

Lady Panthers top Southwood

By Sean Douglas

Coming off their impressive victory over Cowan last week, the Eastbrook Panthers, and Head Coach Jeff Liddick, hoped the momentum from that win would carry over into another tough matchup against an always scrappy Southwood squad.

Safe to say — it did. Behind another strong, all-around performance from every player who touched the hardwood, the Panthers earned their second straight victory in a 62-38 rout.

Despite necessary last minute changes to the starting lineup, it did not deter the Panthers. Gabby Scott, starting for Sehдах McKim, knocked down a three to start the game, and from that moment on, Eastbrook never trailed.

The first quarter was the most competitive. While the Panthers scored 20 points, the Knights took advantage of the lack of size in the post, collecting several offensive putback opportunities to make it a 20-14 Eastbrook lead at the break. However, once usual

starters McKim and Rachel Manning began to sub back into the contest, the Panthers assumed full control of the contest. Their shots continued to fall in the second quarter and the defense stiffened, as the Panthers outscored the Knights 14-9 to grab an 11-point advantage at halftime.

While Liddick was pleased with how they played in the first half, he and the Panthers’ coaching staff made adjustments, looking to limit Southwood’s second chance opportunities.

Eastbrook returned to the court with renewed focus and vigor, dominating the second half en route to a 24-point triumph.

“I just challenged the girls in the second half to do a little better job at the rim and do a better job of blocking out,” Liddick said. “We outscored them 28-15 in the second half and really limited their opportunities. At the same time, our shots...[always] looked like somebody was trying to make the extra pass, giving up a good shot for a great shot.”

Despite Southwood

pressing the entire contest, the Panthers remained calm under pressure, breaking the press often and scoring several easy baskets in the process to increase their advantage.

“They pressed us the whole game, and we knew they would,” Liddick said. “They run that diamond and one press, and we handled it extremely well. I think we only had one turnover against their press all night. We scored 16 points on just layups that [broke] their press. The girls did a great job of handling the pressure and getting [the ball] in the right spots.”

As a team, the Panthers shot 50 percent from the field. Freshman Sophia Morrison led the way with 17 points, while Johwen McKim finished with 13 points and three steals. Sehдах McKim collected 10 points and six rebounds, while freshman Olivia Howell added nine points, six rebounds, and six assists. Additionally, Lexi Binkerd scored seven points, while Scott finished with five.

With each passing contest, the Panthers are play-

ing with more and more confidence, which has been a major factor in their recent success.

“Every one of these girls are accepting the roles that we set forth and we expect of them, and they are gaining that confidence by accepting those roles,” Liddick said. “But at the same time, it’s making every other girl on the court more confident in each other’s roles.”

With a mini-winning streak in tow, Eastbrook will return to action for their CIC opener this coming Wednesday against Grant County rival Mississinewa.

“It’s our first conference game, and we want to get off to a good start in conference play,” Liddick said. “It’s a huge rivalry game. I don’t care what sport it is, if there is somebody wearing an Eastbrook T-shirt and the other person you’re playing is wearing a Mississinewa T-shirt, it’s going to be a battle. Every year, it’s a battle. We don’t expect anything different next week.

“We are going to have to give our best effort for four quarters in order to win it.”



Indiana Wesleyan guard Spencer Piercefield drives to the hoop. Photo by Sean Douglas

IWU routs Goshen

By Sean Douglas

In a world full of uncertainties in what has been a tumultuous 2020, one fact is certain.

The No. 3 ranked IWU Wildcats are a dominant force, and they showcased that again on Wednesday night in a 112-60 rout of Crossroads League rival Goshen.

With the victory, the Wildcats improved to 10-0 overall and 3-0 in league play, continuing their best start to a season since the 2014-2015 campaign, when they started 15-0. Additionally, the Wildcats scored over 100 points for the seventh time this season.

Offensively, the Wildcats were nearly flawless, unselfishly sharing the basketball and knocking down shots from all over the floor. For the game, IWU shot an incredible 70.3 percent from the field, their best shooting performance since 1995.

On defense, despite an empty arena and a large lead for most of the evening, the Wildcats never relented, forcing 20 Goshen turnovers, and holding the Maple Leafs to just 43.6 percent shooting from the field.

“It was fun to watch. Guys were sharing the basketball, the ball was really moving, and defensively, I thought we were connected,” IWU Head Coach Greg Tonagel said. “We were just playing together. To play with a lead like that is not easy, because there is a lot of reason for letdown, and nobody is in the crowd. To give that kind of effort for 40 minutes I think says a lot about these guys.”

After missing their first shot of the contest, Seth Maxwell scored a bucket in the paint, and from that moment on, the Wildcats never trailed. In the first five minutes, the Wildcats knocked down seven of their first eight shots and built a double-digit advantage they would not relinquish.

Goshen did not reach double digits until the 11:29 mark of the first half, and by then, the Wildcats were fully in control. IWU took a 61-32 lead into the halftime break and already had three double-digit scorers.

When armed with a big lead, it can be tough for teams to stay locked and focused. However, the Wildcats stayed grounded and within themselves, continuing to implement their game plan and perform at a high level.

“It’s a game within a game,” Tonagel said. “We had certain goals that we wanted to accomplish. One was [recording] 20 or more assists, and we did that. And we tried to hold them to 42 percent from the field, and we were one stop short of that. But it gave our guys something to focus on throughout the game I think.”

In the second half, IWU’s lead never fell below 27 points, and they held Goshen to just 28 points in the final 20 minutes of play. The Wildcats’ offense continued to hum, as the team scored 51 points and shot a remarkable 18-of-25 (72 percent) in the second half.

Five players finished in double figures, including Kyle Mangas, who led the Wildcats with 30 points on 15-of-16 shooting from the floor. Through 10 games, Mangas is averaging 31.8 points, 7.5 rebounds, and 4.8 assists, while shooting 64 percent from the field.

Dylan Alderson scored 20 points on eight-of-10 shooting, while freshman Tayson Parker collected 17 points off the bench. Maxwell added 16 points and seven rebounds, while Michael Thompson III rounded out the double-digit scorers with 12.

“Everybody we put in raised their level of play,” Tonagel said. “We were able to extend our bench, which is what we need to do. We cannot just play seven or eight guys, and I cannot play Kyle Mangas 39 minutes. I’ve got to be able to trust other guys. Tonight was a step forward in getting guys more opportunities on the floor.”

Indians

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the field.

Ulerick opened the scoring for the Indians, knocking down their first two field goals, and a pair of triples from Swanner helped the Indians build a 17-6 advantage at the 3:25 mark of the first quarter. Another field goal by Ulerick and three by Swanner put the Indians up eight, and McClung capitalized on a three-point opportunity to make it a 25-14 Mississinewa lead.

The Indians continued to play well through most of the second quarter, leading by as many as 13 at one point. Their shots continued to fall, while their defense made it tough for Cougars’ stars Lauderbaugh and Hunter Johnson to find much of a rhythm offensively.

In the third quarter alone, the Indians shot an incredible 14-of-18 from the field and five-of-seven from beyond the arc.

After Ulerick’s tremendous shooting in the third quarter, McClung closed the game out for the Indians in the fourth, scoring 12 of his 19 second half in the final eight minutes.



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