

No.12 Kennedy girls trim No.11 PV

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 05 December 2015 22:23 - Last Updated Sunday, 06 December 2015 00:13



The Kennedy girls basketball team used its "A" game to knock off fifth-ranked Iowa City High Friday night, but its "B" game was good enough to handle 11th-ranked Pleasant Valley on Saturday.

The 12th-ranked Cougars struggled for 16 minutes Saturday before finding their legs and overtaking Pleasant Valley, 52-46, in a non-conference game at the Kennedy gym.

That makes two victories over ranked teams in two days, one a masterpiece and the other a paint-by-numbers, but they both went into the victory column for the Cougars.

"It's hard when you go and play the No. 5 team on their floor and you get an emotional win, and you have to turn around and play another really good team the next day," said Kennedy Coach Tony Vis. "We kind of anticipated a little bit of a struggle, but at the same time, I told them the sign of a good team is winning when you don't have your 'A' game.

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"We didn't have our 'A' game and were still able to find a way."

Sydney Hayden helped save the Cougars with 19 points, including 11 points in the first quarter when she kept the sluggish Cougars in the game with three 3-pointers. Kennedy scored only one point in the second quarter and trailed 27-15 at intermission, but the Cougars came alive in the second half as all-star Lela Sellers began owning the backboards.

Sellers, a 6-foot senior, snared 17 rebounds in the ballgame and scored 13 points, a day after collecting 30 points and 11 rebounds in the 65-61 triumph at Iowa City High. She did most of her damage on the backboards after intermission.

"That looked like the Lela we had seen the previous three games," said Vis.

Kennedy outscored Pleasant Valley, 37-19, in the second half and finally nudged ahead at 38-37 on a bucket by Sellers with 5:17 left in the game.

"We seemed to have a little more gas in our tank in the second half," said Vis.

The Cougars opened a pair of five-point leads at 44-39 and 46-41, but the Spartans (2-1) pulled within 46-43 on a layup by Lana Lindstrom with 56 seconds left in the ballgame.

Kennedy secured the victory at the foul line. Olivia Hellweg cashed a pair to make it 48-43 with 47 seconds left, then Hellweg made two more for a 50-44 advantage with 26 seconds remaining. Sellers wrapped it up with two foul shots with 15.8 seconds left to make it 52-44.

Sellers had a quiet game during the first half, but she was a marvel around the backboards in the second half.

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"The first half was a little rough," said Sellers, "so we knew we had to stop them from getting as many boards as they did in the first half. We just had to step it up."

Sellers is averaging 20 points and 11.8 rebounds this year. Like all the Cougars, she had to push herself after the physically draining victory at City High.



"It was a good win yesterday, and so we just had to enjoy that while we could and then after that just get our minds mentally ready for this game," she said, "but it was hard physically."

It took 16 minutes, but the Cougars finally got untracked after spending a lot of mental and physical energy in Iowa City.

"It was definitely tough," said Hayden. "We knew after last night, which was a physically tough game for us, that we would have to push really hard tonight. We just fought through it and stayed positive with each other."

PLEASANT VALLEY (46): C.Spelhaug 0 0-0 0, Donahue 0 1-2 1, Paul 0 0-0 0, Donahue 2 0-1 6, Arthofer 4 1-2 11, Lindstrom 4 4-7 13, Budde 2 0-0 4, DeGeorge 0 0-2 0, E.Spelhaug 4 1-2 11. Totals 16 7-16 46

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KENNEDY (52): Langhurst 1 2-5 5, Hamilton 0 0-1 0, Hayden 6 3-4 19, Sellers 3 6-11 13, Steele 0 0-0 0, Hellweg 2 4-4 9, Dolphin 0 4-4 4, Runels 1 0-0 2, Meier 0 0-0 0. Totals 13 19-29 52.

Halftime - Pleasant Valley 27, Kennedy 15. 3-point goals - Pleasant Valley 7 (Donahue 2, Arthofer 2, E.Spellhaug 2, Lindstrom 1).