

Young Jersey continues learning experience against Breese Mater Dei

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – Jersey girls basketball coach Kevin Strebel felt his Panthers could learn a few lessons from how his Lady Redbird Tipoff Classic semifinal game against Breese Mater Dei unfolded Wednesday night.

“Dave (Kohnen, Mater Dei's coach) was down there talking about, 'hey, let's slow down and have a good possession',” Strebel said, “and they did a good job of that. It was one of those that the team – and I consider I have a young team – can learn from what they did on their end of the floor, took long possessions and then got us to foul them or got a very good look.”

In the end, the Knights took Kohnen's instructions to heart and pulled away from the Panthers in the second quarter to take a 49-38 win over Jersey to advance to the final of the tournament against the winner of tonight's other semifinal between the host Redbirds and Breese Central at 5:45 p.m. Saturday. The Panthers will meet the Redbird-Cougar loser at 4 p.m. Saturday as a curtain-raiser to the final. The Panthers fell to 1-1 on the young season, while the Knights improved to 2-0.

“We would come down and take a quick shot; we were getting into the paint, but it was in a position where nobody had to move yet,” Strebel said, “so we might actually beat them on the first drive and try to force it to our post player or something like that – a little lack of patience on our part, very good patience on their part.”

“Sometimes we're young and we try to get into a little bit too much of a hurry all the time,” Kohnen said. “We worked (a pick-and-roll) as much as we can; sometimes it's not always there and sometimes we didn't show the patience, but for the most part, we scored some nice buckets off that; I think we got two or three three-point plays out of it.”

Whenever the Panthers would get an initial stop at times, they gave up some second- and third-chance scores. “That's going to be a struggle for us all year long,” Strebel said. “There's no doubt about that; we're going to have to be a team rebounding group. We do have a couple of very solid rebounders, but usually, we're going to be outsized.”

Mater Dei held a 10-6 lead on the Panthers at quarter time before beginning to pull away in the second period, going out to a 30-17 lead at the long break; Jersey made an effort to try to get closer in the second half, but the Knights managed to find ways to keep the lead at double-digits for the most part the rest of the way.

Freshman Claire Breden led the Panthers with 13 points on the night, with Abby Manns adding nine and Hannah Hudson seven; the Knights were led by Shannon Lampe's 19 points, followed by Myah Beckman's 11 and Abby Braudmeier's 10.

In Wednesday's curtain-raiser, Springfield Southeast moved into Friday night's fifth-place game with a 54-47 win over Riverview Gardens; tonight's schedule has Hardin-Calhoun taking on Springfield Lanphier at 6 p.m., followed by the Alton-Breese Central semifinal at 7:30 p.m. The winner of the Calhoun-Lanphier game plays Southeast at 7:30 p.m. Friday for fifth place, while the loser meets Riverview for seventh place at 6 p.m. Friday.

