

'Relaxed' Hutchins helps Eagles clinch title

Written by Mike Condon

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Cyerra Hutchins is admittedly hard on herself.

The Kirkwood sophomore has struggled in recent games and it was weighing on the former Prairie standout.

"She was due," Kirkwood coach Kim Muhl said. "We had a talk today about sophomoreitis. I think she was worried about some things and today she just went out and played."

Play she did. Hutchins netted a game-high 23 points, hitting 8-of-10 from the field, including all three of her 3-point attempts, as the Eagles blitzed Iowa Central, 88-51, on Saturday at Johnson Hall.

The win not only moved the No. 4 Eagles to 25-4 overall, 12-0 in the ICCAC, but secured yet another outright regular-season league championship and the top seed for the upcoming conference tournament.

Hutchins said the talk with her coach was beneficial.

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"Coach just told me to go out and have some fun today," Hutchins said. "I just went out there and tried to do that. I was able to get the ball to our post players and they did a great job of finding me for open shots."

Hutchins was also on her game defensively, as were all the Eagles. She had four steals and five defensive rebounds. Kirkwood led just 34-28 late in the first half, but went on a 9-0 run to end the half and an 8-0 start to the third quarter to put the game away.

Muhl credited the defense for Kirkwood's success on Saturday.

"This is the best they've played defensively all season," Muhl said. "Our defense was good. It can wear on you. I like the way we played."

Caitlin Sudduth added 14 points for Kirkwood. Madison Wood added eight points and 10 rebounds.

Despite his many league titles since coming to Kirkwood in 1989, Muhl doesn't take them for granted.

"No, no it never gets old because it is too hard to get them," Muhl said.

"It's hard to go through this league and stay healthy. To be the No. 1 seed is really nice."

Hutchins said the team has its sights set on the national tournament.

"That's been our goal," she said. "This team has so many good players. If we play like we did today, we are a tough team to beat."

Tangy Wiseman led Iowa Central (14-6, 8-4) with 12 points. Former Cedar Rapids Washington

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player Jazz Royster started for Iowa Central, scoring seven points.

IOWA CENTRAL (51): Stumpf 1 0-0 2, Wiseman 3 3-3 11, Royster 2 2-2 7, Yung 0 2-5 2, Mericle 4 2-3 10, Anaya 0 0-0 0, Morgan 0 1-2 1, Kortan 1 0-0 2, Graffunder 0 0-0 0, Sillman 3 0-0 8, Altman 2 4-6 8. Totals: 16 14-21 51.

KIRKWOOD (88): Harris 3 1-2 7, Miles 2 0-0 5, Sudduth 5 3-4 14, Hutchins 8 4-5 23, Wood 3 2-3 8, Lemons 3 3-3 8, Downs 1 0-0 2, Wheatly 2 1-2 5, Oberman 3 2-3 8, Voss 1 0-0 2, Dampier 0 2-2 2, Jennings 2 0-0 4. Totals: 33 15-20 88.

Halftime – Kirkwood 43, Iowa Central 48. 3-point goals – Iowa Central 5 (Wiseman 2, Royster, Sillman 2). Kirkwood 7 (Miles, Sudduth, Hutchins 3, Oberman 2). Total fouls – Iowa Central 13, Kirkwood 24. Fouled out – Harris. Technical fouls – none.