITY HIGH (50): Kiera Washpun 4 0-1 12, Mickey Hansche 5 4-4 17, Courtney Jones 0 3-4 3, Haley Lorenzen 7 0-1 14, Aliyah Gustafson 2 2-3 6, Sara Blowers 0 0-0 0, Sam Blowers 0 0-0 0. Totals 18 9-13 50.

PRAIRIE (42): Cyerra Hutchins 2 5-7 9, Alisa Weiland 6 0-0 14, Courteney McCrary 1 0-0 2,

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Olivia Usher 4 0-0 9, Madison Dellamuth 2 2-5 6, Taylor Moenk 0 0-0 0, Rachel Shelangoski 1 0-0 2, Makenzie Stoffer 0 0-0 0. Totals 16 7-12 42.

Halftime – Iowa City High 22, Prairie 22. 3-point goals – Iowa City High 5 (Hansche 3, Washpun 2), Prairie 3 (Weiland 2, Usher 1). Fouled out – McCrary, Usher.