

Eagles bump off No.6 Kishwaukee

Written by Ryan Suchomel

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It was a brutal, horrible, not-very-good opening 10 minutes for the Kirkwood women's basketball team, but the Eagles adjusted and upset No. 6 Kishwaukee College, 67-45, in the 2013 Clarion-Kirkwood Classic Saturday afternoon at Johnson Hall.

"I just didn't think we were ready to go to war, we were playing scared," Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl said. "We're going to struggle offensively because we're young, and we just don't know how to play with each other yet.

"But I thought our effort defense would win the game. And it did."

Kirkwood (4-0) played tight defense and held Kishwaukee's top players to a combined 7-for-32 shooting (22 percent). Tami Morice led the Kougars with nine points.

"We held their best players to under double digits," freshman guard Tyra Polite said. "We just played straight-up man and had good help side defense."

The Eagles forced the Kougars into 23 turnovers and Kishwaukee shot just 29 percent as a team (15-of-51).

"They've scored some points and are a very good team," Muhl said. "They'll be in the national tournament, I bet."

Kishwaukee finished fourth nationally last year.

Saturday, the Eagles and Kougars were both a little wound up to start the rematch. When Muhl called a timeout 10 minutes and 49 seconds into the game, Kishwaukee led just 9-5.

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To that point the two teams combined to shoot 5-for-29 (17 percent), and had a combined 16 turnovers and 10 fouls. There had also been a 10-minute delay when the shot clocks quit working.

"The first 10 minutes, we were playing kind of selfish," freshman guard Taylor Silva said. "We had stretches we couldn't hit any shot, and that hurt us as well.

"The momentum changed once everyone started to get energized and ready."

Kishwaukee led 20-14 late in the first half when the Eagles put together a 15-0 run. Kristen Larson and Katelyn Tuttle hit 3-pointers during that run. But it was the three-quarters court shot by Silva at the halftime buzzer that put a real charge in the Eagles and made it 29-20.

"That's the only halfcourt shot I've ever made," Silva said. "Everyone was talking at once. There are so many different emotions. It was crazy."

Muhl let the team bask in the big shot and big run for a few minutes before making adjustments for the second half.

"Silva's bomb at the end of the half was a big-time momentum switch," Muhl said. "It had already switched, but that made it go to another level. But we still had 20 minutes to go against a very good team."

Kirkwood opened the second half on a 7-0 run. Mikayla Fallon hit a 3-pointer and had a driving layup, and guard Danielle Woolfolk had a reverse layup driving the baseline.

The run made it 36-20. Kishwaukee never got closer than 12 points after that, and the Eagles had the lead up to 29 points at one point.

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On Friday, Kirkwood defeated Joliet Junior College, 85-43, while Kishwaukee beat No.7 Iowa Central Community College, 85-75.

"I thought they were a little tired from their game last night," Muhl said. "It's still a good win for our kids. We made our runs with our young kids."

Woolfolk led Kirkwood with 12 points and Ariel Sneed added 10 points. The Kirkwood bench scored 37 points, led by Polite with eight points. Hanna Haynes had a team-high nine rebounds and Silva led with six assists.

"Early, we weren't very together as a team," Polite said. "We started playing together with everyone getting touches, and started coming together as a team. It felt real good."

Kirkwood's bench played 89 minutes compared to the 52 for the Kishwaukee bench. The Eagles' depth wore on the Kougars.

"We have a deep bench and a good team and that helped us a lot," Silva said. "When we play six or seven off the bench, that helps us a lot."

Muhl cited the hard work by freshman guard Anna Martensen, who came off the bench and added six points, three rebounds and three assists in 13 minutes. "She's kind of the dirty-work kid all of a sudden," Muhl said. "She goes in, and she can guard."

Kirkwood has two more Kirkwood Classic games next weekend. They host Parkland College on Friday and No.2 Illinois Central College on Saturday. Both games are in Johnson Hall.

KISHWAUKEE (45): Catie Cox 0-2 0-0 0, Tami Morice 3-11 2-4 9, Sinclair Cunningham 2-10 1-2 6, Ashanti Davis 2-11 0-0 5, Alexis McClain 0-3 3-5 3, Tatiana Wartenbe 2-3 2-2 7, Bria Walker 2-2 0-0 5, Jasmine Ogunjimi 2-4 0-0 5, Nwoye Green 2-4 1-2 5, Jazmyne Wide 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 15-51 9-15 45.

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KIRKWOOD (67): Ariel Sneed 3-10 4-7 10, Danielle Woolfolk 4-13 4-5 12, Katelyn Tuttle 1-6 0-0 3, Mikayla Fallon 2-5 0-0 5, Cassidy Clark 0-4 0-0 0, Taylor Silva 2-3 2-2 7, Tyra Polite 3-4 0-0 8, Kirsten Larson 2-5 0-0 5, Hanna Haynes 3-5 0-0 6, Anna Martensen 1-2 4-5 6, Zoe Kelso 2-3 1-1 5. Totals 23-60 15-20 67.

Halftime - Kirkwood 29, Kishwaukee 20. 3-point goals - Kishwaukee 6-17 (Morice 1-4, Cinningham 1-3, Davis 1-4, McClain 0-2, Wartenbe 1-1, Walker 1-1, Ogunjimi 1-2), Kirkwood 6-18 (Sneed 0-2, Woolfolk 0-4, Tuttle 1-3, Fallon 1-2, Clark 0-1, Silva 1-1, Polite 2-2, Larson 1-3). Rebounds - Kishwaukee 33 (Cox 6, Morice 6, Cunningham 6), Kirkwood 38 (Hayens 9). Assists - Kishwaukee 10 (Wartenbe 4), Kirkwood 18 (Silva 6).