

## Kirkwood men feast on Black Hawk

Written by Ryan Suchomel

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Before that good home-cooking on Thanksgiving, the Kirkwood men's basketball team enjoyed some home-cooking on Tuesday, beating Black Hawk 81-65 in Johnson Hall.

The Eagles built a 42-25 halftime lead, but the Braves whittled it down to five in the second half before Kirkwood (7-2) turned things around.

"They are a good team and I thought we had a lot of letdowns on defense," sophomore guard Taylor Olson said. "Turnovers too. A lot of breakdowns. We weren't mentally tough during that run."

Black Hawk put together a 21-6 run at the start of the second half to erase a lot of the good work Kirkwood had done to put them in a hole.

"We are talented, they know what we need to do," Kirkwood Coach Bryan Petersen said. "But sometimes we flow in and out of how hard we play. That was it basically."

The Eagles called a time out with 11:50 to play, leading 51-46. The control tower gave the flight crew permission to take off, and boy how.

Ajay Lawton started things off with a driving and-1 to make it 60-48 with 9:02 to play. JC Fuller had a driving layup, then Olson got in on the action with his own and-1 off a drive.

"I thought that was a big key to the game," Olson said. "A lot of driving lanes and doing a good job of taking advantage of that."

"Especially with new hand-checking rules, you've got to play physical; got to get into them."

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A game that was tightening up turned back into a blowout.

It matched what happened at the start of the game when Kirkwood went on an 18-0 run to take a 22-7 lead midway through the first half.

"We came out and played well in the first half," Petersen said. "But the second half I was pretty disappointed with our effort and urgency."

When the Eagles weren't bombing it from the arc -- Kirkwood hit 5-of-20 from 3-point range -- they were deadly. Inside the arc, Kirkwood shot 26-of-39 (67 percent).

Freshman forward Joseph Tagarelli had a double-double with 17 points and 11 rebounds.

Olson led the team with 20 points and five assists, and Fuller added 17 points.

"We've got to get the ball in the paint," Petersen said. "The way they are calling the game now. With the new rule changes, our guards have got to realize they can get to the hoop. Don't settle for jump shots."

The Black Hawks were led by 6-foot-6 forward Marshall Bennett, who had 20 points -- including 4 3-pointers -- and seven rebounds.

"With that size and range he was tough to guard," Fuller said. "But we buckled down and played good help defense on him."

The win was the third straight for the Eagles, who take a few days off and return to action on Dec. 3 at John Wood Community College in Quincy, Ill.

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"It's a great win," Fuller said. "They've beat some quality teams. If they would've beat us, we would've had to go home with a bad taste in our mouth."

BLACK HAWK (65): Ryan McElmurry 2-3 1-2 6, Heith Beach 2-6 0-0 6, Jordan Schaller 2-7 1-2 5, Marsahll Bennett 6-19 4-6 20, Sheawn Bedford 1-4 1-2 4, Greg Kent 0-0 0-0 0, Mike Maffie 0-0 0-0 0, Morris Sallis 1-3 0-0 3, Sean Moore 4-8 0-0 11, Terrance Fishere 2-3 0-0 4, Tyrone Lewis 1-3 1-2 3, Nygel Drury 2-6 0-0 4. Totals 23-62 8-14 65.

KIRKWOOD (81): Ajay Lawton 2-6 4-5 9, JC Fuller 8-15 1-1 17, Jalen Currie 2-2 1-1 5, Taylor Olson 6-11 5-5 20, Joseph Tagarelli 8-13 1-2 17, Jamaree Atwater 1-1 0-0 2, Matthew Lassen 1-4 0-0 2, Austin Swank 0-1 0-0 0, Joseph Weeks 1-2 0-0 2, Tyler Bussell 0-2 0-0 0, Myzeah Batie-Gaddy 2-2 2-2 7, Chris Ward 0-0 0-0 0, Henry Uwadiae 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 31-59 14-16 81.

Halftime - Kirkwood 42, Black Hawk 25. 3-point goals - BH 11-26 (McElmurry 1-2, Beach 2-5, Bennett 4-10, Bedford 0-2, Sallis 1-2, Moore 3-3, Fishere 0-1, Lewis 0-1). KCC 5-20 (Lawton 1-2, Fuller 0-5, Olson 3-6, Lassen 0-3, Swank 0-1, Bussell 0-2, Batie-Gaddy 1-1). Rebounds - BH 28 (Bennett 7), KCC 35 (Tagarelli 11). Assists - BH 17 (McElmurry 5), KCC 20 (Olson 5). Total fouls - BH 18, KCC 15. Fouled out - none.