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Gabbi Bennett dribbles against the defense of Cookie Godbold during today's contest at Trenton. The freshman continued her poised play in Tornado Alley, which did not surprise coach Bryan Rogers (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing jbsportsphoto@aol.com).

Too many turnovers prove costly as Steinert falls in Tornado Alley

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

Dec. 22: The Steinert High varsity girls' basketball team was going for the hat trick.

After the freshman and JV teams both beat Trenton, the varsity tried to finish off the sweep and things looked promising after one quarter.

But too many turnovers caused too many problems in the end, as the Tornadoes pulled away for a 55-27 victory over the Spartans in the Alley tonight.

Steinert (2-1) committed 34 turnovers, including 22 in the first half, but only trailed 23-15. It turned it over 11 times in the first quarter and actually led 11-9.

But during the second quarter, Trenton began going inside to Monae Fields (18 points) and the Spartans began fouling. Lindsay Usarzewicz, one of the team's better ball handlers against pressure, sat frequently with two fouls, while Ashley Gonzalez, Carly Wood (who took a fierce shot to the face late in the game) and Mackenzie Ewell all had two.

"It was tough," coach Bryan Rogers said. "But the girls who came in did a good job of keeping it close. In the second half, turnovers caught up with us, and they pushed us around too much."

After a bucket by Adrienne "Boosh" Boucher gave the Spartans a 13-11 lead early in the second quarter, Steinert found points tough to come by. It got just two field goals over the next 11 minutes as Trenton amassed a 34-17 lead and never looked back.

"This is gonna make us better, it's a learning experience," Rogers said. "I told the girls every game we step on the court it's going to be a learning experience. We've got some young girls and some new girls on varsity, this will help us down the road."

One of those new girls is freshman Gabbi Bennett, who chipped in with five points and a team-high six rebounds from her guard spot while coming off the bench.

Bennett showed no intimidation at playing her first game in the Alley.

"She's very composed," Rogers said. "She handles the ball very well. But she's been there before, she's not scared of the moment. She's played a decent amount of AAU which obviously prepared her for varsity level."

Bennett first came to Rogers' attention during the Spartans summer activities.

"I figured she would definitely compete for a varsity spot," he said. "You can't set anything in stone, but at tryouts she impressed and she's played well."

Lawrence gets past Northstars as their Hamilton PAL pal does them in

Daphne Ginn, a product of the Hamilton PAL girls' basketball league, bamboozled her township buddies with 15 points as Lawrence rallied to a 49-44 win over Nottingham in Lawrence.

It was the first win of the year for the Cardinals (1-2), while Nottingham (1-2) dropped its second straight. Shuntell Penix had 15 to lead the Northstars, while Jalliet Taylor added 13 and Imani Alston had eight.

Trailing 32-31 after three quarters, Lawrence outscored the Northstars 18-12 in the final eight minutes.

"The key was foul shooting," Lawrence coach Dana Williams said. "Our defensive pressure exploded in the fourth quarter, and that created offensive opportunities. We got out on the break, got fouled and got to the line."

Lawrence drained 10 free throws to pull away. Another key was Taylor fouling out.

"She's a great player, and that had a major impact on the game in the fourth quarter," Williams said. "She was really taking over down low."