

Eagles work inside-out for win

Written by Mike Koolbeck

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It took a half for Friday and her Kirkwood teammates to kick into gear Saturday.

Friday Chuol's rebound putback of a missed shot 10 seconds into the second half started a 20-7 Kirkwood surge that sent the No. 5 Eagles past No. 4 Kishwaukee, 60-40, in a women's junior college basketball game.

The game was the nightcap of the Clarion-Kirkwood Classic.

Kirkwood's Bianca Dufelmeier scored 13 of her game-high 17 points in the second half, when the Eagles outscored Kishwaukee, 40-17.

Kianna Jacobs added 12 points. Chuol grabbed a game-high 10 rebounds. Eleven Eagles played and eight scored.

The Eagles (4-0) matched their first-half point total of 20 less than five minutes into the second half.

"We realized our mistakes and knew we had to come out stronger than we had in the first half," said Chuol, a sophomore from Des Moines East and native of the Sudan.

Kirkwood managed to penetrate the Kishwaukee defense in the first half, working the ball to Chuol, Kianna Jacobs and Whitney Henderson in the low post. But Kishwaukee played a collapsing defense that strangled most shots the Eagles attempted.

"We kept trying to shoot over their bulk," Kirkwood Coach Kim Muhl said. "They had a 6-4 kid and another long kid that played like she was 6-4."

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And that was trouble for the Eagles.

"We struggled," Chuol said. "They literally had three people on one person, leaving our guards open. That's when we realized it needed to be an outside type of game."

And that's when Dufelmeier, a sophomore from Ames and Australian native, stepped into the spotlight. Her 3-pointer with 19:25 left in the game gave Kirkwood a 25-23 lead it never relinquished. Whitney Rohrbach and Alexis Fitzpatrick also drained 3s during a 20-7 run that gave the Eagles a 40-30 lead with 15:11 still to play.

"We weren't about to lose to Kishwaukee again," Dufelmeier said of the second-half surge.

Kishwaukee knocked Kirkwood out of the national tournament when last the team's met in March.

"We were not about to have a repeat of that," Dufelmeier said. "We came out and decided we were going to put a stop to it."

Both teams struggled to shoot the ball in the first half. Kishwaukee (1-4) shot 24 percent, Kirkwood 20 percent. The Eagles trailed 23-20 at the break.

"We were lucky to be down three points," Dufelmeier said. "We weren't shooting well, we weren't passing well. We went into the locker room and said we need to pick it up and play as a team. We need to pass the ball a little more and that's exactly what we did."

Kirkwood had two assists at halftime. It finished with 15. The Eagles also shot 52 percent in the second half.

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"When we got in rhythm, it was a great game to play in," Dufelmeier said.

"It was a good game for us to get tested," Muhl said. "That's a good team and it's going to get better."

Kirkwood beat Kishwaukee during the regular season a year ago when the teams met in the same classic event in mid-November at Kirkwood.

"We knew it was going to be a battle. They come at you for 40 minutes. That's why we come here," Kishwaukee Coach Karen Wiley said. "I love the way (Muhl) runs his program. I love the way his kids play.

"Hopefully, we'll get better and we'll see them in Peoria."

The national tournament is in Peoria in March.

KISHWAUKEE (40): Catie Cox 0-2 0-1 0, Tami Morice 3-11 10-12 16, Sinclair Cunningham 0-9 0-0 0, Valerierose Agnello 5-17 4-8 15, Kelsie Kluck 1-6 3-3 5, Alexis McClain 1-6 1-1 3, Rosanna Gambino 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 10-51 19-28 40.

KIRKWOOD (60): Kianna Jacobs 5-10 2-3 12, Friday Chuol 3-5 0-0 6, Bianca Dufelmeier 6-15 2-2 17, Whitney Rohrbach 2-6 0-0 6, Alexis Fitzpatrick 2-11 2-2 7, Shahana Williams 0-0 0-0 0, Mikayla Fallon 0-2 0-0 0, Lexi Hobbs 1-1 2-2 4, Haley Faber 0-3 0-0 0, Whitney Henderson 0-5 2-4 2, Krissi Tow 3-3 0-0 6. Totals 22-61 10-13 60.

Halftime - Kishwaukee 23, Kirkwood 20. 3-point goals - Kichwaukee 1-17 (Agnello 1-7, Kluck

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0-1, Cunningham 0-2, Morice 0-3, McClain 0-4), Kirkwood 6-20 (Dufelmeier 3-9, Rohrbach 2-4, Fitzpatrick 1-6, Fallon 0-1). Rebound - Kishwaukee 41 (Morice 8), Kirkwood 45 (Chuol 10). Assists - Kishwaukee 4, Kirkwood 15 (3 with 3). Total fouls - Kishwaukee 13, Kirkwood 19. Fouled out - None. Technical foul - Cunningham.