

## Prairie girls dump Wash, tie for MVC lead

Written by Tom Fruehling

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Washington girls basketball coach Frank Howell said Prairie didn't do anything unexpected to pull off a mild but convincing 75-61 upset Friday night on the Warriors' home court.

"They just did what I feared," he noted. "They pushed the ball hard. They have a lot of people who can hit 3-point shots, so they spread your defense out.

"They can beat you off the dribble, make open passes and then knock down their shots. When they had the ball, we just couldn't stop them."

As a result, there's now a logjam atop the MVC Valley division standings. Washington (14-5 overall and ranked ninth in Class 5A) and Prairie (13-6) are both 8-3 in conference play, as is Waterloo West (14-5).

"A good win," said Hawks Coach Steve Doser. "We knew they'd be very physical. But we stayed right with them on the boards. "And we kept attacking, right to the end."

It was a coming-out party of sorts for Prairie junior point guard extraordinaire Madison Dellamuth, who has been urged by Doser all three years as a starter to shoot more.

On this night against the Warriors, she was all over the court – charging hard to the hoop, taking open jump shots and still feeding her teammates. She ended up with a game-high 20 points, including two 3-pointers.

"Coach has been on me all season to drive more and look for my shots," said Dellamuth, a wizard of a ballhandler. "If the defense focuses on me, it opens up gaps and I can get the ball to others."

And it worked like a charm.

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Mostly on the inside, Cyerra Hutchins popped in 16 points and Courteney McCrary 15. From the outside, sharpshooter Alisa Weiland also scored 15.

Each of the four contributed to Prairie making 10 3-pointers in 20 attempts.

“When we get Maddie to drive and get her to shoot, good things happen,” said McCrary.

For the game, the Hawks shot 45.6 percent on 26 of 57 from the field. The Warriors weren't slouches, knocking down 25 of 56 for 44.6 percent. They were six of 18 from 3-point range.

But Washington had just two players in double figures, the always deadly Dani Franklin with 19 and backboard-busting Abby Herb with 18.

The key difference in the game, according to Doser, was that his smaller but feisty girls held their own on the boards against Washington's rugged front line. Indeed, the Hawks held a rebounding edge of 31-28.

“They're bigger than us,” Dellamuth pointed out. “So we had to keep them from getting rebounds and putbacks.”

By giving the Warriors very few second-chance opportunities, Prairie opened up a 38-27 lead at halftime. Washington wouldn't give an inch, though, and cut the margin to seven at 58-51 with 5:50 left in the game.

The fourth quarter, however, belonged to the Hawks' steely leadership tandem of Dellamuth and McCrary. They turned the Warrior comeback into a 14-point cushion within a minute's time.

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Before four late points by Hutchins, the two combined for all of Prairie's first 13 points in the final period.

"We knew we had to be mentally tough and not let up in the fourth quarter," McCrary said. "We were very consistent the whole game."

Doser said he cautioned his team to stay on the attack throughout.

"Too often, I've seen teams play back on their heels and just trying not to make turnovers," he said. "More often than not, that only leads to turnovers."

Washington defeated Prairie on a 3-pointer at the buzzer by Franklin earlier this season, so they split two regular-season games this year. They could meet again in the Class 5A regional semifinals in what would be their biggest game of all.

PRAIRIE (75): Madison Dellamuth 8 2-3 20, Cyerra Hutchins 5 4-6 16, Courteney McCrary 6 0-0 15, Alisa Weiland 6 0-0 15, Olivia Usher 0 6-6 6, Taylor Moenk 1 0-1 2, Rachel Shelangoski 0 1-2 1, Haley Street 0 0-0 0, Emilie Rotter 0 0-0 0, Lynsey Altenhoffen 0 0-0 0, Grace Gudenkauf 0 0-0 0, Chrisandra Freeman 0 0-0 0, Mackenzie Stoffer 0 0-0 0, Kaytlyn Oellrich 0 0-0 0. Totals 26 13-18 75.

WASHINGTON (61): Abby Herb 8 2-3 18, Aleena Hobbs 2 3-4 7, Colby Bjornsen 2 0-0 4, Madison Kramer 2 0-0 4, Dani Franklin 8 0-0 19, Devin Glenski 3 0-0 9, Sophie Malcolm 0 0-0 0, Callie Cook 0 0-0 0. Totals 25 5-7 61.

Halftime – Prairie 38, Washington 27. 3-point goals – Prairie 10 (Weiland 3, McCrary 3, Dellamuth 2, Hutchins 2), Washington 6 (Franklin 3, Glenski 3). Fouled out – Franklin.