

## Kennedy girls rout Linn-Mar

Written by Tom Fruehling

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Kennedy Coach Tony Vis was hard-pressed to find fault with anything his girls did Tuesday night after they demolished Linn-Mar 74-41 on their home court.

“Well,” he said after a pause, “we fouled a lot.”

Even that mild criticism was tempered, however.

“When you play as aggressive as we did tonight, I can live with that.”

In a match-up of previously unbeaten teams, this one was really no contest.

The Cougars (5-0) came out with claws bared and never let go.

Their defense was tenacious, forcing the oft-timid Lions into 18 turnovers.

With a decided height advantage, they out-rebounded Linn-Mar 38-23 and collected 14 of them on offense leading to second-chance points.

Kennedy also was on fire offensively, sinking 26 of 59 from the field (44 percent) and 16 of 22 free throws.

They also made six 3-pointers, while Linn-Mar made just one of 17.

All five Cougar starters scored in double figures. In fact, it wasn't until deep into the third

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quarter before anyone else made a basket.

The Lions, on the other hand, shot an abysmal 11 of 40 (28 percent), although they converted Kennedy fouls into 18 free throws out of 22.

“Obviously, we weren't on tonight,” said Linn-Mar Coach Michael Brandt. “You're going to have nights like that.

“But Kennedy is a great team. They have size, and they're very athletic.

“And tonight, they really executed.”

Linn-Mar (3-1) scored first, but it was all downhill from there.

Six-foot-one Cougar senior center Morgan Martin scored six points in the first three minutes and finished with 11 for the quarter to lead her team to a 24-15 lead.

Six-foot junior post partner Stephanie Botkin too over the second quarter with eight points as Kennedy built a 43-27 halftime margin.

Always-reliable senior Madi Meier ignited a 9-2 rally with a three-pointer and then added a dagger with a basket at the buzzer.

“With our big girls, we were post-dominant tonight,” said the scrappy veteran playmaker. “We'd kick it to them, and if they didn't score they'd kick it back out.

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“And they definitely the boards.”

Martin led the rebounding barrage with 13, but Meier chipped in with eight.

Kennedy's 5-foot-5 point guard Jordan Holmes took charge after intermission, draining two quick 3-pointers and starting a 7-0 run with a hard drive to the hoop.

By that time, the lead had ballooned to 56-31.

“Jordan does a great job leading our team,” Meier said of her senior running mate. “She's like a second coach on the floor.”

All in all, real Coach Vis said it was a most satisfying victory for his Class 5A ninth ranked Cougars.

“I was very pleased with how hard the girls worked,” he said. “They did a nice job sharing the ball. And we mixed up our defenses and kept Linn-Mar off-balance.

“The turnovers led to a lot of transition points.

“And when you get balanced scoring like we had tonight, it's very difficult for the other team to guard.”

For Brandt, meanwhile, he said the lopsided loss was a learning experience.

“We've got five new starters,” he noted, “so it's a time of growing up.

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"I told the girls that this was game four and we have 22 more practice games until the big season starts with the start tournament."

LINN-MAR (41): Kristie Sommer 4 8-10 16, Katie Sommer 2 8-9 13, Aryn Jones 3 0-0 6, Brittney Lancial 0 0-0 0, Taylor Robertson 0 0-0 0, Emily Makinster 1 0-0 2, Olivia Montague 0 2-2 2, Nikita Sharma 0 0-1 0, Allie Akers 1 0-0 2, Natalie Ross 0 0-0 0, Claire Larson 0 0-0 0, Darby Hayslett 0 0-0 0. Totals 11 18-22 41.

KENNEDY (74): Madi Meier 3 5-6 12, Madi DeLong 1 0-0 3, Jordan Holmes 5 0-0 13, Carly Langhurst 1 1-5 3, Abby Hellweg 0 0-0 0, Sydney Hayden 0 0-0 0, Brinley Milbrath 1 0-0 2, Paige Hendrickson 4 2-2 11, Stephanie Botkin 7 3-3 17, Morgan Martin 4 5-6 13, Madi Hennessey 0 0-0 0, Mariah Vis 0 0-0 0, Sarah Ryder 0 0-0 0, Allison Nemecek 0 0-0 0. Totals 26 16-22 74.

Halftime – Kennedy 43, Linn-Mar 27. 3-point goals – Linn-Mar 1 (Katie Sommer), Kennedy 6 (Holmes, 3, Meier 1, DeLong 1, Hendrickson 1). Total fouls – Linn-Mar 18, Kennedy 19. Fouled out – none.