

No.9 Cougars escape Pleasant Valley

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 07 December 2013 23:11 - Last Updated Saturday, 07 December 2013 23:25



The Kennedy girls basketball team is undefeated and ranked No.9 in the state, but Coach Tony Vis says the Cougars have not done anything special yet.

Vis was not entirely happy with his club Saturday night after Kennedy escaped Pleasant Valley, 57-53, at the Kennedy gym.

The Cougars have a 4-0 record this season and a shiny spot in the Class 5A polls, but the winless visitors from the Quad Cities nearly pulled off the upset.

Vis had a fairly lengthy meeting with his team after the game.

"I said, 'I don't know if you're feeling pressure, but you have to understand that teams are going to get up to play you because you are a rated team,'" he remarked. "When they come in, they're going to be motivated to do their best against you."

Vis said the Cougars have no reason to be overconfident.

"We really haven't won a whole lot," he noted. "We won 15 ballgames last year and this was our fourth win this year. I said, 'As far as state titles and conference titles, we're not defending anything. We're part of the chase. We're not the chase-ee, we're the chase-er.'"

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Pleasant Valley (0-3) scored the first basket of the fourth quarter to snap a 37-37 tie and grab a 39-37 lead. Kennedy tied on a basket by Carly Langhurst, but Erin Moser gave the Spartans a 42-39 edge with a 3-pointer.

There appeared to be an upset in the making, but the Cougars scored seven straight points with four free throws and a 3-pointer by Paige Hendrickson for a 46-42 advantage. Pleasant Valley would not go away, however.

Lana Lindstrom made a 3-pointer to pull the Spartans within 46-45 near the middle of the fourth period and it was anyone's game.

Stephanie Botkin made a three-point play and followed a few seconds later with a pair of foul shots to give Kennedy a seemingly safe advantage at 55-47 with about 1:30 remaining, but the Cougars made enough mistakes in the final seconds to help Pleasant Valley draw within 55-51.

Jordan Holmes made two free throws for a 57-51 lead with 31.2 seconds left and the Cougars held on for the victory.

Vis covered several topics in the locker room after the game.

"The one that was probably the loudest and the clearest was late-game situations, as far as how we handle that," he said. "You've got to play with poise and composure.

"We're throwing passes that are way too long, we're not thinking. We're not using our timeouts (when in trouble with the ball). That was the gist of it," he remarked. "I said, 'Hopefully this gets our attention in practice a little bit.'

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"Sometimes you get sloppy when you're winning comfortably. Tonight hopefully was an eye-opener for us. There's definitely room for improvement. There's a lot of stuff to work on."

Morgan Martin made 10 of 14 free throws and led Kennedy with 18 points. Hendrickson finished with 11 points and Botkin scored 10.

PLEASANT VALLEY (53): Reynolds 1 0-0 3, Moser 2 0-0 6, Donahue 2 1-2 5, Elceser 5 1-2 11, Price 1 0-0 2, Lindstrom 3 2-2 9, Dwyer 4 1-2 12, Bishop 2 1-2 5. Totals 20 6-10 53.

KENNEDY (57): Meier 0 4-5 4, DeLong 0 0-0 0, Holmes 3 2-4 9, Vis 1 0-0 2, Langhurst 1 1-2 3, Hellweg 0 0-0 0, Hayden 0 0-0 0, Milbrath 0 0-0 0, Hendrickson 4 2-3 11, Botkin 4 2-3 10, Martin 4 10-14 18. Totals 17 21-31 57.

Halftime - Pleasant Valley 23, Kennedy 20. 3-point goals - Pleasant Valley 7 (Dwyer 3, Moser 2, Reynolds 1, Lindstrom 1), Kennedy 2 (Holmes 1, Hendrickson 1).