

# Triad Uses Physicality To Wear Down Panthers

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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TROY – The Jersey Panthers led after the first quarter, but from there on it was mostly Knights as Triad went on to a 57-33 Mississippi Valley Conference win Friday night.

Tyler Thompson got things going for Triad, followed by back-to-back baskets from Drew Winslow as Triad went up quickly to a 6-1 lead.

But Jersey used a couple of threes from Abe Kribs and Aiden Taylor to tie the game back up at 9-9 and again at 11-11. Finally, after at least a two-minute offensive possession from the Panthers, Taylor drilled a three from the corner right before the buzzer to give Jersey a 14-11 lead after the first quarter.

Jersey led most of the second quarter before Triad tied it at 18-18 and again at 20-20. Winslow grabbed an offensive rebound and put it back up to give his team a 22-20 lead heading into the locker room.

The Knights controlled the physicality of the game, and they used it to never surrender their halftime lead.

Triad opened the second half on a 9-0 run to boost the lead to 31-20 and then 35-28 after three quarters.

“That’s kind of how we play, that’s our brand, Triad head coach Jeff Guidry said on his team’s physicality. “Coming out early to start I don’t think we had that. I think we were a little bit on our heels. Part of that is probably coming out of where we played last week with the aggressiveness and the pressure we saw. Tonight it just took a minute to adjust.”

This was Triad’s first game since wrapping up the Prairie Farms Holiday Classic in Collinsville on Dec. 29.

In that tournament the Knights finished 2-2, winning their first first-round game in nearly 20 years according to Guidry in a 41-40 win over Carbondale. Triad then lost to then-undefeated Collinsville, the eventual tournament winners. The Knights bounced back by beating Belleville East 47-40 before concluding with a 46-45 loss to Decatur MacArthur, the tournament winners in 2021 and 2022.

“No, actually that’s a huge success for us,” Guidry said about the Collinsville tourney experience.

“That’s one of the best tournaments around. Our goal is to get two wins there a year at least. We’re probably one of the smallest schools there. To go two wins on the championship side was a major accomplishment for our program considering the teams we had to play there. We were pretty pleased with it actually.”

A lot of things were learned in that tournament that translated back onto their home court Friday night against Jersey.

The Knights continued to dominate the Panthers, opening the final frame on a 17-0 run, outscoring them 22-5 in the fourth as they improved to 10-6 on the season and 3-2 in MVC action.

“I think right now we’re doing okay,” Guidry said. “There’s still a lot of basketball to go. We’ve got to do what we got to do, control what we can control. From a conference and seedings standpoint, we’re going to need some help, but we’ve got to take care of our business and keep doing what we do.”

Winslow led all scorers with 27 points. Thompson had 13 and Ethan Stewart had 10.

For the Panthers, Taylor led with nine points. Francis Voegel and Jaxon Brunaugh each scored six while Kribs and Aiden Kendall each scored five.

Jersey falls to 7-11 and 1-4 in the MVC.

“I thought our first half, we played really, really well,” Jersey head coach Matt Murphy said. “We held our own physically. I knew coming in, was long and athletic across the board and we are not. But at halftime keep battling, doing what you’re doing.”

“Unfortunately, the second half got away from us there late,” Murphy added. “They just wore us down.”