

Xavier depth douses City High girls

Written by Susan Harman, Iowa City Press-Citizen

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Two teams with a lot in common put strength against strength on Tuesday, and Cedar Rapids Xavier came out with a 58-47 victory over Iowa City High.

Both teams use full-court pressing defenses, and both have more than the usual array of post players to clog up the middle and score easy baskets.

"They are a really good defensive team, and they're really fast and they get a lot of fast breaks," City High guard Mickey Hansche said. "They never really shoot outside; they just like to pound it in because they have two 6-footers inside. We didn't really box out that well. They got a lot of offensive rebounds and got second and third shots."

But maybe what Xavier had that City didn't was an inexhaustible bench.

Xavier Coach Tom Lilly played 12 players in the first six minutes and the hockey line changes continued throughout the game.

"We like to utilize as many as we can in the first half, see how they are doing, see what kind of matchups it presents for us," Lilly said. "It gives our first group of kids extra opportunities to rest in case we do need significant minutes in the second half I think we can get them."

"I think it's a great thing for our team," Xavier guard Katlyn Andersen said. "We can get everybody in and get everyone a chance to play and keep people out of foul trouble."

Eighth-ranked Xavier is 8-1 overall and 4-1 in MVC play. Xavier's only loss came at Dubuque Wahlert early. The Saints trail Cedar Falls and Iowa City West by one game in the MVC Valley Division standings. Both Cedar Falls and West High were unbeaten heading into Tuesday's

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games. Xavier plays host to top-ranked West on Friday.

Eleventh-ranked City High is 6-2 overall and 3-2 in MVC play.

"Overall we came out and played well early," Lilly said. "That was the most positive thing we're going to walk away. Starting the game, matching them, defense, offense, it was a great contest."

The Saints separated themselves from the Little Hawks in the second quarter when City committed eight turnovers and made only three field goals. The Saints made 7-of-12 shots in the period, including 2-of-3 3-pointers to take a 30-21 halftime lead.

"We just knew we wanted to get out and get the lead before half," Andersen said. "We had a lot of communication, worked hard to find the open girl. Then just concentrated on having poise and good fundamentals after that."

The City High press had little or no effect on the Saints, and the Saints' half-court offense was patient enough to reverse the ball and get good shots. Andersen made two uncontested 3-pointers from the right wing created by good ball movement and unselfish play.

"We knew our high-low post offense was really good so we worked to get it into them as much as we could, and they finished the job," Andersen said.

Xavier's starting post players -- Emily Walvoord and Alex Bartz -- combined to make 8-of-10 shots, and Bartz made all four of her foul shots. The two not only worked a high-low passing game but had some nice interior passes to each other for baskets. Reserves Lisa Boomgarden and Ashley Stulken scored only six points but did the job defensively when they were in the game.

Xavier also took advantage of City High's tendency to crash the offensive boards. The Saints

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were able to get a player or two off in transition right away.

"It was a really fast-paced game," City guard Kiera Washpun said. "If we had gotten back a lot faster it would have made a big difference. Like a lot of times all our people would crash and not get back fast enough. We knew Xavier was a fast tempo type of team, and we're like that too, but we're used to crashing and then getting back."

City twice cut the margin to five points in the second half but wasn't able to get closer. Lilly said he thought the difference in depth helped the Saints weather the City High runs.

"It took a lot of energy for them to do that," Lilly said of the two runs. "We weathered that with our two starting post players on the bench. That was probably the turning point when they expended a lot of energy in order to do that."

"They were fresh all the time," Hansche said. "Some of us played the whole game and they would just keep coming in and they were fresh."

Andersen led Xavier with 15 points and Bartz added 12. The Saints shot 50 percent from the field and made 19 of 23 free throws. City High's free-throw shooting (12 of 24) definitely hurt its chances.

C.R. XAVIER (58): Kayla Armstrong 3-5 2-3 9, Annie Dale 3-6 0-2 6, Katlyn Andersen 4-7 5-6 15, Emily Walvoord 4-4 0-0 8, Alex Bartz 4-6 4-4 12, Nicole Noonan 0-1 0-0 0, Ashley Stulken 0-2 2-2 2, Sarah Dickes 0-3 0-0 0, Lisa Boomgarden 0-2 4-4 4, Katelyn Winker 0-0 0-0 0, Maddie Bertsch 0-0 0-0 0, Hayley Deutmeyer 0-0 2-2 2. Totals 18-36 19-23.

CITY HIGH (47): Kiera Washpun 4-6 4-8 12, Mickey Hansche 3-4 0-0 9, Harper Beasley 0-1 0-0 0, Haley Lorenzen 4-6 2-4 10, Aliyah Gustafson 0-1 0-1 0, Sierra Chambers 5-13 6-11 16, Jordan Sullivan 0-0 0-0 0, Erin Danielson 0-2 0-0 0, Brie Hightshoe 0-0 0-0 0, Katherine Van der Woude 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 16-33 12-24.

Halftime -- Xavier 30, City High 21. 3-point goals -- Xavier 3-7 (Armstrong 1-1, Dale 0-1,

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Andersen 2-4), City High 3-4 (Hansche 3-4). Total fouls -- Xavier 18, City High 20. Fouled out -- Chambers.