

Lady Warriors remain stingy on defense to continue 2019 streak

By Lenny Sementi

Tuscola's girls' basketball team continued its defensive onslaught to remain unbeaten in 2019, limiting a good Warrensburg-Lathem to just 27 points in a 39-27 victory over the Lady Cardinals. Coach Tim Kohlbecker and his ladies in black showed no signs of weariness after the long bus ride west as they smothered the home squad in the first half limiting them to just three field goals en-route to a 20-6 advantage at the break.

Natalie Bates led all in the scoring department hitting 6 of 11 from the floor including 2 of 2 from the free throw line and a three

pointer. Next up was senior classmate Grace Dietrich who ended the night with seven points on 3 of 7 shooting. Dietrich's point totals continue to rise as the Lady Warriors push through the second half of the season. The shooting guard is finding her way to the basket and to the line. The Russo sisters, Lexie and Marissa, added to the offense as well tossing in four points each while also leading the way on the boards garnering 10 and 7 rebounds, respectively. Lexie hasn't posted less than double digits boards in any one game since the calendar turned to 2019.

"Lexie has been very strong on the boards all

season long but has taken it to the next level as of late," commented Coach K. "Marissa joined the party with her sister under the basket and gives us a big boost at the hoop off the bench."

Tuscola limited the Cardinals to just six shots in the first frame and four shots in the second, allowing six points total, including a mere two in the second eight minutes of action. Grace Dietrich and Bates pressured out front as did point guard Brynn Tabela. In all, six players recorded steals for the Warriors, who swiped six balls in the first half including a pair by Bates in the first frame and two more from Dietrich in

the second. The duo added three steals apiece to their season rap sheet.

Bates found freshman Sophia Kremitzki down low early for a bucket, drained a pair of runners and a short jumper helping the Warriors to 13-4 lead after one. Dietrich took a swing pass from Tabela to the hoop at the five-minute mark in the second, and Abbey Jacob hit a late jumper helping the Warriors build a 20-6 lead the break.

"Our first half defense was very effective we held a pretty good team to just six points in 16 minutes," stated the coach. "That pressure allowed us to just keep throwing fresh bodies at them."

Kohlbecker rotated freely the final two quarters as the Lady Warriors continued their win streak to eight straight as they prepare for a showdown with the current co-leader of the Central Illinois Conference, St. Teresa, looming on Thursday.

The Lady Bulldogs are 14-6 overall on the year and 4-0 in the CIC. With the victory over Warrensburg, the Warriors enter the battle with a 17-5 overall record and a 2-2 mark in the league.

"St. T's new coach has them playing very well," quipped Kohlbecker. "They have a lot of talent and will be a good test for us to see where we are at heading into the CIC Tournament on

Saturday."

Tuscola pulled the fifth seed in the bracket and will look to avenge an earlier loss when they take on the fourth seeded Clinton Maroon's.

Coach Lydia Miller's JV came up two points short in a 29-27 Warrior loss despite a nine-point outing by junior Laney Banta. Banta was good on 4 of 14 from the field in the game. Sophomore Hope Dietrich found her way to six points in the game, which included a 4 for 6 effort from the line. Maddie Stahler was tops on the rebound list for Coach Miller grabbing eight boards, while Grace Voyles corralled five.



Warrior Hope Dietrich prepares to make a 2-pointer extending their lead to 4 points during Holiday Hoopla championship basketball action with the Ridgeview Mustangs. The Warriors defeated the Mustangs 44-38 for the championship.

LEFT: Warrior Ashton Smith attempts a three pointer during Holiday Hoopla championship basketball action with the Ridgeview Mustangs. The Warriors defeated the Mustangs 44-38 for the championship.

Submitted photo
RIGHT: State Sen. Chapin Rose (R-Mahomet) was sworn into office Jan. 9 at the Statehouse during the Illinois Senate Inauguration. Rose's last vote of the previous General Assembly, that occurred just two hours before the new General Assembly was sworn in, was a vote against legislation that would give 15 percent raises to certain state government department heads and positions that already pay six figures as requested by the new Democrat supermajorities. "Despite Illinois' improved economy, our state budget is not in a position to handle pay raises for department heads - and certainly not ahead of increases for developmental disability providers, higher education, K-12 schools, or other worthy causes," Rose said. Rose, who represents all or portions of Champaign, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby, and Vermilion Counties, is also an Assistant Republican Leader for the Senate Republican Caucus.



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AROUND the Halls

The seventh annual Tuscola Music Boosters dinner/concert fundraiser "Colour My World" is Saturday, Feb. 23 in the TCHS gymnasium. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. and the concert will follow at 7 p.m.

TCHS is having a Winter Dance - casual wear - Saturday, Jan. 23 from 7-10 p.m. All proceeds from the tickets are going to the Douglas County Mental Health.

Key Club had the first meeting of the second semester Wednesday, Dec. 9 when officers thanked everyone who rang the bell for the Salvation Army, made dog toys at the Christmas party, and helped with SOCS at North Ward. Members also signed up for the Kiwanis Game Night on the 16th and concessions at the boys' basketball game on the 18th.

By **Caleigh Parsley**