

Sommer twins lead Lions by J-Hawks

Written by Tom Fruehling

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For the Linn-Mar girls, Friday night was all about redemption.

They admittedly played poorly Tuesday in a 33-point loss at Kennedy and weren't about to let it happen again at home against Jefferson.

"We wanted to redeem ourselves," said senior guard Kristie Sommer, who led the Lions with 21 points in a 65-49 victory over the J-Hawks.

"This is our house," added twin sister Katie Sommer, who chipped in with 20 points. "We don't like to lose here."

Jefferson, meanwhile, had to pay the price for its transgressions. The worst sin of all was awful uncontested shooting from the free throw line and from behind the 3-point arc.

The J-Hawks made just 11 of 22 free throws and only two of 14 from long distance. The Lions, on the other hand, cashed in on a more respectable 22 of 37 free throws and five of 16 treys.

"We lost by 16, and there's the difference right there," said Jefferson Coach Jason Edwards.

It was an uphill struggle all night for his young squad, which features two freshmen and a sophomore in the starting lineup. Still, they managed to close within two points at 42-40 to start the fourth quarter, only to have the roof cave in.

The Lions reeled off a 16-3 run and left the J-Hawks in their dust.

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"We talk and talk about playing all 32 minutes," said Linn-Mar Coach Michael Brandt. "And tonight we won the fourth quarter.

"We really stepped up in the last eight minutes. We attacked the basket, we did a much better job on the boards and our defense was great. I was real proud of our execution."

At the start, it was a game of spurts.

Jefferson (3-4, 2-2 MVC) went on a 7-0 streak to take a 13-7 lead, but Linn-Mar (4-1, 2-1 MVC) came right back with a 9-0 rally to claim a 20-15 first quarter edge.

The Sommer girls accounted for all but six points as the Lions jumped up 32-15 at halftime.

"I was getting open, and my teammates were getting me the ball," said Kristie Sommer, who had 16 points at the half with three threes. "I just went with the flow."

Katie Sommer said it was far from a two-twin show.

"It was a team effort all around," she said. "Everyone contributed."

Brandt said a big part of the win was the group effort to stymie Jefferson's twin towers of 6-foot-2 sophomore Amanda Ollinger and 6-foot-1 freshman Kennedy Dighton. While the pair helped the J-Hawks to take a 36-31 advantage in rebounds, they were held to just 18 points between the two of them.

"I thought our girls did a great job at half adjusting on their two bigs," he noted. "We had kids

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helping out on them.”

Indeed, Dighton was held scoreless in the second half and Ollinger had but one field goal.

For his part, Edwards felt his team seemed to run out of steam in the fourth stanza. “We just got out-of-sync offensively,” he said.

“We turned the ball over a couple of times, missed a couple of rebounds and they hit a big 3-pointer. That sort of took the wind out of our sails.

“That three (by Olivia Montague) really did it. That stunned us. We were a little bit shell-shocked after that.”

Brandt, meanwhile, thought his team kept its composure all night.

“We just came out with confidence,” he said. “We certainly played with more confidence than we did on Tuesday night.”

Maddy Blietz led Jefferson with 16 points.

JEFFERSON (49): Amanda Ollinger 2 4-7 8, Kennedy Dighton 4 1-3 10, Maddy Blietz 6 3-5 16, Avery Guy 1 0-0 2, Kieleley Brathwaite 2 2-3 6, Erin Kuba 3 1-4 7, Autume Starks, 0 0-0 0, Sam Kitterman 0 0-0 0. Totals 18 11-22 49.

LINN-MAR (65): Kristie Sommer 5 8-13 21, Katie Sommer 4 11-20 20, Aryn Jones 4 1-2 9, Brittney Lancial 0 0-0 0, Taylor Robertson 1 0-0 2, Emily Makinster 1 2-2 4, Olivia Montague 3 0-0 7, Nikita Sharma 1 0-0 2, Allie Akers 0 0-0 0, Claire Larson 0 0-0 0. Totals 19 22-37 65.

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Halftime – Linn-Mar 32, Jefferson 25. 3-point goals – Jefferson 2 (Blietz 1, Dighton 1), Linn-Mar 5 (Kristie Sommer 3, Katie Sommer 1, Montague 1). Total fouls – Jefferson 27, Linn-Mar 19. Fouled out – Kuba.