

Kirkwood men fall to SCC again

Written by Jim Ecker

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Bryan Petersen has a list and he's checking it twice, but it has nothing to do with buying Christmas gifts for the Kirkwood men's basketball team.

Petersen has a long list of problems the Eagles need to solve before they can become a championship team this season.

The Eagles ran into problems Wednesday night and lost to Southeastern Community College, 70-62, at Johnson Hall for their second loss to the Blackhawks this year.

Kirkwood committed 18 turnovers, suffered breakdowns on defense, missed open shots and saw two of its top scorers combine for only four points in the ballgame.

The setback dropped the Eagles to 8-4 heading into the holidays and a three-week break before their next game on Jan 2.

"We're not coming together and obviously we're not finding the solutions," said Petersen. "And that's on us as coaches as well.

"It's frustrating to lose at home and lose in the fashion that we did."

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Burlington is a good NJCAA Division I ballclub with a 12-2 record, but Kirkwood had its chances to win the game.

The Eagles took a 43-38 lead midway through the second half with three straight 3-pointers, including a pair by Jay Small, but Southeastern countered with eight straight points and a 46-43 edge.



Bailey Kale gave Kirkwood a 54-53 lead with a 3-pointer with 5:30 remaining, but it was Kirkwood's last lead of the night.

Kale pulled the Eagles within 62-60 with 1:20 remaining, but the home team did not make another field goal with the game hanging in the balance, Southeastern, which made only one 3-pointer all night, scored three times near the basket in the final minute to claim victory.

"I don't think we were a very tough team tonight," said Petersen. "We're struggling with fighting through adversity when things get tough."

Tajen Ross tossed in 22 points for Kirkwood and Kale finished with 17 points and four 3-pointers. Nobody else scored in double figures and only six Eagles scored at all.

Chris King, averaging 18.6 points, had four points. Doug Wilson, averaging 13.3, got shut out.

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"We didn't share the ball," said Petersen. "I thought we played selfishly on offense, but that's usually what happens with our guys when things get hard.

"It's been tough for us as coaches, who we can go with and who we can trust out there. It's obvious that we haven't figured it out yet."

Southeastern topped Kirkwood on points in the paint (46-18), points off turnovers (20-8), second chance points (14-5) and bench points (33-10).

Kourtney Ware led the Blackhawks with 13 points. Southeastern topped the Eagles, 72-69, in West Burlington on Nov. 18.

SOUTHEASTERN (70): Dixon-Conover 3 4-5 11, Jackson 3 5-5 11, Wise 2 0-2 4, Nwagbaraocha 5 1-3 11, Miller 0 0-0 0, Lakovic 1 0-0 2, Barton 3 3-5 9, Johnson 0 0-0 0, Riak 0 0-0 0, Ware 6 1-1 13, Nikolic 3 3-3 9. Totals 26 17-24 70.

KIRKWOOD (62): Kale 6 1-2 17, Ross 6 9-11 22, King 1 1-2 4, Wilson 0 0-2 0, Arrington 4 1-5 9, Stansbury 0 0-0 0, Small 2 0-0 6, Ray 0 0-0 0, Meeker 1 2-4 4, Marble 0 0-0 0, Johnson 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 14-26 62.

Halftime - Southeastern 30, Kirkwood 25. 3-point goals - Southeastern 1 (Dixon-Conover 1), Kirkwood 8 (Kale 4, Small 2, Ross 1, King 1).