

No.7 KCC women cruise in opener

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Kirkwood women's basketball team went for a stroll in the park Tuesday night in the opening round of the Region XI tournament at Johnson Hall, but it figures to get a lot harder from here.

The seventh-ranked Eagles scored 27 straight points in the first half and demolished Ellsworth, 75-30, with stringent defense and a productive bench.

Kirkwood (26-5) will host Iowa Central (20-11) in the semifinals Thursday at 5:30 p.m., with a possible date with No. 6 NIACC in the finals here Saturday afternoon.

Kirkwood is the No. 1 seed for the tournament and will host all the games it plays.

The Eagles got off to a relatively slow start against Ellsworth, but they loosened up and tormented the visitors with their trapping defense and quick hands.

"I thought we were a little tight early," said Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl. "I thought our second group came in and did a nice job. They came in and just played. They hit shots and started pressing (on defense).

"Players have to play this time of year. Losers go home," he said.

The game was the 900th of Muhl's illustrious career at Kirkwood and raised his record to 760-140.

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Kirkwood got 48 of its 75 points from its substitutes, who saw plenty of action against Ellsworth (6-24). Casey Miles, who has battled injuries this season, scored 12 points off the bench and hit three 3-pointers. Aliyah Isaac contributed 11 points off the bench and starting center Cassidy Clark had 12 points.

"I thought our bench did a great job," said Muhl.

ELLSWORTH (30): Greenfield 1 0-0 3, Thigpen 4 0-0 8, Lehman 0 0-0 0, Gates 1 3-4 5, Lewis 0 0-0 0, Rumph 5 1-3 12, Smith 0 0-0 0, Weatherspoon 0 0-2 0, Birkenholz 0 0-0 0, Jones 1 0-0 2. Totals 12 4-9 30.

KIRKWOOD (75): Silva 2 0-0 5, Larson 10-0 2, Hutchins 11-2 4, Martensen 2 0-0 4, Clark 5 1-2 12, Sneed 2 2-4 7, Miles 3 3-3 12, Downs 1 0-0 2, Isaac 3 3-4 11, Oberman 0 0-0 0, Sudduth 3 0-0 8, Bockholt 2 0-0 4, Kalenberger 0 0-0 0, Wood 2 0-0 4. Totals 27 10-15 75.

Halftime - Kirkwood 38, Ellsworth 16. 3-point goals - Ellsworth 2 (Greenfield 1, Rumph 1), Kirkwood 11 (Miles 3, Isaac 2, Sudduth 2, Silva 1, Hutchins 1, Clark 1, Sneed 1).