

Eagles escape NIACC in OT

Written by Jake Koolbeck

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With wins over two ranked foes in three days a week ago, you know Kirkwood has a pretty good women's basketball team.

Add luck and you get a hard-fought, 78-68, overtime win over NIACC on Saturday in a conference game at Johnson Hall.

Luck got the Eagles to overtime and then they were good as they dominated the extra session.

"We were lucky to win," Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl said. "We missed layups, missed free throws, and they shot it well."

Alexis Fitzpatrick scored 20 points and Kianna Jacobs 18 to lead Kirkwood.

Kirkwood scored five quick points within the first minute of overtime and never looked back from there. The Eagles rode the quick start in the extra time to a 11-1 run in the five minute period as their active 1-3-1 zone held NIACC to no field goals and just one free throw.

"We were going to let them live and die by the three and focus on stopping penetration," Muhl said on his team's overtime defense. "They were good off the dribble and we had to stop that."

The game started well for red-hot Kirkwood (14-3, 3-0) as it grabbed an early lead.

But the lead didn't last long. NIACC came back strong, knocking down 7 of 19 three's in the first half and forced the Eagles into 12 turnovers to just five for the Trojans to take a two-point lead at halftime.

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Kirkwood lost the turnover battle in the game 26 to 7.

“We didn’t have a lot of energy for the most part and our passes were not very accurate,” Muhl said. “We were more interested in arguing and making excuses than we were with just playing.”

Still, Kirkwood held a three-point lead with 1-1/2 minutes to go. And when the Eagles missed the front end of a 1-and-1 free throw attempt, NIACC answered with a trey that tied the game.

The Eagles missed a pair of free throws with five seconds left to send the game to overtime.

The overtime was all Eagles as they avoided disappointment after big wins last week, that included a win over top-ranked Lake Michigan.

“It is what it is,” Muhl said. “It is hard right now because we are not in session (Kirkwood is still out of school for winter break). It is hard to get any kind of consistency.”

Lateeka Thompson led the Trojans with 20.

NIACC (68): Young 4-11 0-0 11, Meyer 3-8 0-0 8, Jacox 3-17 2-3 10, Thompson 8-22 3-7 20, J. Rogers 2-4 0-2 4, Bell 3-8 0-0 9, Walker 2-6 2-4 6, Bianchi 0-4 0-0 0, S. Rogers 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 25-80 7-16 68.

KIRKWOOD (78): Fallon 1-4 0-0 2, Hobbs 5-8 0-0 12, Dufelmeier 1-7 2-2 5, Gray 0-0 0-0 0, Jacobs 9-16 0-2 18, Rohrbach 2-5 1-2 5, Fitzpatrick 7-10 0-0 20, Faber 1-2 0-0 2, Henderson 2-5 5-9 9, Tow 1-2 1-2 3, Chuol 0-0 2-2 2. Totals 29-59 11-19 78.

Halftime - Kirkwood 33, NIACC 35. Regulation – Kirkwood 67, NIACC 67. 3-point goals - Kirkwood 9-18 (Dufelmeier 1-3, Fallon 0-2, Hobbs 2-3, Faber 0-1, Fitzpatrick 6-8, Rohrbach

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0-1), NIACC 11-43 (Bianchi 0-4, Walker 0-4, Bell 3-7, Thompson 1-8, Jacox 2-12, Meyer 2-2, Young 3-9). Rebounds – Kirkwood 60, NIACC 36. Turnovers – Kirkwood 26, NIACC 7.