

Franklin delivers in the clutch for Wash

Written by Jim Ecker

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Cedar Rapids Washington passed the basketball eight times in the final 24 seconds Friday night before Dani Franklin got the ball in front of her own bench.

She let it fly just in time.

Franklin drilled a long 3-pointer at the buzzer as the No.8 Warriors stopped Prairie, 65-62, in an exciting Mississippi Valley Conference game at Prairie.

Courtney McCrary tied the game for Prairie, 62-62, with a 3-pointer with 32 seconds left, completing an 11-0 run by the Hawks that erased a 62-51 deficit in the final three minutes.

Washington Coach Frank Howell called a timeout with 24.2 seconds to go.

"He wanted us to run a play over and over again to see what we could get, if there were any openings down low," said Franklin, a 6-foot-1 junior. "And if that wouldn't have worked, we would have had it tied and just gone into overtime."

There was no need for that.

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Franklin began the final sequence by making the in-bounds pass to Colby Bjornsen. The ball flew around the perimeter from there as the Warriors probed for an opening.

Bjornsen passed to Abbie Herb. Herb passed back to Bjornsen. Bjornsen gave it back to Herb, with no penetration and the clock ticking.

Herb passed to Madison Kramer, who gave it to Bjornsen. Bjornsen passed to Aleena Hobbs, and Hobbs fired the ball to Franklin beyond the arc on the left side of the court.

"I knew when the ball was on the other side of the court how much time was left," said Franklin. "I knew I had to shoot it when I got it."

Franklin caught the ball in rhythm and swished the long 3-pointer for the victory. Howell and Franklin weren't sure of the distance, but it was a healthy poke from perhaps 24 feet, just a step or two from the Washington bench.

"It seemed like I could probably reach out and touch her," Howell said with a big smile.

Franklin finished with a game-high 25 points, scoring all over the court. She effectively used her size and strength near the basket for a series of post moves and drilled a pair of 3-pointers, including the winner.

"That's the nice thing about her," said Howell. "She's very fundamentally sound at both ends of the floor. And inside-out ... she's drilled and drilled and drilled both on the perimeter and on the post.

"She showed her versatility down the stretch with that big 3."

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Herb also had a big game near the basket for Washington (10-3, 6-2) and finished with 18 points.

Hobbs gave the Warriors a 62-51 lead with three minutes left when she hit a 3-pointer, but the Prairie Hawks (9-4, 6-3) were not finished.

Madison Dellamuth hit a 3-pointer to make it 62-54, McCrary converted a three-point play and Cyerra Hutchins made a driving layup to pull the Hawks within 62-59 with 1:36 remaining.

Washington committed its second straight turnover with 1:21 left. It took Prairie a long time to find the shot it wanted, but McCrary drilled her 3-pointer with 32 seconds left to tie the game 62-62.

"I thought defensively we got a little better and rattled them a little bit the last couple of minutes. And we made some big shots," said Prairie Coach Steve Doser.

Unfortunately for the Hawks, Franklin made the biggest shot of the night.

Alisa Weiland tossed in five 3-pointers and scored 21 points for Prairie. Hutchins finished with 12 points and McCrary had 10.

WASHINGTON (65): Herb 7 3-5 18, Malcolm 0 0-0 0, Hobbs 4 0-0 9, Bjornsen 0 0-0 0, Glenski 2 0-0 6, Kramer 2 2-2 7, Franklin 10 3-3 25, Kamin 0 0-0 0, Cook 0 0-0 0. Totals 25 8-10 65.

PRAIRIE (62): Moenk 1 0-0 2, Hutchins 6 0-0 12, Weiland 7 2-2 21, McCrary 4 1-1 10, Usher 1 4-4 6, Gudenkauf 0 0-0 0, Dellamuth 3 0-0 7, Shelangoski 0 0-0 0, Stoffer 1 2-4 4. Totals 23 9-11 62.

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Halftime - Washington 35, Prairie 28. 3-point goals - Washington 7 (Glenski 2, Franklin 2, Herb 1, Hobbs 1, Kramer 1), Prairie 7 (Weiland 5, McCrary 1, Dellamuth 1).