

Oak Hill defense lead girls to 2nd win

By Sean Douglas

Over the last 15 years, Oak Hill’s play on the defensive end has been a core strength of their program and has played a key role in their success over that time period.

Though Oak Hill is now under new leadership, the defense-first mentality remains unchanged and was the driving force in Oak Hill’s second win of the season.

“This is the first week we’ve had a full week of practice, and I felt like we played the game better,” Oak Hill Head Coach Clay Bolser said. “Did we light up the scoreboard? No, but we lit up in a way to win, and that’s important.”

The Golden Eagles held conference foe Elwood to just seven total field goals and forced 22 turnovers, and strong offensive performances by Treniti Thurman and Nikki Alston led Oak Hill to a 32-24 triumph over the Panthers on Friday night.

With the victory, Oak Hill improved to 2-4 on the season, ending a three-game losing streak, and 2-0 in CIC play.

“Defense – that’s the one thing we can hang our hat on,” Bolser said. “We are always going to compete. With the exception of the Norwell game, there hasn’t been a team that has scored outside of the 40’s against us.”

Elwood star Jaleigh Crawford, who came into the night averaging 20 points per contest, was contained for most of the evening, scoring 15 points on just four-of-12 shooting. No other player scored more than seven points for the Panthers.

“We executed some stuff tonight that was really good,” Bolser said. “Elwood presents some issues. The Crawford girl, she’s a load. That right there is a huge thing for us. The girls executed the gameplan.”

The contest got off to a slow start, with the first points of the contest coming off an Alston three at the 4:40 mark of the first quarter. Points continued to be hard to come by in the opening frame, as the two teams combined for 16 turnovers and only 12 points. Crawford hit a pair

of free throws at the 1:02 mark to make it a 7-5 Elwood lead after the first eight minutes.

However, three minutes into the second quarter, Alston provided the Golden Eagles with a much-needed offensive spark, hitting back-to-back threes to give the Golden Eagles a 13-8 lead, one they would not relinquish.

With a young team still working to become comfortable with a new coach and a new system, Alston has provided a veteran presence and has elevated her play in the last several games.

“She is comfortable offensively,” Bolser said. “She just comes down and she plays. She is going to make a mistake here or there, but she plays the game offensively with a lot of comfort and skill.”

Elwood eventually cut Oak Hill’s advantage to 13-12, but a three-pointer by Thurman in the waning seconds gave the Golden Eagles a 16-12 lead at the halftime break.

The Panthers briefly made it a two-point contest early in the third. However, a Holly Gillespie field goal and another triple by Thurman put the Golden Eagles up 21-15. Oak Hill’s defense continued to shut the Elwood offense down, holding them to just three field goals in the quarter,



Nikki Alston scored 14 points to lead Oak Hill to their second conference victory. Photo by Sean Douglas

and Alston’s fourth three put the Golden Eagles up five heading into the fourth.

Oak Hill saved their best defensive play for the fourth quarter, holding the Panthers to just four total field attempts and only four points. After Lori Miller scored on an offensive put-back at the 3:25 mark, Alston sealed the victory with a pair of free throws in the final 27 seconds.

Alston led the Golden Eagles with 14 points, while Thurman was second on the team with 13. Carlee Biddle and Kate Hornocker were held off the scoreboard, but did yeoman’s work on the glass, combin-

ing for 14 rebounds.

While the Golden Eagles are still two games under .500, Bolser is pleased with the progress that his team has achieved over their first six games, and they will look to keep it going against Western on Saturday evening.

“I think the great thing for this group is we’re 2-0 in the conference and we are getting better,” Bolser said. “We are continuing to get better. We are executing things offensively. The shots will come, and I still think we are good enough basketball players that we are going to be able to continue to make a lot of strides.”

Eastbrook Cont. from Pg. 6

quarter. Eastbrook dominated the final eight minutes, and McElaheny was the catalyst. After VanBelkum tied the contest at 49-49 on a pair of made free throws, McElaheny connected on his second triple of the night, putting the Panthers ahead for good. Later in the frame, the sophomore scored, recorded a steal on the defensive end, and scored again, putting the Panthers up 58-51 with 2:14 remaining.

The Raiders never got closer than four points the rest of the way.

“It shows a lot about our kids,” Allison said. “Things didn’t go their way. We didn’t necessarily end the second quarter well. We didn’t really play the third quarter all that well. But they kept coming. That shows a lot about the character of our kids.”

The Panthers, after a woe-

ful first half from the charity stripe, were nearly automatic in the fourth quarter, knocking down 10 of their 11 attempts, including their final six.

As a team, Eastbrook shot 24-of-55 (43 percent) from the field and six-of-19 (31 percent) from beyond the arc. Defensively, the Panthers held Southern Wells to 24-of-60 (40 percent) from the floor.

Here at the start of their season, the Panthers recognize that there is plenty to be proud about, but likewise there is plenty of work yet to be done.

“I think it’s huge for our kids to recognize that their hard work is paying off,” Allison said. “They worked. They listened. They try to do what we ask. They busted their butts in the off-season, as crazy as an off-season we had.

“I think success is coming for this group. But we’ve got to handle it in a positive way.”

For all the latest news, see The News-Herald’s Facebook page.



REAL ALLOY

COMPETITIVE BENEFITS:

- Quarterly Perfect Attendance Bonus
- 10 Paid Holidays
- Paid Vacation
- Health Savings Account with Employer Contribution
- 401k Savings Plan with Company Match
- Life and AD&D Insurance
- Short Term Disability
- Medical/Dental/Vision

Apply in person Mon-Fri 9am-4pm at
Real Alloy • 4525 W. Old 24, Wabash
Apply online at realalloy.com

Real Alloy is an Equal Opportunity Employer

SPECIFICATION NOW HIRING

Immediate Openings for UTILITY OPERATORS

Schedule: 2-2 3-2 2-3 Rotating Schedule of 12 hour shift.
Must be able to work both days and nights

Pay Rate \$16.50/Hour