

# Fast, high-tempo start leads to dominating opening victory for Marquette Catholic

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EDWARDSVILLE - Marquette Catholic head coach Steve Medford knew his team would score in bunches, but he was more impressed with the defensive intensity the players produced and the scoreboard reflected that.

A dominating first quarter by the Marquette Catholic Explorers led them to a 68-25 thrashing of the Lebanon Greyhounds in the first round of the Metro East-Lutheran Thanksgiving Turkey Tip-Off Classic on Monday night.

“We always pride ourselves on the defensive end and that’s where it’s going to start and end at for us. If we defend really well then we have a chance to win at (Class) 3A as well as 2A,” Medford said. Offensively we knew it was going to be there. I thought the effort was really good, hopefully, we can build on it.”

Marquette had a balanced scoring outlet.

Sammy Green led all scorers with 15 points. Jayce Maag and Isaiah Ervin each tallied 13, including three triples from Ervin. Regan Snider finished with 12 and Jake Hall added 10, which all came in the first quarter.

The Explorers got out to a 15-0 lead before the one minute mark, and as the first quarter came to a close they were ahead 20-2. Marquette held the Greyhounds to no field goals in that span as they caused numerous turnovers in the backcourt which led to layups in transition. In the second quarter, they kept up that pressure, which successfully yielded more points, including a one-handed dunk by Green, who is a six-foot, zero-inch point guard.

What may be a consistent advantage for the Explorers this season is their height advantage. Their length made life difficult for the Greyhounds as they struggled to find open shots as they finished 24 percent from the field.

“Our pressure on their guards really made it difficult for them to throw it in or get any kind penetration on us,” Medford said. “Our bigs did a good job of deterring them from coming in the lane, but our guards did a really good job of pressuring the basketball and making them uncomfortable.”

At the start of the second half, the Explorers came out with a different approach but still brought the intensity. That was shooting the lights out beyond the arc with Ervin and Green each connecting twice from downtown, while Snider added a trey of his own in the third quarter. As a team, Marquette drained eight triples in the game

“Isaiah’s instant offense. If he makes one or two then it’s on for him. “I don’t ever want to deter a kid from shooting the ball, especially a kid who can shoot it as well as he can,” Medford said. “ is a tremendous basketball player, he knows how to make plays, and he can make shots.”

The Explorers will play Marissa, who knocked off Gillespie 51-43, in the second round in the main gym at 7 Tuesday night.

