

# Explorers' Girls Basketball Drop Season-Opener To Hosts Columbia In Tip-Off Tournament

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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COLUMBIA, IL. – The Marquette Catholic High School girl's basketball team opened up their season Monday night. They played their first game of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Columbia Tip-Off Classic against the hosting Columbia Eagles.

The Explorers were beaten by a score of 40-30.

Freshman guard Allie Weiner scored a team-high eight points and had five rebounds while senior forward Olivia Kratschmer had seven points and five boards.

It was a close game after one quarter with the Eagles up 14-11, but they would take a commanding lead before halftime. Marquette was outscored 12-2 in the second quarter and trailed 26-13 heading into the locker room.

The third quarter was a little more balanced and then in the fourth Marquette was playing their best. They outscored the Eagles 11-5 in that quarter to cut into the deficit, but it was a little too late for a comeback.

Marquette's new head coach Whitney Sykes-Rogers knew that her team would see some tough opponents in this season-opening tournament and was proud of her team for hanging in there.

"That was a good test for us. I thought we came out a little slow and got into a rut there," Sykes-Rogers said postgame, "but, in the fourth quarter, I feel like that's how we should play, and they just have to convince themselves that they can play that way. So that was encouraging to see that and that they didn't give up."

As for the loss, she said that her team was missing the easy ones, especially on layups and free throws.

The Explorers went 7-13 from the line, just 53.8%, and didn't fare so well in field goal percentage at 26.3%. Marquette went 10-38 from the field and 1-11 from three-point land.

As for the Eagles, they were led by sophomore guard Sam Schmuke and senior guard Karson Jany who each scored 14 points on the night. Sophomore guard Ava Langhans scored seven and senior forward Taylor Etheridge added five. Those four did all the scoring for Columbia.

The Explorers will look to regroup and move along in the tournament.

"Kids are tough; they'll be fine," Sykes-Rogers said. "It takes a minute to find your identity. This is a whole new team technically of varsity players, so they're learning each other. It'll take a little bit, but we'll be all right."

Marquette will be back at it on Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup> when they take on Belleville East at 6 p.m. The game will be played at Columbia High School in the tournament's consolation bracket.

