

Sluggish KCC women roll by 29

Written by Jim Ecker

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Kim Muhl has set the bar extremely high with the Kirkwood women's basketball program with six national titles, so sometimes even a 29-point victory leaves him frustrated.

That was the case Wednesday night.

The fourth-ranked Eagles put on a sluggish performance and irritated their coach in a 78-49 victory over Marshalltown Community College at Johnson Hall.

Kirkwood raised its records to 14-3 overall and 3-1 in the ICCAC conference, but Muhl was not happy.

"We're just not a hungry basketball team right now," he said. "We're just going through the motions, and it's going to come back and bite us in the butt somewhere."

Only one team from the ICCAC will reach the national tournament this year, which means the Eagles will be competing with top-ranked NIACC, 14th-ranked Iowa Central and possibly DMACC for that one spot in the national event.

That's tough enough, but it could be even tougher because the semifinals and finals of the regional tournament will be hosted by Iowa Central in Fort Dodge. Muhl knows his team will have to play at a high level to win the regional and advance to the national tournament in March, which is why he was not satisfied with a sloppy 29-point victory at home against an overmatched opponent in January.

"We've got to come tomorrow ready to practice or I'm going to boot them out of practice. I'll tell them to come back later," he vowed after a lengthy post-game session with his team behind closed doors.

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"If they don't want to do it, we'll come in at 6 o'clock in the morning. I have no problem with that. I'll get up at 4.

"They're going to get better," he insisted.

Muhl did not think his club played with enough energy, emotion or intensity against Marshalltown (10-4, 1-3). There were flashes of good basketball, but not enough to suit the veteran coach.

Kirkwood has 12 freshmen on its 15-girl roster, but Muhl does not want to use youth or mid-season blahs as an excuse.

"You can have an excuse and accept it, or you can change your mentality," he said. "We have to change our mentality.

"We have a choice to make: How much do you want to play, how hard do you want to play? And I have a choice to play you or not.

"It's time," he said. "They're women. They're not girls in high school anymore.

"Go play and have some fun with it," he told his players.

Muhl realizes he's set the bar high at Kirkwood with those six national titles, but he's motivated to keep trying for a seventh.

"That's where we put that bar," he said. "And most of the time when you put the bar there, you don't want to go down. At least try to maintain it, or be close."

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Mikayla Fallon led Kirkwood with 13 points, nine rebounds and five assists. Ariel Sneed collected 12 points and eight rebounds. Cassidy Clark finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds.

Jamerka Martin and Mackenzie Gott led Marshalltown with 14 points apiece.

MARSHALLTOWN (49): Howe 2 6-6 11, Salgado 3 0-0 6, Martin 3 5-10 14, Williams-Perry 1 2-6 4, Gott 6 2-3 14, Calles 0 0-2 0, Henio 0 0-0 0, Sieck 0 0-0 0, Montgomery 0 0-0 0. Totals 15 15-27 49.

KIRKWOOD (78): Sneed 6 0-0 12, Woolfolk 4 0-1 8, Tuttle 1 0-1 3, Fallon 4 2-2 13, Clark 5 0-0 10, Silva 4 0-0 9, Polite 2 0-2 5, Larson 1 0-0 3, Haynes 3 1-2 7, Bockholt 1 0-0 2, Kelso 1 4-10 6, Robinson 0 0-0 0. Totals 32 7-18 78.

Halftime - Kirkwood 34, Marshalltown 18. 3-point goals - Marshalltown 4 (Martin 3, Howe 1), Kirkwood 7 (Fallon 3, Tuttle 1, Silva 1, Polite 1, Larson 1).