

## Saints girls stump Prairie

Written by

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It wasn't always pretty, but Xavier got the job done at Prairie, beating the Hawks, 56-37, on Friday in the regular season finale.

Xavier was led by senior Alex Saxen, who notched 19 points, including three 3-pointers. Junior Emily Walvoord chipped in 10 points for the Saints.

Freshman Madison Dellamuth topped Prairie with 10 points, and sophomore Alisa Weiland added eight points.

Prairie threw an unexpected wrinkle at the Saints by opening up the game playing zone defense for the first few minutes. But the Saints didn't miss a beat, stretching out the defense by hitting five 3-pointers to open up a 20-10 first-quarter advantage.

The Saints maintained a double-digit lead the rest of the way.

"I don't like the zone, personally. We never play it, but we wanted to make sure that we clamped down on their big girls," Coach Steve Doser said.

"Their posts are very physical, (Krissi) Tow especially. We wanted to keep them out of it.

"But then, of course, Saxen hits threes. We just wanted to change things up a little bit."

When these two teams met at Xavier on Jan. 14, the Saints' defense was stifling, holding Prairie to just 14 points. The Saints were stingy at times Friday, holding the Hawks scoreless for a 3:50 stretch in the first quarter, a 4:16 stretch in the second quarter, 3:20 in the third and 5:15 in the final quarter.

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But Coach Tom Lilly would have liked to have seen a more consistent effort.

"I think we defended hard at times. I don't think we were smart all the time," Lilly said. "We fouled too much and we let penetration occur too much.

"We are a man-to-man team, and we are supposed to not give up 3-point shots, and they drilled us for a number of them.

"I think sometimes it allows our kids to learn what we are trying to explain to them, and doing so with a win seems to be much better than doing it with a loss."

That will give the Saints a couple of things to work on as they await the winner of Newton versus Marshalltown in the regional tournament.

"We are really excited to see what we are able to do" this postseason, senior Krissi Tow said. "We will have to work hard in practice."

Prairie also will be looking to learn from this game as it prepares to face Kennedy on Wednesday.

"Xavier is a good team to play going into the tournament, especially since we will see Kennedy in the first round," Doser said. "Both are physical, they are man-to-man and they are aggressive. So that helps us get ready for Kennedy."

XAVIER (56): Dale 2 0-0 6, Saxen 8 0-0 19, Sampson 0 2-3 2, Walvoord 3 4-10 10, Tow 2 0-0 4, Anderson 3 0-0 6, Dickes 0 0-0 0, Bartz 0 0-1 0, Boomgarden 1 3-4 5, Murtha 0 3-4 3, Wiltgen 0 1-2 1, Winker 0 0-0 0, Noonan 0 0-0 0, Dostal 0 0-0 0, Armstrong 0 0-0 0. Totals 19 12-24 56.

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PRAIRIE (37): Crist 1 0-0 2, Dellamuth 4 0-0 10, Wieland 1 0-0 2, Blaha 0 4-4 4, Carver 2 0-1 4, Yanacek 2 0-0 4, Weiland 3 0-0 8, McCrary 1 1-2 3, Hutchins 0 0-1 0, Tonyan 0 0-0 0. Totals 14 5-8 37.

Halftime -- Xavier 29, Prairie 16. 3-point goals -- Xavier 5 (Saxen 3, Dale 2), Prairie 4 (Weiland 2, Dellamuth 2).