

No. 4 Cougars roll to 9-1 record

Written by Jim Ecker

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Tony Vis does not need anything else for Christmas.

The Kennedy girls basketball coach already has a team that is ranked No. 4 in the state and boasts a sparkling 9-1 record with a nine-game winning streak.

The Cougars sailed into the holiday break Monday with a 77-34 victory over Fairfield as Sydney Hayden popped in 18 points, Hailey Dolphin netted 15 points and Lela Sellers added 13.

Vis likes what he's seen during the first half of the season.

"I really like the chemistry," he said. "You can see when we walked out, smiles on their faces. They like each other, and they work hard for each other. And it's a fun group to coach."

Sellers is averaging 18.6 points, Hayden follows at 13.9 and Dolphin has raised her mark to 10.2 points, giving Kennedy three players in double figures. Carly Langhurst, Linden Runels, Olivia Hellweg and Ashley Hamilton have combined to average another 16.6 per game.

Hayden hit five more 3-pointers Monday and has tossed in 38 this season, which leads Class 5A by a considerable margin.

Kennedy does not have much size, but the Cougars have some strong players and they've found a way to win close games with a four-point verdict over Iowa City High, a six-point triumph over Pleasant Valley and a victory over Washington in overtime.

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The Cougars are a fun bunch to watch when they're clicking.

"I like the style that we play," said Vis. "It's an up-tempo style. And they can defend bigger kids, even tho we don't have a center per se."

Kennedy lost to top-ranked Waukee, 49-43, in the season opener Nov. 24, but the Cougars have run the table the last four weeks with their nine straight victories.

"There's always stuff you want to get better at," said Vis. "We've got to rebound a little bit better. We've got to rotate a little better sometimes if we get beat off the dribble."

Vis plans to install a few things during the holiday break before the Cougars begin 2016 with a home game against North Scott Jan. 2.

"We've got a few wrinkles up our sleeves yet as far as some offense that we'll get in over the break," he said.

Nicole Buch led Fairfield (6-4) with 12 points.

FAIRFIELD (34): Bowman 0 0-0 0, Drish 0 2-2 2, Fritz 2 3-4 8, Kurtz 2 0-0 5, Flattery 1 0-0 3, Buch 2 7-9 12, McLain 0 0-0 0, Ryan 0 0-0 0, Ridgeway 0 1-2 1, Beard 0 0-0 0, Kaska 0 0-0 0, Lunsford 0 3-4 3, Crile 0 0-0 0.
Totals 7 16-21 34.

KENNEDY (77): Choate 0 0-0 0, Langhurst 3 0-2 7, Hamilton 0 2-2 2, Hayden 6 1-3 18, Sellers 4 5-5 13, Steele 1 0-0 2, Vaske 1 1-1 3, Hellweg 2 3-4 7, Dolphin 6 2-2 15, Runels 2 0-0 4, Meier 0 3-4 3, Gallagher 1 0-0 3.
Totals 26 17-23 77.

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Halftime - Kennedy 42, Fairfield 21. 3-point goals - Fairfield 4 (Fritz 1, Kurtz 1, Flattery 1, Buch 1), Kennedy 8 (Hayden 5, Langhurst 1, Dolphin 1, Gallagher 1).