

## Marion surges in 4th to upset Kennedy girls

Written by Don Taylor

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Marion outscored Kennedy 16-9 in the fourth quarter Saturday night to upset the Class 4A seventh-ranked Cougars, 69-62, at Marion in the regular season finale for both teams.

At the end of three quarters the game was knotted at 53. Kennedy's Courtney Strait scored 16 of her game-high 35 points in that quarter.

But at that point Marion went to a diamond-and-one defense and dared the rest of the Cougars to score. Kennedy scored two field goals and nine points in the deciding quarter.

"In the fourth quarter they put a lot more emphasis on me and I was not able to get the ball," said Strait. "It seemed like I never got the ball with an opportunity to turn it into points."

Strait scored 24 points Friday in the Cougars' 70-35 romp past Jefferson.

"When we play with intensity and play together we play really well and tonight we didn't seem to have that," Strait said. "Now it is time to get ready for a run to the state."

"We waited until the last quarter to go to a diamond-and-one to stop Strait," explained Marion Coach Brian O'Donnell. "We had to find a way to keep her from scoring. We know that they

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have other very capable options, but we had to do something because she was scoring.”

“Marion played a great game tonight,” said Kennedy Coach Dennis Roloff. “They wanted this game more than we did and they played well, hustled, and shot well.

“We have been playing well, but we learned that we have more work to do to get ready for Linn-Mar in the first round of the tournament.”

Kennedy (12-9) hosts Linn-Mar on Wednesday in the first round of the Class 4A regional tournament.

Marion (13-9) played like a team on a mission. The Indians played aggressive zone defense and had a balanced attack. They were led in scoring by Beth Knapp with a career-high 21. Freshman Michalyn Mohr dropped in 13 and Alyssa Jones added 12.

“To get a nice win like this against a really good program like Kennedy coached by a good coach like Denny is huge for our program,” said O’Donnell. “It will really help our confidence for the tournament. When we got down by four or five in the third quarter, our kids battled right back. It was a tremendous team effort.”

“None of us could get our points if we didn’t play as a team and work together,” said Knapp. “We have learned a lot about ourselves and how to help each other click.”

“We just play a lot of help defense, box out, and push the ball on offense,” explained Jones. “When we work together we play pretty well.”

Mohr put it in perspective. “If we all work hard and we work together, we play so much better. Everything flows and we are hard to beat because we are all contributing.”

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Marion hosts Vinton-Shellsburg on Wednesday in the first round of the Class 3A regional tournament.

KENNEDY (62) Meier 0 0-0 0, Strait 10 9-14 35, Johnson 2 2-4 7, Hendrickson 2 5-6 10, Botkin 1 0-0 2, Holmes 1 0-0 3, Davis 1 0-0 2, Simmons 0 1-2 1, Zinser 0 0-0 0, Wagner 1 0-0 2. Totals 18 17-26 62.

MARION (69) Scott 0 0-4 0, Korf 1 0-0 3, Kramer 0 0-0 0, Cole 0 0-0 0, Deeney 1 0-0 2, Knapp 7 4-5 21, Peyton 2 3-4 8, Jones 5 2-4 12, Mohr 6 1-2 13, Banes 2 0-0 5, Perkins 2 1-1 5. Totals 26 11-20 69.

Halftime - Marion 36, Kennedy 32. 3-point goals - Kennedy 9 (Johnson 1, Strait 6, Hendrickson 1, Holmes 1), Marion 5 (Peyton 1, Knapp 3, Banes 1). Fouled out - Holmes, Perkins.