

Xavier destroys Demons for state berth

Written by Tom Fruehling

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Just like the Xavier girls, players from Washington, Iowa, pass a baton to one another when coming in and out of the game.

That's where the resemblance between two teams ended Tuesday night at Kennedy.

In a David versus Goliath match-up (or, if you will, Demons versus Saints), heavily favored Xavier crushed its underdog foe 51-15 to earn a trip to the Class 4A state tourney next week in Des Moines.

It is Xavier's second straight tourney berth and will be the 10th tournament appearance for the Saints since the school opened 15 years ago.

Last year the Saints lost their opener to Ankeny while in the class with the state's largest schools.

An expansion to five classes in the girls' ranks bumped Xavier down a class this year. The Saints will be competing with schools closer to their size this time around.

"Last year, we played a team that had four years of (tournament) experience," said Xavier Coach Tom Lilly. "And we had zero."

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“We won’t be playing just to say we’re happy to be there. We’ll be trying to win the title.”

If they play the way they played most of the way Tuesday, then pity the opposition.

The Demons had no chance against them, despite coming into the game with a better record.

Competing most of the season against smaller schools, Washington posted a 14-7 mark.



With 18 of its 22 games against Class 5A opponents (mostly Mississippi Valley Conference members), Xavier compiled a deceiving 12-9 regular season record.

Applying their usual suffocating defense from the opening tip, the Saints simply would not let the Demons score. Indeed, they went without a single point in the second quarter and only scored one in the fourth.

“It was standard fundamental defense,” said Lilly matter-of-factly. “We just applied hard pressure, in-your-face pressure. We smothered their post and took away their offense.

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“On defense, we had a great effort.”

The Demons had difficulty holding onto the ball and struggled to get off any shots at all. Six of their attempts were blocked. And, for the game, they were just five for 38 (13 percent). Only one of their dozen 3-point tries fell. They were also outrebounded 33-24 and committed 23 turnovers.

While Washington was stumbling, the Saints raced out of the blocks to a 19-7 first quarter lead. They extended the margin to 30-7 at half.

The spunky Demons continued to fight a fruitless battle, however, and actually held their own in a listless 7-7 third quarter.

Even as they employed a slowdown, ball-control offense, Xavier scored 11 straight points to begin the fourth quarter and stretched the lead to 48-14.

Subs from both sides mopped up .

The Saints made just three free throws and the Demons but one in the final five minutes of the game.

Xavier shot 47 percent for the game (17 for 36), but only two for nine from behind the arc.

And on defense, the regional champs recorded 16 steals.

As always, the Saints featured a balanced scoring sheet with Hayley Deutmeyer, Sarah Dickes and Ashley Stulken sharing honors with eight points each.

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Reserve Grace Redlinger scored all seven of her team's first half points and finished with a team-high nine for Washington.

WASHINGTON (15): Sammy Ellingson 0 1-2 1, Stephanie Fishback 1 0-0 2, Lauren Kimball 0 0-0 0, Beth Dillon 1 1-2 3, Johannah Vittetoe 0 0-0 0, Grace Redlinger 3 2-2 9, Mariah Reighard 0 0-0 0, Dema Gardino 0 0-0 0, Natalee Enfield 0 0-0 0, Sydney Hoffman 0 0-0 0, Olivia Hartzler 0 0-0 0, Addison Shive 0 0-2 0, Addie Pacha 0 0-0 0. Totals 5 4-8 15.

XAVIER (51): Kayla Armstrong 3 0-0 6, Hayley Deutmeyer 3 1-1 8, Sarah Dickes 3 1-2 8, Maddie Bertsch 2 2-6 8, Ashley Stulken 2 4-4 8, Morgan Breitbach 3 1-4 7, Abby Watson 1 1-2 3, McKenzie Andersen 0 2-2 2, Hannah Chute 0 0-0 0, Jenny Dickes 0 1-5, 1, Lizzy Bailey 0 0-0 0, Allison Chorzempa 0 2-2 2. Totals 17 15-28 51.

Halftime – Xavier 30, Washington 7. 3-point goals – Washington 1 (Redlinger), Xavier 2 (Deutmeyer, S. Dickes). Total fouls – Washington 23, Xavier 11. Fouled out – none.