

KCC women knock off Australians

Written by Jim Ecker

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Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl says the Eagles are still looking for their identity as a basketball team this season, but that was better than Kirsten Larson's predicament Tuesday night.

She was looking for part of a front tooth.

Larson popped in three 3-pointers and scored 13 points but was injured in the second half during Kirkwood's 79-59 victory over the South Australia Institute of Sports at Johnson Hall.

Larson banged heads with Sophie Houral of Australia, bit through her upper lip and lost part of a tooth in the collision. Her mouth was a bloody mess and she spent the rest of the game with an ice bag on her face.

"Don't kiss anyone tonight," teased Muhl after the game.

Larson, a 5-foot-10 sophomore from Belvidere, Ill., was heading home after the game for

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Thanksgiving, not knowing if she would need stitches or not.

Kirkwood was setting up for an in-bounds play under its own basket with 13 minutes, 37 seconds left in the game when the accident happened.

"I went to set a screen and my head banged straight into hers," said Larson, who suffered a chipped tooth. "I bit through my lip. It hurt a lot.

"I don't know where the other part of my tooth is."

Larson has not been wearing a mouthguard during games. "No," she said. "Maybe now I will."

Larson hit two straight 3-pointers at the end of the first half to give the Eagles (5-4) a 33-30 edge at intermission. She made another 3-pointer in the second half and was enjoying a good game with 13 points in 17 minutes when she got hurt.

Larson has helped Kirkwood with her 3-point shooting this season and may be on the verge of cracking the starting lineup.

"I think it's going good," she said. "People are finding me when I'm open and making that extra pass. They know I'm a shooter, so they try to find me."

Larson missed her first four 3-point shots, then nailed three in a row. "Everybody told me to keep shooting, so I just kept shooting even though I

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missed the first four," she remarked."

The Eagles committed 15 turnovers in the first half and shot only 36.7 percent in the opening 20 minutes, but they played much better in the second half and made 56.7 percent of their shots and committed only four more turnovers.

Muhl is searching for more consistency.

"I don't think we're good enough yet," he said. "I think we're trying to figure out who we are. And we're trying to figure out some kids that want to play hard and don't want to play hard.

"You saw that by the substitutions," he said. "There was no rhyme or reason to it. I'm just trying to figure them out."

Tyra Polite led Kirkwood with 16 points. A.J. Downs contributed 13 points off the bench. Cassidy Clark finished with eight points and nine rebounds.

Meg Prosser led the Australians with 12 points.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA (59): Brennan 1 4-5 6, Thacker 3 0-0 7, Calbert 1 1-2 3, Karhajeri 2 0-0 5, Broadbent 2 3-3 7, Mader 2 2-2 6, Brett 1 1-4 3, Prosser 5 1-2 12, Hatchard 2 0-0 6, Houral 1 2-4 4, Fallenberg 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 14-22 59.

KIRKWOOD (79): Sneed 0 5-6 5, Isaac 2 0-0 5, Silva 2 1-2 6, Polite 7 0-0 16, Clark 3 1-3 8, Miles 0 0-0 0, Downs 5 2-4 13, Oberman 2 0-0 6, Larson 4 2-2 13, Hutchins 1 0-0 2, Martensen 1 1-2 3, Bockholt 1 0-0 2, Wood 0 0-0 0. Totals 28 12-19 79.

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Halftime - Kirkwood 33, South Australia 30. 3-point goals - South Australia 5 (Hatchard 2, Thacker 1, Karhajeri 1, Prosser 1), Kirkwood 11 (Larson 3, Polite 2, Oberman 2, Isaac 1, Silva 1, Clark 1, Downs 1). Fouled out - none.