

Sims helps No. 12 Eagles stuff SCC

Written by Jim Ecker

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Seybian Sims likes to score a bunch of points if he can, but that's not the end of the basketball floor that he enjoys the most.

"Me personally," he said Wednesday night, "I prefer playing defense over offense. Honestly."

He proved it last night.

Sims helped the Kirkwood Eagles hold Southeastern to 24 points in the second half to cement a 75-56 non-conference victory at Johnson Hall.

Sims finished with 13 points, 12 rebounds, two assists and a big steal as Kirkwood whipped the Blackhawks for the first time since 2015, snapping a five-game losing streak to SCC.

Kirkwood trailed 32-29 at halftime, but the Eagles pelted the Blackhawks 46-24 in the second half while shooting 69.2 percent. It all started on defense.

"Defense. Defense. Defense," said Sims, a 6-foot-7 sophomore from Iowa City West. "We really strive on defense."

Get a stop, get a bucket.

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"Defense is a 'Want to.' It's a mind-set," said Kirkwood Coach Tim Sandquist. "Not everybody can play it effectively. And some guys don't.

"We have a group of guys who are buying into it," he said. "And they're seeing results. They see the importance of it and they're liking to play defense."

Sims, averaging 8 points and 5.9 rebounds, made 6 of 7 shots and excelled at both ends of the court.

"A tremendous effort by him," said Sandquist. "Seybian is a very talented offensive player. I think a lot of people recognize him as one of our best defenders and rebounders, but he has some tools."



Kirkwood trailed 49-48 with 10 1/2 minutes left, but the Eagles took control from there with a 23-5 run that was sparked by excellent defense, crisp passing and good shooting as they zoomed to a 71-54 advantage.

Griffen Clark scored eight points during that 23-5 spurt with a pair of 3-pointers and a hard-driving layup. Sims had six points during the run, including a key steal and layup.

"I think we played well," said Sims. "We definitely came out and played well together."

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Luke Appel led Kirkwood with 19 points. Devonte Thedford had 10 points, five assists and four rebounds. Clark and DJ Purnell, back in action again, added eight points apiece. Chris Burnell scored seven points and Gacoby Jones hit two straight 3-pointers to get the Eagles started in the second half.

"Our guys are really playing unselfishly now," said Sandquist. "We're sharing it. We don't really care who scores. That's a great mind-set to have and fun to coach."

Kirkwood, ranked No. 12 in NJCAA Division II, raised its record to 9-3 overall. Southeastern, ranked No. 18 in NJCAA Division I, fell to 10-3.

Southeastern defeated Kirkwood, 74-69, in West Burlington earlier this season on Nov. 2. Aaris Bonds had 18 points and nine rebounds for the Blackhawks.

SOUTHEASTERN (56): Boubacar Kamissoko 3-9 1-1 7, Camryn Weston 3-5 1-2 7, Diew Moses 4-7 1-2 9, Carlos Lemus 1-7 1-2 3, Zurabi Zhgenti 2-4 0-0 5, Aaris Bonds 8-13 2-6 18, Miganeh Abdi 1-5 2-2 5, Dadrian Hoambrecker 1-4 0-0 2. Totals 23-54 8-15 56.

KIRKWOOD (75): Seybian Sims 6-7 0-1 13, Devonte Thedford 3-3 4-4 10, Luke Appel 7-10 5-5 19, Gacoby Jones 2-5 0-0 6, Niko Gosnell 0-3 2-2 2, Chris Burnell 3-7 0-0 7, Griffen Clark 3-6 0-0 8, Jamal Stephenson 0-1 0-0 0, DJ Purnell 3-5 2-2 8, Owen Coburn 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 28-48 13-14 75.

Halftime - Southeastern 32, Kirkwood 29. 3-point goals - Southeastern 2-13 (Zhgenti 1-2, Abdi 1-3, Weston 0-1, Moses 0-1, Kamissoko 0-2, Hoambrecker 0-2, Lemus 0-2), Kirkwood 6-16 (Jones 2-5, Clark 2-5, Sims 1-2, Burnell 1-2, Appel 0-1, Stephenson 0-1).