

Effort not to blame as QHS falls to Rocky

ROCK ISLAND QHS GIRLS 56 27

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QUINCY — Still in the midst of changing the culture around Quincy High School girls basketball, coach Brad Bergman has just one rule for his team. “We preach everyday to never quit,” Bergman said. “It’s a mentality that we are trying to instill here.”

The Blue Devils showed plenty of heart Thursday night, trailing by just three points at the end of the first quarter before eventually falling 56-27 to Western Big Six rival Rock Island.

“We tell them to keep fighting,” Bergman said. “There were some girls who did that the whole night for us.”

Quincy (1-6, 0-2 WB6) found themselves in a defensive struggle early, as the Rocks (6-1, 2-0) scored the game’s first basket more than two minutes into the opening period.

“This was the first time we’ve been guarded man-to-man all year,” Rock Island coach Thad Hoover said. “The Quincy kids did a good job of matching up with us and helping when they needed it.”

The Blue Devils ended up getting baskets from three different players in the first eight minutes, including a 3-pointer by sophomore Bre Bordewick with less than a minute left in the quarter that sent Quincy to the second quar-

ter trailing just 10-7. “At times, we did a lot better against pressure than we have all season,” Quincy guard Jada Humphrey said. “We had a good amount of energy in the first that kept us within three points.”

Rock Island found some holes in the Quincy defense in the second however, outscoring the Blue Devils 16-6 in the quarter to take a 26-13 lead at half-time.

The Rocks kept that momentum going in the third as they outscored the Blue Devils 22-5 to grab a 48-18 lead heading to the fourth.

“I never worried about our effort. We had kids working hard all night,” Bergman said. “They beat us because they just had bigger kids that played more physical than we did.”

The Blue Devils flashed their mental toughness again over the final eight minutes, outscoring the Rocks 9-8 in the fourth quarter.

“We challenged them to not worry about the score and keep competing,” Bergman said.

Humphrey believes QHS can take what it showed against Rock Island and build moving forward.

“We can take this intensity from tonight and put it on different teams to play at our own pace,” Humphrey said. “I don’t think we’re going to play another team with this kind of pressure, so we’re only to get better from here.”

Humphrey led Quincy with eight points.



Quincy University's Erin Mennemeyer, center, drives to the basket between a pair of William Jewell defenders during their game Thursday in Pepsi Arena. | H-W Photo/Phil Carlson

CLOSE | FROM 1B

Interior presence opens up perimeter for QU

“Staying focused and calm is our biggest thing. We knew they were going to come out and press us hard. We couldn’t lose focus.”

That’s critical be it the first quarter or the fourth quarter.

The Lady Hawks missed six of their first seven shots, saw Madison Campbell score the Cardinals’ first six points and fell behind 10-5 five minutes into the game. However, Cunningham found Edom open on the wing

for a 3-pointer with 4:44 to go in the quarter, kick-starting an 11-0 run that enabled Quincy to take control.

Edom hit two 3-pointers in that run and forced a turnover.

“She’s a calming factor out there,” QU coach Jeni Garber said. “She’s calm and confident.”

While Edom found her rhythm on the perimeter, senior forward Erin Mennemeyer came off the bench to establish the interior and force Wil-

liam Jewell (4-6, 0-1) to sag somewhat defensively. Mennemeyer had 15 points on 7-of-11 shooting, grabbed three offensive rebounds and dished a pair of assists.

Mennemeyer’s presence was enhanced by the fact Quincy’s guards made effective entry passes.

“They were having to double-team me,” Mennemeyer said. “I was able to throw it out and we hit some big threes. That’s when we were able to extend it.”

The inside-out play led to the Lady Hawks shooting 54.9 percent from the field and piling up 15 assists with five from Cunningham and three from Edom. Cunningham added 13 points.

“As guards, it’s our job to get the ball into them,” Edom said. “Then they got their job done. When they get their job done and the defense takes note of it, it makes it easier for us to get our shots.”

HAWKS | FROM 1B

QU led by at least 20 points down the stretch

“The first couple weeks of the season, we were really forcing everything,” said junior forward Evan McGaughey, who had 16 points and 10 rebounds and made 2 of 3 3-pointers. “Now, defensively, we’re locking up and sticking to our principles. Offensively, we’re finding the open man and knocking down the open shot.”

QU coach Marty Bell believes the offensive efficiency is the byproduct of a better effort defensively.

“You have better rhythm on offense when you’re guarding and you’re making stops,” said Bell, whose team is averaging 18.4 assists

and 12.4 turnovers per game. “You can play freer because there’s not so much pressure on every possession. When you know you’re going to get more possession because you’re making stops, it’s easier to make the extra pass and give it up because you know there’s going to be another possession where you’re going to get it back.”

“It’s allowing us to play free and loose and confident on the offensive end.”

So far this season, the defense has never been better.

For the second game in a row, the Hawks took an opponent averaging 20

or more points per game and shut them down. Against Lindenwood, they limited Cory Arentsen to seven points after he came in averaging 23.5 points. For William Jewell, junior guard Matt Lassen had been averaging 20 points per game, but he managed just four points as he went 2 of 9 from the field and 0 of 4 from 3-point range.

In fact, the Cardinals (2-3, 0-1) had four players averaging 12 points or more prior to Thursday’s game. They combined for 22 points as William Jewell was held 27 points below its season average.

“We just want to pressure the ball,” Washing-

ton said. “We’re trying to be more aggressive. Teams don’t like when they’re pressured. They want to stay out and run their offense. The more we can pressure them and speed them up the better.”

It worked. Quincy bolted to a 16-6 lead before missing a shot, extended the advantage to as many as 15 points in the first half and then rattled off a 12-2 run to start the second half. The Hawks led by 20 or more points the final 14:43.

“It starts and ends with the defensive effort,” Bell said. “We need to keep building from there.”

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