

Highland defeats Jersey girls in last home game of regular season

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February 5 2016 12:41 PM



JERSEYVILLE - Even though the **Highland High School Lady Bulldogs** girls basketball team ultimately defeated the **Jersey Community High School Panthers** with a score of **69-51** at the final buzzer, the ladies in blue kept a smile on their face.

This Thursday, the four seniors on the varsity squad took their last steps onto their home court in a moment that can only be described as bittersweet.

The Senior Night celebration had the stands filled with friends and family to rally for **Mikayla Kraut, Caroline Crawford, Lauren Davis and Ally Schroeder**. The quartet had helped Head Coach **Kevin Strebel** solidify his position as their team's leader throughout the past couple years of his career in Jersey.

“These girls have always played up a level beyond what maybe they should have early because they didn't have a lot of seniors ahead of them”, Strebel said, “These girls have stuck it out and deserved every accolade they can get. They're a group of bright, personable and polite girls, all of these things and you can't help but love them. We really appreciate everything they've done for us and our program.”

As far as the game was concerned, Coach Strebel knew that Highland always posed a large threat, especially when it came to offense. He also commended coach **Mike Arbuthnot** for the way his team handles the game.

“There is a chance we may see them again in the post-season, so we had to evaluate the way that we were guarding them. They have got shooters and the best part of their game is their flashing. Highland is very athletic for their size and their length. They're an impressive basketball team.”



In the first period, the Bulldogs came out of the gate with three back-to-back shots produce by **Amanda Ponce**, **Caitlin Lammers** and **Madison Wellen** to take the lead at 6-0.

On a rebound shot, senior **Mikayla Kraut** knocked in two herself to put the Panthers on the board.

Wellen then went on to bring in two consecutive baskets to further the lead to 10-2.

A foul on senior **Caroline Crawford** allowed two points from the foul line to inch closer to the Lady Bulldogs.

Wellen was fouled upon and earned one from the line. Then, Ponce brought in two in a row to push the score to 15-4.

A foul on senior **Lauren Davis** gave the Panthers two more free points before the Lady Bulldogs went on a solid offensive push. The free throws by Davis was the last time the Panthers could score in the first.

Junior **Alex LaPorta** kicked off the offensive push by knocking in two baskets in a row. Then, Wellen made another basket herself.

After a timeout was called, with 1:16 left on the clock, Wellen scored her last basket of the period. Ponce closed out the period with yet another basket, bringing the score to **27-6** at the end of the first.

Lammers got the second period started with a basket for the Lady Bulldogs. Shortly after, junior **Mackenzie Thurston** knocked in two for the Panthers. Beyer then earned Highland four more points. Davis scored a three-pointer to bring the score to 33-11 before the ladies in black and red started another offensive push.

Beyer started the push with a basket for two. Wellen delivered a three-pointer before Wellen was fouled upon and earned one from the line. Then, Lammers locked down a three-pointer herself to make the score a staggering 42-11.



Fortunately, junior **Bethany Muenstermann** was able to come through for the Panthers to score two back-to-back three-pointers. Shortly after, Davis knocked in another standard shot to bring the Panthers' score to 19.

After a basket was scored by freshman **Katelyn Marti**, the Lady Bulldogs held the lead with a score of **44-19** at the end of the second.

After the break, the Lady Bulldogs came out of the gate with three consecutive baskets, one from junior **Hayley Taylor** and two from Ponce.

Thurston knocked in a three-point shot to bring the Panthers' score to 50-22 in the Lady Bulldogs' favor before Beyer and Wellen scored a standard basket each.

Thurston then came back to bring in three points from a basket and a shot from the foul line to bring the Panthers' score to 54-25.

Junior **Elizabeth Meadows** came through for Highland to knock in her first basket of the game to bring her team's score to 56 before the Panthers made one of their first steady pushes to level the playing field before the end of the period.

Muenstermann made two back-to-back three pointers before a foul on Crawford allowed her to take three shots from the foul line, earning three more points herself to bring the score to **56-34** at the end of the third.

Marti kicked off the fourth by knocking in a basket for the Bulldogs. Sophomore **Rece Portell** scored her first basket of the game to bring the score to 60-34.



Crawford swooshed in a three-point shot in a push to level the playing field before junior **Alisse Koishor** knocked in two for Highland.

Jersey senior **Ally Schroeder** earned her place on the board for the night by providing a great three-pointer. Thurston followed up with a basket to bring the score to 62-42.

Highland junior **Katie Kampwerth** came off the bench to knock in two points for the Lady Bulldogs before a foul was committed on Thurston, allowing her two more points from the line. After the free throw shots, sophomore Brianna Schroeder assisted the Panthers with a basket to bring the score to 64-46.

Marti hit a three-pointer for Highland before Meadows knocked in a basket to bring their team's point total to 69. The final push for Jersey came from sophomore **Faith Franke**, who knocked in five points before the final buzzer to bring the score to **69-51**, a vast improvement from the 30-point deficit at the beginning of the game.

Mackenzie Thurston and Bethany Muenstermann lead the pack with 12 points each during this Thursday night's game. Following the duet with eight points contributed was Caroline Crawford. Lauren Davis earned seven points for the Panthers. Faith Franke knocked in a total of five points while Ally Schroeder brought in three points. Both Brianna Schroeder and Mikayla Kraut knocked in two points each.

Madison Wellen lead the Lady Bulldogs with 16 points contributed throughout three periods of play. Amanda Ponce locked in 14 points. Following with 13 points was Alex LaPorta. Katelyn Marti and Caitlin Lammers each brought in seven points. Elizabeth Meadows knocked in four points. Hayley Taylor, Rece Portell, Alisse Koishor and Katie Kampwerth each brought in two points each.