

Franklin sparks Warriors by Prairie

Written by Carl Gonder

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She hit 3-pointers. She rebounded. She passed the ball. She blocked shots. She even sold popcorn at halftime.

Well, four out of five ain't bad.

Dani Franklin put on a dazzling do-everything performance for the Washington Warriors Friday night, collecting 27 points, four rebounds, four assists, four steals and two blocks in a gritty 59-52 win over Prairie at the Warrior gym.

"That's funny," Franklin said when asked if she sold popcorn at halftime. "I haven't heard that one before."

The 6-foot senior did everything else.

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"It was a good overall team effort," the humble Franklin said. "My teammates were passing well and we were all doing well defensively."

Franklin said that, "I think we can go really far if we keep reaching for our goals."

Franklin scored 19 second-half points, bringing the Warriors back from a 26-23 halftime deficit. The Valparaiso University signee hit on 7 of 17 from the floor and 10 of 11 from the foul line and buried a trio of 3-pointers. She also hit five key free throws in the final minute.

Warrior Coach Frank Howell calls Franklin one of the best players he has ever had. "No doubt about it," he said.

Howell said he was concerned about how Prairie would react following Coach Steve Doser's announcement this week that he would retire at the end of the season.

"It did cross my mind," Howell said. "I didn't know how they would respond. Steve Doser is a first-class individual. He is a first-class teacher of the game and he has always been very approachable and very easy to talk to."

Howell said that Doser will be missed.

"One door closes and another opens. I'm sure he will have some other opportunities. He's one of the great coaches that I have had the opportunity to go up against over the years," Howell said.

Kandis O'Donnell, a 5-foot-11 junior, played one of her best games of the season with 11 points on 4-of-7 shooting. Her two free throws with 29 seconds left gave the Warriors a 56-48 lead and effectively iced the game.

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Her steady improvement is providing the Warriors with another scoring option.

"It was fun to play tonight," O'Donnell said. "Dani and Aleena (Hobbs) are always going to be our top two people and I just want to contribute as much as I can to try and get us as far as we can."

"When they are covered, I am open," she said. "They can't cover all three of us most of the time."

O'Donnell said the impressive 81-68 victory at Waterloo West on Tuesday helped to create some confidence in the Warrior camp. "We knew that we could beat some of the best teams," O'Donnell said.

Both Cyerra Hutchins, the Prairie Hawks' leading scorer at 15 points a game, and Bradley University recruit Madison Dellamuth were in foul trouble most of the game. Hutchins had a quiet 13 points and Dellamuth added 11 points and four steals.

Prairie boss Doser said that Franklin was the difference-maker.

"She hurt us and took over the game at the end," he said. "I like the fact that she saw what was needed and took over. She is a real confident player and I like that."

Doser said he didn't think the announcement of his decision to step down as head coach had any impact on the game.

"We had a good discussion about it and the kids are working their tails off and that is all we can ask," he said. "I think they understand that my decision is based on what is best for me and my family at this point in time in my life."

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Hobbs added 11 points and led the Warriors with eight rebounds. Makenzie Stoffer had seven boards for the Hawks.

Washington improved to 9-3 overall. Prairie dropped to 6-6. The outing was a non-conference affair, but a rematch Feb. 7 will count in the conference standings.

Washington led by as many as 11 points in the second half and won the third quarter 14-7 in a big momentum swing as the Hawks got into deep foul trouble.

Leading 37-33 after three sessions, the Warriors padded their lead and hit seven free throws in the final 90 seconds.

Washington hosts Moline, Ill. Saturday. Prairie travels to Waterloo West next Friday.

PRAIRIE (52) Taylor Moenk 0 0-0 0, Cyerra Hutchins 5 3-3 13, Maddie Adams 0 0-0 0, Emilie Rotter 2 1-2 5, Cassidy Kuehl 0 0-0 0, Linsey Altenhofen 2 0-0 5, Olivia Usher 3 0-0 7, Savanna Hutchins 0 0-0 0, Madison Dellamuth 3 3-5 11, Emily Machula 0 0-0 0, Chrisandra Freeman 0 0-0 0, Katherine Pieper 0 0-0 0, Makenzie Stoffer 2 3-5 7, Kaytlyn Oellrich 0 0-0 0. Totals 15 10-15 52.

WASHINGTON (59) Joniqua Clark 0 0-2 0, Aleena Hobbs 3 5-6 11, Jasmyne Jones 1 0-0 3, Lilly Hartman 0 0-0 0, Danielle Franklin 7 10-11 27, MJ Kamin 0 0-0 0, Anne Visser 2 2-4 7, Kandis O'Donnell 4 3-4 11, Allie Semrau 0 0-0 0, Callie Cook 0 0-0 0, Courtney Squires 0 0-0 0, Kiki West-Doyle 0 0-0 0, Sophie Ochs 0 0-0 0. Totals 17 20-27 59.

Halftime - Prairie 26, Washington 23. 3-point shooting – Washington 5 (Jones 1, Visser 1, Franklin 3), Prairie 4 (Usher 1, Altenhofen 1, Dellamuth 2).