

Jan. 20 Girls Basketball



Mackenzie Ewell fires a pass around a Princeton defender to Ashley Gonzalez during tonight's Spartan victory (Photo by Ken Weingartner).

Spartans get just what they need in snapping four-game losing streak

By Ken Weingartner

Fish4scores.com

Jan. 20: After snapping a four-game slide with a 44-31 win tonight against visiting Princeton, Steinert High's Lauren Matrisciano summed up the Spartans' feelings in just a few words.

"This," she said, "is what we needed."

Steinert evened its record at 6-6, but it wasn't easy. Princeton jumped out to a 9-2 lead before the Spartans got serious, went on a 32-13 run, and seized control of the game.

"We picked up our intensity on defense," said Steinert coach Bryan Rogers, who benched his starting five for several minutes midway through the first quarter. "In the first quarter, [Princeton] outhustled us and got all the loose balls. In the second half, and the second quarter, we picked it up.

"Our shot selection was much better in the second half," Rogers added. "We handled the ball

better and worked the ball inside, which helped open up the floor and get more people involved in the offense. They saw success and kept going with it.”

Eight Spartans found the scoring column, led by forward Ashley Gonzalez’s 10 points. Gabi Bennett added nine points and Lindsay Usarzewicz chipped in eight. Matrisciano and Mackenzie Ewell contributed six points apiece to the balanced attack.

“We needed to step up our game,” Gonzalez said. “We knew we should turn it around. I think this [win] was real important. Now we can go out with our heads up Monday and go for another win against Pennington.”

Steinert was agonizingly close to victories against West Windsor-Plainsboro South and Ewing during its skid and Matrisciano said the squad never doubted its ability to get back to winning.

“I think this team has a lot of potential,” Matrisciano said. “We’ve shown there are moments where we work really well together, like in the second half tonight when executed our plays. We had some tough losses, but we never doubted ourselves.”

Handling adversity could serve the Spartans well as the season progresses.

“It’s a learning experience,” Rogers said. “I think we responded very well in the second half [tonight]. We knew that if we stayed with the game plan we would be fine. We came out with a needed victory, which should be good for confidence purposes.”

Maybe just what the Spartans needed.

Nottingham has a long day at Tornado Alley

Playing Trenton was going to be a mismatch for Nottingham regardless of circumstances, but playing a Tornado team that had lost two straight didn’t do the Northstars any favors.

An angry Trenton squad took no prisoners in rolling to a 60-28 win over Nottingham, which was coming off a win over Hopewell Tuesday. Dalia Lopez had nine points for the Tornadoes while Imani Alston added eight.

Hornets can’t hold on at Ewing

Hamilton was eight minutes away from its second straight win but could not seal the deal in dropping a 56-42 decision at Ewing. The Hornets led 33-29 after three quarters until the Blue Devils exploded for a 27-point fourth quarter while holding West to nine points.

Hamilton fell to 2-10.