

SPORTS



AHS GIRLS BASKETBALL - Senior Emma Vazquez (22) in the varsity game on Monday, Jan. 30. It was senior night for Arcola and the team defeated Argenta-Oreana 44-16. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



AHS GIRLS BASKETBALL - Senior Reyli Vega (00) in the varsity game on Monday, Jan. 30. It was senior night for Arcola and the team defeated Argenta-Oreana 44-16. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



AHS GIRLS BASKETBALL - Junior Kelsey Moore (11) appears to be fouled in the varsity game on Monday, Jan. 30. Arcola defeated Argenta-Oreana 44-16. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

Arcola girls avenge loss to Cumberland, fall to A-L-A-H

By Mike Monahan
ARCOLA - 33-30, 33-30, 33-30 that score was the final of when Arcola lost to Cumberland in the Lincoln Prairie Conference Tournament on Jan. 16 at Toledo which knocked the Lady Riders out of chance to earn the title.

Feb. 2 Arcola returned to Waldrip Gym and this time downed the Lady Pirates 43-18.

"The 33-30 loss is all we talked about the last two days of practice and that this our revenge tour (also beat Marshall after losing to them)," said Arcola senior Makenzie Thomas. "We were trying to get payback. We wanted to go out and beat them to show them that we were better than we were and had a bad game that day. We were all working together and we were patient with everything. It worked out well."

However, Arcola had its four-game winning streak

snapped by Class 2A Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond 51-38 in a game that was an eight point contest with two minutes left. It was only the second LPC loss for the Lady Riders, who finished 8-2 in the conference.

Arcola 43, Cumberland 18

It was a close game early with Arcola leading just 11-10 after a 3-pointer by Cumberland senior Abbie Becker who is headed to play at Aurora University.

What happened next was a 34-3 run by Arcola in a span of 18:47.

"Coach (Roberts) just told us to run basic over and look for the open players and Makenzie had a really good game tonight," said Eva Hopkins. "We just kept feeding her and she just kept executing off of it."

Thomas finished with a season-high 14 points, while

Hopkins was also in double digits with 10. Thomas was 7-of-11.636 from the field.

"It was just the passes that everybody made," said Thomas. "They found the looks and I was open. I just made a move and went up and it went in. Sometimes they go in and sometimes they don't."

Arcola's run started with a bucket by Thomas and four straight by Hopkins for an 18-10 lead. Thomas scored off a pass from Kelsey Moore and Reyli Vega netted the final points of the half for a 22-11 advantage.

The 18 points by Cumberland, who fell to 15-12, was the second lowest total this season and Arcola, who did use a press during the game, caused Cumberland to turn the ball over 22 times.

"Our press was really effective," said Hopkins. "We have been working on pressing a little more later in the season, but at the beginning we didn't really press."

Cumberland was held to 7-of-29 (.241) shooting from the field.

"We just went out and ran the plays right," said Thomas. "The last time we didn't run the plays right. It was the loss that made us want to beat them."

Arcola shot 41 percent from the field, including 15-of-31 in the final three quarters.

"I think we all blew our expectations out of the water, which is really good and now we will have a lot more wins than we have had in previous seasons. That is something really special that the whole team should be proud of."

ALAH 51, Arcola 38

A 10-2 run by Arthur-Lovington-Atwood-Hammond proved to be pivotal as they went from leading 34-30 with 2:44 left in the third to a 44-32 advantage with 7:37 left in the game.

The Lady Riders got to within eight on two different occasions, but could not get any closer.

The Knights, who lost to Arcola 58-51 in double overtime in the consolidation championship of the LPC Tournament, used a box-and-one defense in the second half and late in the first half went to a transition game.

"They kept changing their defense every time down and it seemed like he (A-L-A-H coach Mac Condill) would go box-and-one on whoever scored the basket before," said Arcola coach Corey Roberts. "I think we handled it a little better later. They changed it up a lot. We just had an off night and that happens."

The Knights were a 55 percent shooting team from the free throw line, but sank 23-of-28 (.821) Monday at Nancy Stiff Gymnasium.

"That was our highest we have shot all season," said Condill. "We say from day one

that free throws are going to win close, tight games. We have been on the other end of that many times. For us to get that many points tonight, doesn't mean it is going to be there Thursday, but to get them to go down tonight was a huge lift. I can't say enough about how we executed our game plan."

Arthur's run started with a layup by Kailee Otto, one of two free throws by Charley Condill and a bucket by Claire Seal made it 39-30.

Arcola's Jaycee Kessler stopped the run momentarily with a basket. Then Arthur had the ball after a scramble for it and coach Condill called a time-out with .9 on the board. However, the official thought there should be 1.9 seconds left and the clock was moved to 1.9. The Knights scored at the buzzer on a 17-footer by Seal. This gave A-L-A-H momentum and even

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