

Tigers get 21 from Martin, defeat Patriots to open Viz tourney

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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TOWN AND COUNTRY, Mo. - A 21-point effort from Kate Martin helped send Edwardsville to the quarterfinals of the 42nd Visitation Christmas Tournament at the west St. Louis County school's Buder Gym Saturday afternoon with a 55-33 win over Parkway South.

The Tigers will take on Washington, Mo., at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday in a quarterfinal contest; the Blue Jays defeated Webster Groves 63-57 Saturday to set up the game, with the winner of that game meeting either Kirkwood or Hazelwood Central in a semifinal contest Wednesday night. The Tigers improved to 11-0 on the year, while the Patriots fell to 3-5.

“It was a good win for us and we're glad to move on and go from there,” said Tiger coach Lori Blade following the game.

The Patriots gave the Tigers several defensive looks throughout the game; Blade felt the Tigers handled the South defensive strategy well. “They mixed it up from their diamond to their man to their 2-3 matchup (zone),” Blade said. “They gave us a lot of different looks; at the beginning, we didn't handle it real well and then we started to recognize it.

“We have to understand some teams are going to do that to you and that becomes just as much mental as it is physical.”

South came no closer to 14 points to the Tigers in the third period; a time-out in that quarter helped to settle Edwardsville as much as anything. “They did respond (with a 12-point run following the timeout); we called that timeout and they settled in,” Blade said. “They were kind of forcing it a little bit; we didn't have the discipline we normally have – it was good to see them respond after that.”

The Tigers know that they're going to be seeing the competition get tougher as the tournament wears on, that there will be no easy games coming up. “It's tough, and that's what we tried to tell them,” Blade said. “We knew Parkway South was going to come in playing hard, with their tradition and being well-coached; we needed to match that. There's no easy game in this, that's for sure.”

The Tigers got out in front early, scoring the game's first seven points and grabbing a 12-4 lead at quarter time before expanding it to 27-8 at the half; the Patriots never cut the deficit to single digits as the game wore on and the Tigers managed to run out winners on the day.

Martin's 21 points were complimented by Rachel Pranger's 16 points and Jaylen Townsend's nine points on the day; South was led by Lani Thompson's 10 points and Emily Shin's eight on the day. Townsend hauled down seven rebounds for the Tigers, with Martin and Pranger getting six rebounds each and Morgan Hulme four.

Kirkwood opened the tournament with a 59-42 win over the host Vivettes, followed by St. Joseph's being defeated by Hazelwood Central 51-47; Whitfield downed Nerinx Hall 53-37, Parkway North defeated Cor Jesu 69-46, Metro defeated Francis Howell 41-25 and top-seed Incarnate Word defeated Ursuline 66-19 to round out Saturday's opening-round play.

