

GIRLS BASKETBALL: Bishop Foley hands Lutheran North its first loss

By JOE ABRAMSON
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MADISON HEIGHTS- The offense tends to come and go with the Madison Heights Bishop Foley girls basketball team, but the defense is a constant.

That's why the Ventures are undefeated and that's why they opened conference play in the Catholic League AA division Thursday night with a 53-28 win over previously unbeaten Lutheran North.

The Ventures challenged shots, deflected passes, and forced turnovers throughout the game as they held the Mustangs to single digit scoring in each quarter.

"That's our forte, we're going to keep harping defense," Foley coach Dave Joseph said, "It's something the kids take pride in and we want to keep doing that. It's what wins games."

Lutheran North (4-1, 1-1) took a 5-4 lead early in the game when freshman Jenna Birney made a steal and followed with a 14 foot jump shot. That would be the only lead for the Mustangs.

Junior Cyndi Claucherty (10 points) came off the bench to hit a pair of triples to give Foley a 10-5 lead and the Ventures never looked back. "That was big for us because it gave us a little bit of separation," Joseph said, "I thought Cyndi came in off the bench and made a big difference."

A steal and layup by junior Emma Wonsil(eight points, eight rebounds) and a layup by junior Lauren Cross gave the Ventures a 22-12 lead at halftime.

The margin never got under 10 points the rest of the game. Consecutive putbacks by seniors Megan VanFleteren(six points) and Erin Mullen gave Foley a 29-15 lead midway through the fourth quarter.

The Ventures put the game away with a 13-0 run that was punctuated by a layup from senior Colleen Szakacs(four points, six rebounds) but it was senior Jaclyn Bieniewicz(14 points, five rebounds, three steals) who made the biggest statement, scoring seven straight points in the middle of that run.

"She got a couple steals to trigger that and that comes off the defensive game," Joseph said. "She struggled a little bit early and got some help off the bench but when it came down to the end she was able to do what she was supposed to do."

The Mustangs were led by junior Katie Draeger with seven points and junior Krystyn Dean with six. Sophomore Jackie Schwark pulled down seven rebounds while junior Danielle Schomaker grabbed six to lead Lutheran North on the boards.

Bishop Foley (7-0, 1-0) had last played two weeks ago in a home victory over Rochester Adams.

There was a little rust early but once they got in the flow the Ventures seemed to pick up right where they left off in December.

"We practiced hard but that doesn't simulate game speed," Joseph said, "I figured we'd be slow coming out and that's why I really wanted to harp on defense because the defense never rests."

Now that the rust has been shaken off after the break, Joseph is excited about the prospects for his squad.

"Absolutely," he said, "the kids are clicking together and I think they're playing with a lot of confidence and that's going to help us down the road in the tough Catholic League."

