

J-Hawks drop opener to North Scott

Written by Tom Fruehling

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The mantra from the coaches on the Jefferson bench Monday night was that the girls play with “hot hands” on defense against their visitors from North Scott.

It was on offense, however, that they had much more trouble holding onto the ball with a severe case of butter fingers.

In their season opener, the young J-Hawks committed 23 turnovers that finally led to a 57-42 loss to the Lady Lancers.

“I think it was a little bit of first-game jitters,” said Jefferson Coach Jason Edwards. “And we were playing a really good team.”

North Scott is ranked third in Class 4A, and the J-Hawks made it a much closer game than the end score would indicate.

After pouring in three straight 3-pointers they closed the deficit to 45-42 with four minutes still to

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go. Ahead much of the way, North Scott had appeared to be pulling away.

But in a matter of a mere minute, Jeff got right back into it on long treys by Amanda Ollinger, Avery Guy and Kylie Wise. Then the roof of the newly-lighted gym caved in.

After missing a second free throw, North Scott high scorer Rachel Edmudson put in her own rebound and was fouled in the process for a three-point play. A layup soon after completed a quick six-point swing.

“We missed some key stops and some key rebounds,” Edwards pointed out. “They got a couple of crucial offensive rebounds and stick-backs that really hurt us.”

While the J-Hawks took honors 31-29 in rebounds (with twin towers Ollinger and Kennedy Dighton pulling down nine and seven, respectively), the Lancers had four more on the offensive glass.

“We have some kinks we need to work out,” said Ollinger, who led all scorers with 17 and also had four steals. “But his was a good start against good competition.”

She said they especially must do a better job on the boards. “We need to go in there thinking no one’s going to get the ball from us,” she remarked.

All but one of Jeff’s nearly two dozen turnovers took place in the first three quarters when they seemed to play with less urgency than when mounting their fourth-quarter comeback. And most miscues resulted from bad

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passes swatted away while throwing the ball down low to Ollinger or Dighton.

“We’ve got the two big girls in the post,” Edwards said. “We have to feed them the ball, but there are some things we still have to work out.

“For our first game, though, I thought we did some things well. We’ll be better when we play at Bettendorf on Saturday.”

NORTH SCOTT (57): Karli Rucker 2 5-6 9, Karly Soy 3 2-2 10, Gina Percuoco 3

0-1 7, Rachel Edmundson 4 2-3 11, Evan Hundley 3 0-0 6, Shelley Matthys 1

0-0 3, Olivia Schmidt 2 2-2 6, Rylee Claussen 2 1-2 5, Lindsay Gallens 0

0-0 0, Lauren Van Blaricom 0 0-0 0, Cora Wiersema 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 12-16 57.

JEFFERSON (42): Sam Kitterman 0 0-0 0, Avery Guy 3 0-2 8, Kylie Wise 1 0-0 3, Kennedy Dighton 5 0-3 10, Amanda Ollinger 5 6-7 17, Mariah Robinson 1 2-2 4, Sparkle Melton 0 0-00, Cassandra Veglahn 0 0-0 0, Emily O’Brien 0 0-0 0. Totals 15 8-14 42.

Halftime – North Scott 23, Jefferson 21. 3-point goals – North Scott 5 (Soy 2, Matthys 1, Percuoco 1, Edmundson 1), Jefferson 4 (Guy 2, Wise 1, Ollinger 1). Fouled out – none.