

Linn-Mar girls stop Xavier in 2 OTs

Written by Don Taylor

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It took the Linn-Mar girls two overtimes to put away Class 4A fourth-ranked Xavier Friday night, 57-54, in an exciting Mississippi Valley Conference battle at Linn-Mar.

The game was nip and tuck the entire way.

Sara Strauel of Linn-Mar was called for a controversial foul going for an offensive putback with .4 seconds left in the fourth quarter. It put Morgan Breitbach on the line to shoot two free throws for Xavier in a tie ballgame, but she missed both shots and the game went to overtime.

"I just hoped she would miss her free throws," said Strauel, "and then she did."

Strauel took over in the overtime periods. She led all scorers with 18 points, including four points in each overtime session.

"I don't try to score a lot of points. Tonight I just let the game come to me and I got some opportunities," she said. "On our team anyone is capable of stepping up."

Linn-Mar (8-11, 5-6) had balanced offense. Mykaela Brandt's 11 points and Hannah Yearling's 10 gave the Lions three players in double figures.

Strauel made four free throws and Yearling added a pair for all the points Linn-Mar scored in the second overtime, but those free throws secured the victory.

"I have been struggling a bit with my free throws lately," said Yearling. "I have been working on them and it paid off."

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"I was very proud of our team tonight," said an excited Linn-Mar Coach Mike Brandt. "We played hard through everything tonight. We never let down.

"We just kept battling, rebounding and executing our defensive game plan. It was a hard-earned victory."

Xavier (11-8, 8-4) was led in scoring by Ashley Stulken with 15 points and Kayla Armstrong added 11. Xavier's press bothered Linn-Mar at times during the game. Three times Sarah Dickes picked their pocket and it resulted in easy layups.

"I was able to get some steals and it really helped us," said Dickes. "But in the end we just didn't quite have enough."

"Both teams played hard and we had some moments and didn't capitalize and they did," said Xavier Coach Tom Lilly. "When you play teams on their home court they are going to play better and they certainly did tonight."

XAVIER (54): Armstrong 5 1-4 11, Deutmeyer 0 3-4 3, Dickes 3 1-2 7, Bertsch 3 0-0 6, Stulken 5 5-10 15, Breitbach 0 6-10 6, Watson 0 0-0 0, Andersen 1 0-0 3, Chorzempa 0 0-0 0, Bailey 1 0-0 3. Totals 18 16-30 54.

LINN-MAR (57): Yearling 2 6-6 10, Brandt 4 1-1 11, Strauel 7 4-6 18, Major 3 2-2 9, Libenguth 4 1-2 9, Eiles 0 0-0 0, Jones 0 0-0 0, Harms 0 0-0 0. Totals 20 14-17 57.

Halftime - Xavier 23, Linn-Mar 22. Regulation – Xavier 46, Linn-Mar 46. First OT - Xavier 51, Linn-Mar 51. 3-point goals — Xavier 2 (Andersen 1, Bailey 1), Linn-Mar 3 (Brandt 2, Major 1). Fouled out - Libenguth.