

Sluggish Coe women fall to Simpson

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Coe women's basketball team got off to a hot 9-2 start in non-conference games this season and appeared poised to challenge for the Iowa Conference title, but the Kohawks have dug themselves a hole to begin the league race.

Coe got off to a sluggish start Saturday and wound up losing to Simpson, 75-71, in a league game at Eby Fieldhouse that dropped the Kohawks to 0-2 in the conference.

Coe trailed 20-9 late in the first quarter and faced an uphill struggle all day. The Kohawks rallied for a 61-60 lead with six minutes left, but they committed four straight turnovers and fell behind again.

This time, they never recovered.

It was a similar story Wednesday night in the conference opener when the Kohawks lost at Loras.

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"We dug ourselves a hole again to start the game and to start the second half, and that kind of caught up to us," said Coach Nate Oakland. "We had to spend some energy to get back into it both halves. It looked like we were a little sluggish and a step slow.

"We started the same way Wednesday night, so we're going to have to take a look at things and figure out what our issues are to start the game. You cannot dig yourself double-digit holes like that."

When Oakland became the new coach at Coe this season, he placed a heavy emphasis on trimming the number of turnovers that plagued the club a year ago. The Kohawks did a good job of protecting the ball during non-conference games this season, but they reverted to bad habits Saturday with some careless passes and 18 giveaways.



Simpson (8-5, 1-1) did not press the Kohawks and used a zone defense most of the game, so it's not like the visitors were in Coe's face all day.

"The turnover number is really disappointing, especially against a team that didn't press," said Oakland. "They were in zone. Turning it over 28 percent of the time is definitely our season high."

The Kohawks lost the ball only 14 percent of the time in previous games, but they doubled that ratio Saturday.

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"That was really disappointing to see and I think it had a lot to do with our issues," said Oakland. "And when you couple that with their second-chance points, 42 of their 75 came off second-chance and turnovers."

Coe pulled into a 35-35 tie at halftime on a 3-pointer by Prairie grad Courteney McCrary right before the buzzer, but Simpson began the second half with a pair of 3-pointers for a 41-35 lead and the Kohawks were running uphill again.

Washington grad Aleena Hobbs gave Coe a 61-60 edge with 6:05 remaining, but the Kohawks committed four straight turnovers and Simpson scored eight straight points for a 68-61 advantage.

The Kohawks pulled within 69-67, 71-69 and 73-71, but they never got the equalizer and lost by four points.

Hobbs led Coe (9-4, 0-2) with 24 points. Jenna Lehman scored 14, Mickey Hansche had 11 points and Kennedy grad Jordan Holmes added 10.

Hansche, a junior from Iowa City High, made three 3-pointers and now holds the career record at Coe with 188.

Noreen Morrow, a 6-foot-2 center, hurt the Kohawks with 21 points near the basket and 11 rebounds. Simpson (8-5, 1-1) also got 14 points from Mackenzie Haupt, 13 from Maddie Bosworth and 10 from Katie Ahrenholtz.

The Storm have won the Iowa Conference title 11 times in the last 19 years and own a commanding 41-10 lead over Coe in the all-time series since 1977.

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Oakland is disappointed with his team's 0-2 start in the league, but not discouraged.

"We can't let an 0-and-2 start deflate us," he said. "We know what we need to work on, we know what we need to improve. There are still a lot of games to go."

SIMPSON (75): Van Wyk 1 0-0 3, Boland 1 0-0 2, Morrow 8 5-6 21, Bosworth 4 5-6 13, Haupt 5 2-2 14, Lankford 2 2-2 7, Mauro 0 0-0 0, Dalsing 2 0-0 5, Ahrenholtz 5 0-0 10, Gullickson 0 0-0 0, Gallagher 0 0-0 0. Totals 28 14-16 75.

COE (71): Hobbs 8 8-9 24, Lehman 4 6-9 14, Wirth 0 0-0 0, Holmes 3 4-4 10, Hansche 4 0-0 11, Boltz 0 0-0 0, McCrary 3 0-0 8, Lehmann 0 0-0 0, Stulken 2 0-0 4. Totals 24 18-22 71.

Halftime - Coe 35, Simpson 35. 3-point goals - Simpson 5 (Haupt 2, Van Wyk 1, Lankford 1, Dalsing 1), Coe 5 (Hansche 3, McCrary 2).