

CM girls honor seniors Troeckler, Ochs, then defeat Jersey in final regular season MVC matchup

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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BETHALTO – For **Civic Memorial's girls basketball program**, **Allie Troeckler** and **Annika Ochs** have made their marks on the program's history.

Troeckler and Ochs marked their final home games before the Eagle faithful Wednesday night, with Troeckler scoring 28 points and pulling down 12 rebounds in a 65-31 Eagle Mississippi Valley Conference win over Jersey Wednesday night.

CM finished the regular season at 27-2 overall, 9-1 in the MVC; the Panthers finished 15-11 overall, 5-5 in the league.

“Those two kids are the consummate professionals in my book,” said **Eagle coach Jonathan Denney**. “They go about their business the right way; I could sit here and give you superlative after superlative on who they are and what they do, but they are leaders, they're good kids, they're good student-athletes, they lead the cheering section at junior high postseason games; I mean, they are kids who have made the program better since they third grade since they started Junior Eagles, and here they are, seniors playing their last home game. I can't say enough about them – they're two of the best kids I've coached.”

“I'm not sure I ever imagined ever playing for a team like this,” Troeckler said. “My freshman year I had a great team; I always look back on that, but this team is just as

special, if not more, than my freshman year. With all the trips we've gone on, and how close we are as a team, they (the memories) really mean a lot.”

“The thing that makes them so tough is you just can't pack in on (Troeckler),” said **Panther coach Kevin Strebel**. “We didn't really do that tonight; we just tried to bring in some help from players we felt could help. Just look at the numbers – that's all you've got to say. She has had a spectacular career; she gets 28 on us tonight – that's nothing she hasn't done time and time again.

“She's getting offensive rebounds, she posts up so darn well, she's patient, she stays on one side, waits for the ball to be reversed and then just absolutely seals you. Her last play of the night – you could see it getting set up.”

The game opened close before CM started pulling away, getting to a 12-8 lead at quarter time and then opening it up to 27-14 at the half. “What we talked about, we were way too quick on the offensive end,” Strebel said. “Their pressure sped us up and we did get a layup or two out of it, but then we tried to take everything one passes or two passes and a shot; for people who don't necessarily have the green light to make one pass and a shot – we talked about that at halftime and we did adjust to it.

“The problem is they became so good on the offensive end in the second half; their threes they didn't hit so well in the first half, all of a sudden, they did. We had a really difficult time keeping up with their scoring.”

“Anytime you're missing shots, it's a slow start,” Denney said, “especially when you're a team that shoots the ball the way we do; we were making shots early, we were playing good defense. When you look up there and you're still up by 13, you don't think you're playing very well and the next thing you know, you're winning by 34 and everyone's happy. We're moving on now and this is a great way to end the season as conference champs and ending 27-2.”

Kourtland Tyus added 15 points for the Eagles, with Kaylee Eaton chipping in 11; the Panthers were led by **Mackenzie Thurston's** 11 points, with Hannah Hudson adding five and Bethany Muenstermann and Peyton Tisdale scoring four each.

Now comes the IHSA Class 3A playoffs; both teams are in next week's Roxana Regional, with the Panthers meeting the host Shells at 7:30 p.m. Monday in a first-round contest and the Eagles taking on Monday's Columbia-Cahokia winner at 6 p.m. Tuesday.

“It's what we've prepared for all season and preseason,” Troeckler said. “to get stronger and better for postseason; I think we're prepared. Right now, that's all you can do is take it one game at a time, because if you lose, you're done; you have to stay focused on the game you're playing.”

