

Dec. 23 Girls Basketball



Hamilton's Stephanie White and Alexis Johnson (10) make life tough for Leah Ogrodnik during today's game in Allentown (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing jbsportsphoto@aol.com).

Johnson puts on another great show but Allentown puts up the 'W'

By Rich Fisher
Fish4Scores.com

Dec. 23: Even in defeat, Alexis Johnson has her fan clubs.

Today it was Allentown High girls' basketball coach Linda Weise and Redbirds forward Carlee Corvasce, who collected 20 points and 15 rebounds to help the hosts to a 51-45 victory over Hamilton West

The first victory of the year for Allentown (1-3) offset a vintage Johnson performance, as the senior forward had 28 points, 20 rebounds and six blocked shots.

"Alexis Johnson is just a great player," Corvasce said. "I tried to box her out as best I could, but it was tough."

"Johnson's a pretty special player," Weise added. "It was her second and third shots. She has just such an ease to go to the basket and rebound the ball."

But like Trenton a few days earlier, Allentown figured out if you make life rough for Johnson, it makes things tough for the Hornets.

Weise switched to a box-and-one, resulting in just six points by the West star over the final 13 minutes of the game.

"Leah (Ogrodnik) did a great job on her in the box-and-one," Corvasce said. "I wish we went to it earlier."

"I don't know if it would have mattered, the way she was getting putbacks," Weise said. "But we had to do it in the second half."

Trailing 9-1 at one point, Hamilton rallied for a 32-27 lead, only to watch Allentown rebound for a 43-37 advantage early in the third quarter when the Redbirds began to get a slew of open layups underneath.

Hamilton trailed the entire fourth quarter but thought it had a chance to tie midway through. With the score 44-41, Erin Septer (10 points) made a lay-up and the whistle blew. Hamilton thought it was an "and-one", but Septer was called for an offensive foul.

Hamilton (1-2) hung close, and pulled within 47-45 when Courtney Adams, playing in obvious pain after hurting her knee in the season opener, made one of two foul shots with 1:29 left.

The missed shot was rebounded by Johnson, who missed the putback but the ball went out off Allentown. Johnson traveled on the inbound, however, giving Allentown possession. The Redbirds Dana Sensi shrugged off a tough shooting day to make both free throws with 33.7 seconds left.

Hamilton missed down the other end and Allentown got possession. The Hornets appeared to have Sensi trapped, but she dribbled out of trouble and threw a fullcourt pass to an open Mandy Hornyak, who hit the game-sealing lay-up with eight seconds remaining.

Despite the Hornets loss, Weise couldn't say enough good things about Johnson. As a coach and player in the Colonial Valley Conference all her life, Weise has seen most of the greats and feels Johnson is one of the best at being able to dominate a game single-handedly.

"Absolutely, no question there," the former Hornet coach said. "She's so versatile, she can bring the ball down and run the point, she can go inside the post and post up and ask for the ball there.

"She can play the wing, she can rebound when you need her too, and defensively, how many blocks did she have?"

She had a lot, but not quite enough to save the Hornets this time.