

## Sommer girls help Lions spank Saints

Written by Mike Condon

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Linn-Mar's wonder twins were reunited Friday night after being apart for three-plus games.

Senior guard Kristie Sommer suffered a head and neck injury in a Jan. 10 loss to Cedar Falls and missed the next three games.

She returned Friday night and combined with twin sister Katie to score 35 points in the Lions' 48-24 Mississippi Valley Conference win over Xavier on "PINK OUT" night at Linn-Mar that saw the hosts decked out in pink uniforms.

Gate receipts and other money raised were donated for cancer research.

"It was great to have the twins back playing together again," said Linn-Mar Coach Mike Brandt. "They really gave us the lift we needed."

The Sommer twins transferred to Linn-Mar from Dubuque Senior this school year.

"They came in and it is a lot of credit to our other kids that they accepted them," Brandt continued. "It's tough coming in as seniors, but they did a great job of meshing with the kids who were already here."

After being honored prior to the game for becoming what is believed to be the first twins in Iowa history to both pass the 1,000-career point plateau, the sisters went to work. They scored all but three of the Lions' first-half points as they took a 19-11 lead at halftime.

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Kristie Sommer, who finished with 15 points, said it was hard sitting out and not being able to help her teammates.

"It was so nice being back on the floor with my teammates and working to get our chemistry back," she said. "I didn't want to hold back and I didn't want to play scared. That's not my game. Aggressive is the only way I know how to play."

Katie Sommer, who carried much of the offensive load in her sister's absence, admitted it was different being on the floor without the girl who has been her running mate since grade school.

"It was awesome having her back tonight," said Katie Sommer, who had a game-high 20 points. "It was just nice being able to play with my twin again. I've played with her all my life.

"We eat, breathe and live basketball all the time. It was different playing without her, but I played for her when she was out."

Linn-Mar (10-5) actually fell behind 9-4 early as Morgan Breitbach and Lizzy Bailey each hit 3-point baskets for the Saints in the opening minutes. The Saints scored just 15 points the rest of the game.

Brandt credited some defensive adjustments for some of Xavier's poor fortune on the offensive end.

"We started running a little different defense against them," he said. "I thought the girls executed it really well. We really found the shooters and rebounded really well."

Xavier Coach Tom Lilly said his team had been shooting the ball well the past couple games, but that wasn't the case against the Lions.

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"Shooting is probably as much rhythm as anything else," he said. "You catch the ball in rhythm and you have a much better chance to be successful in your shooting."

"I thought we hesitated a little bit too much," Lilly added. "We had some opportunities and didn't take advantage of them. If you don't shoot the ball well, you just aren't going to look very good."

Brandt also had praise for senior center Aryn Jones, who had six points, 12 rebounds and was a force in the middle for Linn-Mar. The Lions also welcomed back junior Lannie Nietert, who saw her first action in over a year after suffering a knee injury.

"Aryn did a great job in there tonight," Brandt said. "She made it tough for them around the basket."

It doesn't get any easier for Xavier (7-8). The Saints host No.6 Waterloo West on Saturday. Linn-Mar is also in action Saturday, traveling to Waukee.

XAVIER (24): Morgan Breitbach 3 0-0 7, Lizzy Bailey 1 0-0 3, Hayley Deutmeyer 1 1-2 3, Abby Watson 0 1-2 1, Maddie Bertsch 2 0-2 4, Meghan Joens 1 0-0 2, Jenny Dickes 1 0-0 2, Erin Drahozal 1 0-0 2, Madi Nelson 0 0-0 0, Brylee Bastian 0 0-0 0, Kylie Tritle 0 0-0 0, Claire Christianson 0 0-0 2, Lexi Noonan 0 0-0 0, Kiana Stanek 0 0-0 0. Totals 10 2-8 24.

LINN-MAR (48): Katie Sommer 6 7-10 20, Kristie Sommer 4 4-4 15, Aryn Jones 3 0-0 6, Olivia Montague 0 0-0 0, Nikita Sharma 2 0-0 4, Taylor Robertson 0 1-2 1, Emily Makinster 0 0-0 0, Claire Larson 0 0-0 0, Brittney Lancial 1 0-0 2, Lannie Nietert 0 0-0 0, Alie Akers 0 0-0 0, Natalie Ross 0 0-0 0, Darby Hayslett 0 0-0 0. Totals 16 12-16 48.

Halftime - Linn-Mar 19, Xavier 11. 3-point goals - Xavier 2 (Breitbach 1, Bailey 1), Linn-Mar 4 (Kr. Sommer 3, Ka. Sommer).