

Black & Gold

Tuscola ends season with 23-8 mark

By Daniel L. Chamness
It was a season far better than most of the Tuscola Lady Warriors expected.

After losing two former stars to graduation, the Lady Warriors rose up, won a Central Illinois Conference Tournament Title and finished second in the Monticello Holiday Hoopla to the team that ironically would end their season last week in the Tuscola Sectional, the Neoga Lady Indians. Neoga won a 41-34 decision to end the Lady Warrior season at 23-8. They were 6-1 in the Central Illinois, losing only to Clinton. They were second overall in the league.

"We knew coming into this game, Tuscola was extremely well coached," said Neoga head coach ???. "We knew coming in that we could not just focus on one person. Defense won us this game tonight. We needed to calm down a little bit."

Tuscola raced out to an early lead in the game, but Neoga led by three points at the end of the first break. Lady Warrior junior guard Ella Boyer cut the lead to 13-12 with a pair of free throws made with 7:12 to play in the first half. The Lady Indians never relinquished the lead and would score the next six points, even though by the middle of the second quarter, a couple of the Lady Indians were in foul trouble. Tuscola would enter the final minute of the first half down by

six points, but Izzy Wilcox drained a three-pointer from the left wing to cut the Neoga lead to 22-19 at halftime.

The Warriors would keep pace in the third quarter and once again close the quarter with a trey. This one was nailed by Boyer with :58 to play. They would get within two points on a free throw by Harley Woodard at the 6:31 mark of the final stanza, but would get no closer. Neoga would be ahead by seven, at 5:07, when Haylee Campbell hit a bucket. Seven points would be the finishing total, but they would lead by as many as 10 when Avery Fearday nailed her only bucket of the game with only 3:00 to play. The bucket stretched the lead to 39-29.

Ella Boyer led the Warriors with 12 points. The junior was supported by Sophia Kremitzki, who finished with seven, Maddie Stahler, who finished with five. The scoring was rounded out by Sydney Moss (four points), Woodard (three points) and Wilcox (three points).

"They are the most together team that seen all year," said Tim Kohlbecker, Tuscola's head coach. "We did not shoot well tonight. We were at 29 percent from the field and around 50 percent from the charity stripe. The seniors we are losing are high quality basketball players. They have been

with me for four years and I am going to miss them. The athletes played in the title game of four different tournaments and won two of those tournaments. They had a great year."

While the Tuscola Lady Warrior basketball team will not be going to state as a team, they will be represented.

Kremitzki, a senior captain, won the three-point shooting contest at the Tuscola Sectional and will represent the sectional and the Lady Warriors at state. In the sectional competition, Kremitzki won with nine treys. She made her nine from the left wing, the right wing and the top of the key.

"I am super excited to be in the three-point shooting," said Kremitzki. "I am lucky that I have been able to stretch out my senior year of basketball and wear my uniform for a couple more weeks."

She advanced and did not have to participate in a tiebreaker. Tri-County senior Megan Houlihan was the other athlete to advance in the three point shooting contest. She finished with eight in the opening round and bucketed five in the tiebreaking round to advance. There are 16 competitors that will be competing in the IHSA Class 1A Queen of the Hill. The 1A shooters will shoot first thing on Saturday morning.



MADDIE STAHLER (24), a Tuscola senior, prepares to dribble between two Neoga players at the IHSA Class 1A Sectional hosted by Tuscola. Stahler was one of the senior mainstays on the team and ended her career after playing four years. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.

The participants check in at 7:45 a.m. at Redbird Arena. The shooting will start at 8:30 a.m. If she wins the 1A title, she will advance to the Overall

Queen of the Hill to shoot against then other three winners at 12:45 p.m. or immediately following the Class 1A title game, which is scheduled to start at 11 a.m.

Stahler was also involved in the three point shooting contest sinking five in the

opening round.

"It was a little nerve racking," said Stahler of the sectional three-point shooting contest. "I am so happy I made it to that round and got an opportunity to shoot. There were some great shooters in the sectionals."



TUSCOLA SENIOR Sophia Kremitzki (left) poses with her fellow senior Tri-County's Megan Houlihan after the three point shooting contest at Tuscola. The two proudly display their IHSA Envelopes giving them entrance into Redbird Arena at Illinois State University for the Queen of the Hill Three-Point Shooting Contest. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.



TAYLOR MUSGRAVE (4) handles the ball in Tuscola's sectional opening game against Neoga. The Warriors lost a 41-34 decision and ended their season with over 20 wins. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.



TUSCOLA SENIOR CAPTAIN Sophia Kremitzki looks down-court and dribbles around a Neoga player. While Kremitzki and the rest of the Lady Warriors ended their 2021-2022 season as a team, she will get a chance to continue on as a three-point shooter in the Queen of the Hill Contest at Illinois State University. Photo by Daniel L. Chamness.

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