

# Three Players Score In Double Figures As Marquette Catholic Gets Out To Big First Quarter Lead, Defeats Metro-East Lutheran

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January 19 2022 5:25 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Marquette Catholic jumped out to a big first-quarter lead as three players scored in double figures in the Explorers' 68-18 win over Metro-East Lutheran in a Gateway Metro Conference girls basketball game played Tuesday night at Hooks Gym.

The game was played in a virtually empty gym due to COVID-19 restrictions at Metro-East, but Marquette was able to get out in front early over a young Knights team and led all the way through.

"It was good," said Explorers' head coach Lee Green, who recently won his 100th career game at Marquette. "Metro-East Lutheran isn't allowing visiting team fans, so it was pretty dead from the start. But the girls brought their own energy, we jumped on them from the start and we wrapped it up by the middle of the second quarter."

It's a very young Metro-East team, with only one senior on the roster, but the Knights kept hanging in there and played hard for the entire 32 minutes.

"They play hard, and Rob (Stock, the Knights' head coach) does a good job with them. They're just young."

Marquette is playing very well, and have won nine of their last 10 games, which included Green's 100th career win over Belleville Althoff Catholic at home on Jan. 13 63-32, and have done well with a big number of upperclassmen on the roster.

"We're playing well, the girls are clicking," Green said. "We've got seven seniors and four juniors, so we're definitely an upperclassman team."

Green is also excited about the formation of the Gateway Metro Conference, which also consists of Father McGivney Catholic, Maryville Christian and Bunker Hill, and adds on Centralia Christ Our Rock Lutheran for the 2022-23 school year.

"It's going to be good," Green said. "I'm excited about it."

The Explorers started the game off by leading after the first quarter 15-2, then expanded the lead to 38-7 at halftime and to 52-13 after three quarters. Marquette outscored the Knights in the fourth quarter 16-5 to make the final 68-18 margin.

Chloe White led the Explorers with 19 points, with both Alyssa Powell and Abby Williams scoring 11 points, Megan Meyer had seven points, Kamryn Fandrey scored six

points, Nia Ballinger hit for five points, Haley Rodgers scored four points, Olivia Kratschmer and Hayley Porter had two points apiece and Jillian Nelson scored a single point.

Leticia Bennasar led the Knights with nine points, with Emma Lorenz hitting for four points, Sarah Huber scored three points and both Cameron Williams and Kate Jose each had a single point.

The Explorers are now 16-6, while the Knights go to 1-12, and Marquette plays at Roxana on Thursday night in a 7:30 p.m. tip before both teams play at the Carrollton tournament starting on Saturday. Metro-East meets up with the host Hawks at 1:30 p.m., while the Explorers play a much-improved Granite City team to lead off the tournament at 9 a.m. Green's looking forward to the game against the Warriors.

"They're pretty good," Green said, "and we think they're going to be a good test for us."

