

Durbin Drops 21, CM Moves Onto Mattoon In "Sweet Sixteen"

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BETHALTO – The Civic Memorial girl's basketball team defeated the Mount Vernon Rams by a score of 57-45 Tuesday night. With the win, the Eagles move on to Sectionals and continue their postseason run yet again.

Different game, but the same player came up big again for CM. It was once more junior guard Olivia Durbin. She led her team with a 21-point performance and was the only Eagle to break double digits. Senior guard Kelbie Zupan came close with nine points.

Durbin confirmed that her nose was not broken from the previous game against East St. Louis, but that it still does hurt.

The Eagles grew a comfortable lead early on in the game leading 19-8 after the first quarter and 34-22 at the half. The Rams came storming back onto the court though and really gave CM a good scare. By the end of the third quarter CM only led by five. The Rams outscored CM 16-9 in the third and kept the game close.

Durbin believed in her team even if they were to lose the lead, which they never did. "We knew that if we went down, we'd be fine. Just stay together, score our points and we'll be fine," she said after the game. She also added that head coach Mike Arbuthnot really helped calm the team down and keep their composure in the second half.

It's worth mentioning that during the third quarter, the fans really got into the game. Rams fans traveled well and kept the gym loud when they made their comeback, but it was the near-sellout crowd from Eagles fans that really put it over the top. Durbin mentioned that there were a lot of people there and that it was "very nerve-racking."

Coach Arbuthnot had nothing but good things to say again about Durbin. "She makes big shots for us all the time. We go to her and look for her." He also added that Zupan made some important free throws late in the game and that Aubree Wallace once again had a well-rounded defensive game.

The Rams had CM fans worried in the second half, but Arbuthnot wasn't. "I thought down the stretch we executed, and we had the right people handling the ball at the right times." He's referring to the good free-throw shooting in the fourth quarter from Zupan who made four and went 7-10 overall from the line. Wallace also scored a pair late in the game to secure the victory; she finished with seven points on the night.

So, this one wasn't quite as dramatic as the Regional Finals, but a win is a win, and the Eagles are moving on. They will face Mattoon this Thursday. Mattoon beat Triad 53-29 to move on.

“They’re a good ball club, no doubt about it. Everybody’s good this time of year when you’re in Sectionals.” Arbuthnot said about his upcoming match.

The Eagles will have to be weary about #25 on Mattoon senior Mallory Ramage. She scored an astonishing 35 points in their Regional Semifinal against Herrin. She’s their leading scorer, so if the Eagles can slow her down, they’ll have a good chance of moving on.

All “Sweet Sixteen” matchups, including the clash between CM and Mattoon, are scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m.