

Martensen sparks No. 4 Eagles by SCC

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Kirkwood Eagles needed a new power forward in the starting lineup Wednesday night with All-American Ariel Sneed sidelined with a knee injury.

Anna Martensen handled the call in style.

Martensen made her first start of the season and responded with 18 points and nine rebounds as the fourth-ranked Eagles bounced Southeastern Community College, 78-62, in a conference game at Johnson Hall.

Martensen, a 5-foot-10 sophomore from Belvidere, Ill., normally plays about 16 minutes per game with averages of 7.2 points and 4.5 rebounds. She played 31 minutes Wednesday and more than doubled her production.

"Tiring," she said with a weary smile after her career night. "I'm not used to that. I had to catch my breath a couple of times."

Sneed's injury is not as serious as originally feared, but she'll probably miss a few weeks while recovering from a sprained knee. Martensen and other interior players showed Wednesday they are ready to fill the void.

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Peyton Bockholt came off the bench and scored 12 points, Madison Wood scored six points and Cyerra Hutchins had six rebounds and four assists.

They helped Kirkwood (14-4, 2-0) win its 10th straight game and it came on the heels of a clutch two-point victory at seventh-ranked NIACC Saturday.

"I think it was a good win after a very emotional win on Saturday," said Coach Kim Muhl.

Martensen hit 7-of-14 shots with effective post moves near the basket. The Kirkwood guards did a good job of feeding her the ball in position to score.

"My teammates had a lot of good looks to me," she said. "I couldn't do it without them."

The Eagles collected 28 assists on 29 field goals. Taylor Silva led the way with nine assists and Tyra Polite had six.

"Twenty-eight is perfect, because they should be passing the ball to each other," said Muhl. "We're sharing the ball better."

"I thought early on (in the season) we were selfish. And I told them that."

Martensen was a guard in high school, but she's made the transition to an inside position in junior college.

"I like the post position a lot more, because you can get those looks and layups," she said. "My best thing isn't being a shooter, as everyone knows."

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Martensen likes playing near the basket now and she certainly liked playing 31 minutes against Southeastern. "It makes me more comfortable in the game," she said. "I can get more shots up."

Kirsten Larson popped in four 3-pointers and scored 13 points for Kirkwood. Silva added nine points.

Andrekia Thompson led Southeastern with 15 points. Kelsi Conner had 10 points and 15 rebounds.

SOUTHEASTERN (62): Nicholas 0 0-1 0, Grays 1 2-4 4, Barnes 2 1-2 5, Soy 1 1-1 4, Nikitina 4 0-0 11, Conner 3 2-2 10, Salas 2 0-0 5, Johnson 0 2-2 2, Scurry 1 0-0 2, Mehmert 1 2-2 4, Thompson 4 7-8 15. Totals 19 17-22 62.

KIRKWOOD (78): Silva 3 1-2 9, Polite 3 0-0 8, Larson 4 1-3 13, Martensen 7 4-7 18, Clark 3 0-0 6, Downs 1 0-0 3, Isaac 1 1-3 3, Oberman 0 0-0 0, Sudduth 0 0-0 0, Hutchins 0 0-0 0, Bockholt 4 4-4 12, Kallenberger 0 0-0 0, Wood 3 0-0 6. Totals 29 11-19 78.

Halftime - Kirkwood 40, Southeastern 26. 3-point goals - Southeastern 7 (Nikitina 3, Conner 2, Soy 1, Salas 1), Kirkwood 9 (Larson 4, Silva 2, Polite 2, Downs 1).