

Hopkins leads Arcola in double overtime thriller; Lady Riders suffer first LPC loss

By Mike Monahan

ARCOLA - Eva Hopkins scored a career-high 15 points as Arcola won the consolation championship (fifth place) in the fourth Lincoln Prairie Conference Tournament at Cumberland. The Lady Riders won 58-51 in double overtime in what was their first win over Arthur since the Class 1A regional semifinals on Feb. 9, 2015 as Arcola won 51-49 at Casey, a string of 10 straight losses to the Knights.

"I didn't picture it to be this close. Arthur is really good and it is a good rivalry," said Hopkins. "I never expected a double overtime game."

Arcola coach Corey Roberts said, "Beating Arthur, the No. 2 seed was big. Last year we played the No. 7, 8, or 9 seed team and didn't really get better. It was a huge win for us going into the rest of the conference games."

Arcola advanced to the consolation championship with an easy 61-12 triumph over Argenta-Oreana on Jan. 18.

After the tournament Arcola took on the No. 18 team in Class 1A, Tri-County and lost 53-23 on Monday.

Arcola is 17-6 overall and 7-1 in the LPC, while the Lady Titans improve to 19-6 and 4-0 in conference play.

Tri-County 53, Arcola 23

For the first half of the opening quarter Arcola was right there with Tri-County, who recently won the LPC tournament beating Cerro Gordo/Bement 66-27. Arcola led 8-6 after a three-point play with five minutes left in the period. Jaycee Kessler tied the game at 10 with a 3-pointer.

However, that is when Tri-County, who averaged 53.3 points per game (prior to the contest) went on a 25-4 run to take control with a 35-14 advantage after a steal and layup by Thaylee Barry.

The Titans did this with superb defense holding Arcola to just 3-for-22 (.136) shooting in the final 28 minutes.

Offensively, Tri-County's run started with Josie Armstrong scoring eight unanswered points for a 20-10 advantage. The Titans

worked the ball inside continuously and also hit some 15 footers, making 21-of-50 for the game. Tri-County was 20-of-40 in the first 22:44.

The speedy Lady Titans did have to take off their three-quarter trap, but their half-court defense proved just as good and they forced Arcola into 21 turnovers.

Tri-County had three players in double figures and only the starting five scored. Armstrong led the way with 17 points, while Kaylin Williams had 13 and Barry 12.

Sisk led Arcola with 10 points.

Arcola 58, ALAH 51, 2 ot

The game featured 55 fouls and 72 free throws as well as 11 ties and 12 lead changes with neither team leading by more than the final margin of seven.

Arthur never led in the second overtime, but stayed close, trailing by four with just under a minute left. That is when Arcola freshman Kiera Leal scored on a layup for a six point advantage.

"For a freshman to come in for the first time in a close ball game like that was a pretty cool scene," said Roberts. "I think she had a block and a steel also."

Both teams had three players foul out.

Arthur was 0-for-4 in the second four minute period against Arcola's man-to-man. The Lady Riders also played a zone before the overtimes.

"When we were in man their big girl Claire Seal (5-10) is pretty good and she went right at us," said Roberts. "We had some foul trouble, Mackenzie Thomas got hurt (missed four minutes of the first half). We were small and so we had to go zone. It was pretty good considering we don't practice it. I am proud of that. Late in the game we jumped back and forth depending on what type of personale we had on the floor. Once Seal fouled out we went back to man. Our kids played so hard."

Arthur had a chance to win the game after one overtime, but made one free throw and

missed one making it 49 all with just 3.3 left. The Knights last lead was 48-47 in the first overtime. Hopkins made two free throws with 4.6 left to put Arcola ahead, but fouled just 1.3 later.

In the fourth Arcola led 40-36 with 50.1 left. Seal made a bucket to make it a one possession game with 40.3 remaining. Arcola missed a pair of free throws with 37.5 and Seal made one free throw to deadlock the game at 40 with still 30.8 left.

"I had never coached a double overtime game before," said Roberts. "I went to the locker room and just laid down on the floor in exhaustion."

It was a happy exhaustion despite going 17-38 from the free throw line.

"Eva made her free throws when she needed to make them," said Roberts of Hopkins going 7-of-14 all in the final 9:21 of the game. It was good for her because she has struggled so many times at the free throw line."

Arcola's biggest lead up until the final was early in the game as they scored nine of the first 12 points, including a 3-pointer by Hopkins.

"When I made the 3-pointer it helped a lot," said Hopkins. "It gave me the momentum to keep it going and a lot of confidence that I probably didn't have coming into the game."

The Knights biggest lead was six points late in the first half on a 3-pointer by Kailee Otto with just under a minute left for a 23-17 advantage.

Arcola had the longest run of the game after that on a 9-0 run, including a 3-pointer by Moore to start the third quarter and Mackenzie Thomas scored on a feed from Kacie Sisk for a 26-23 lead. After Otto sank a 3-pointer to tie the game neither team led by more than four until late in the second overtime.

"I had to calm myself down and kept telling myself I can make it because they were big free throws at big moments," said Hopkins.

Besides Hopkins Crystal Ramirez was also in double digits as she came off the

bench to score 12. The Arcola bench scored 20 points.

Overall the girls played a great game," said Roberts. "Our guard play stepped up big today as most of our bigs were out for most of the game due to foul trouble. Our guards played well offensively and defensively."

Arcola shot .404 from the field compared to .283 for Arthur, who was led by Seal and Otto with 25 and 16 points respectively.

"They played a 1-2-2 and what looked like a 3-2," said Hopkins. "During the week we worked with Kacie running the baseline and we were all prepared for it. We also knew we would have to hit our outside shots because that is what they wanted us to do. We did that and worked in the middle which helped us also."

Arcola 61, Arg.-Oreana 12

There was no doubt who was going to win this consolation semifinals as Arcola took control early leading 22-1 after the first eight minutes, including 12 by Sisk. The Lady Riders led 39-5 at the half as Hopkins, Kessler, and Ava Simpson all made 3-pointers. Arcola led 53-10 after three quarters meaning the fourth quarter would be a running clock due to the 30-point mercy rule. Sisk led Arcola with 21 points all in three quarters.

Varsity	Tri-County	22	13	13	5	-53
Arcola	10	6	3	4	-23	

ARCOLA: Eva Hopkins 0-0-0, Jacey Kessler 1-1-4, Kelsey Moore 0-1-1, Mackenzie Thomas 0-3-3, Kacie Sisk 4-2-10, Reyli Vega 0-0-0, Crystal Ramirez 1-2-4, Ema Simpson 0-0-0, Vanessa Condarco 0-0-0, Emma Vazquez 0-1-1, Ava Simpson 0-0-0, Kiera Leal 0-0-0, Totals 6-10-23

3-point goals: Arcola 1-7 .143 (Kessler 1-3, Hopkins 0-2, Vega 0-1, Sisk 0-1), Tri-County 4-13 .308 (Josie Armstrong 3-8, Ona Pelican 1-2, Thaylee Barry 0-3) Free throws: Arcola 10-27 .370, Tri-County 7-14 .500. Rebounds: Arcola 21 (Sisk 6), Tri-County 33 (Armstrong 10, Turnovers: Tri-County 10, Arcola 21. Shooting percentages: Tri-County 21-50 .420, Arcola 6-25 .240.

Junior varsity	Tri-County	7	3	9	6-25
Arcola	10	10	16	9-44	

ARCOLA: Ramirez 3-7-13, Ema Simpson 0-1-1, Hayden Gauna 2-0-4, Leal 1-2-4, Ava Simpson 6-2-14, Alessia Menoud 0-0-0, Shelby Roberts-McGeheon 0-3-3, Kaydence Nichols 2-0-5, Total 14-15-44

3-point goals: Arcola 1 (Nichols 1)

Arcola Sports

through Feb. 1

High school boys basketball

Friday

Arcola vs. winner of Heritage/Villa Grove, 6 p.m. Lincoln Prairie Conference Tournament at Argenta-Oreana

Saturday

Arcola vs. TBD, 1 p.m. (if lose Friday 9th place) or 2:30 p.m. (7th place) if win Friday Lincoln Prairie Conference Tournament at Argenta-Oreana

Tuesday

Tri-County at Arcola, 6 p.m.

High school girls basketball

Thursday

Arcola at Arthur Christian, 6 p.m.

Saturday

Marshall at Arcola, 10 a.m.

Monday

Argenta-Oreana at Arcola, 6 p.m.

Junior high boys basketball

Saturday

Eighth grade Class 2A regional tournament Arcola vs. Salt Fork, 11:30 a.m. at St. Matthew

Tuesday

Eighth grade Class 2A regional tournament if Arcola won Saturday vs. winner of Villa Grove and Champaign International, 6:45 p.m. at St. Matthew

Junior high volleyball

Thursday

Arcola at Bement/Cerro Gordo, 6 p.m.

Monday

Arcola at Shiloh, 6 p.m.

Tuesday

Sangamon Valley at Arcola, 6 p.m.,

Mackenzie Condill 0-1, Kaci Beachy 0-1, Charley Condill 0-3, Lindsay Rochas 0-1) Free throws: Arcola 17-38 .447, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 18-34 .529. Bench points Arcola 20, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 4. Turnovers: Arcola 22, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 21. Shooting percentages: Arcola 19-47 .404, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 15-53 .283

Arcola	22	17	14	8-61
Argenta-Oreana	1	4	5	2-12

ARCOLA: Hopkins 2-0-5, Kessler 3-0-8, Moore 2-0-4, Thomas 4-0-8, Sisk 8-5-21, Vega 1-0-2, Menoud 0-0-0, Ramirez 1-0-2, Ema Simpson 0-0-0, Condarco 0-0-0, Vazquez 1-3-5, Ava Simpson 2-0-6, Leal 0-0-0, Totals 24-8-61

3-point goals: Arcola 5 (Ava Simpson 2, Kessler 2, Hopkins 1), Argenta-Oreana 0.

Free throws: Arcola 8-11 .727, Argenta-Oreana 2-6 .333.

ARCOLA: Ramirez 3-7-13, Ema Simpson 0-1-1, Hayden Gauna 2-0-4, Leal 1-2-4, Ava Simpson 6-2-14, Alessia Menoud 0-0-0, Shelby Roberts-McGeheon 0-3-3, Kaydence Nichols 2-0-5, Total 14-15-44

3-point goals: Arcola 1 (Nichols 1)

Lincoln Prairie Conference girls basketball tournament

Saturday 1/14/23

Game 1: Argenta-Oreana 41, at Blue Ridge (8, n/a) 25

Monday 1/16/23 at Cumberland

Game 2: Tri-County 65, Argenta-Oreana 10

Game 3: Okaw Valley 38, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 33,

middle school

Game 4: Cumberland 33, Arcola 30

Game 5: Cerro Gordo/Bement 55, Decatur LSA 27, middle school

Wednesday 1/18/23

Game 6: Arcola 61, Argenta-Oreana 12

Game 7: Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 63, Decatur LSA 43

Thursday 1/19/23

Game 8: Tri-County (1, 16-6) 46, Cumberland (5, 12-8) 6 p.m.

Game 9: Cerro Gordo/Bement 51, Okaw Valley 14

Saturday 1/21/23

(records are up to date through Saturday's games)

Game 10: Decatur LSA (7, 6-15) 47, Argenta-Oreana (9, 2-15) 30, 7th place

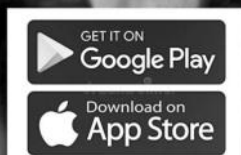
Game 11: Arcola (4, 17-5) 58, Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond (2, 14-7 51 2 ot.) 5th place (consolation championship)

Game 12: Cumberland (5, 13-9) 47, Okaw Valley (7, 6-19) 30, 3rd place

Game 13: Tri-County (1, 18-6) 66, Cerro Gordo/Bement (3, 16-7) 27, championship

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