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SPORTS

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South Elgin snaps 4-game skid

By: John Lemon



St. Edward's Madeline Ellsworth, (4) drives to the hoop against South Elgin's Ella Winterhalder (10) Thursday during basketball at South Elgin High School *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

South Elgin didn't wait long in 2020 to get a bad taste out of its mouth.

After going 0-4 at Dundee-Crown's 37th annual Komaromy Classic, the Storm returned to the court Thursday for a home matinee against St. Edward and got back on track, winning 73-48.

Senior Megan McClure paced the Storm with 24 points.

"Coming off four losses is hard to bounce back off of," McClure said. "I think we played really hard the whole game and never doubted ourselves. We came out strong."

Ella Winterhalder and Caroline Croft also scored in double figures with 16 and 14 points, respectively, for South Elgin (13-5).

Croft said the team wasn't discouraged after losing to talented teams New Trier, Trinity, St. Charles North and Hononegah at the Dundee-Crown tourney.

"I thought we played well, just really good teams," Croft said. "We got better as a team. Just really good competition to play against."

Winterhalder tallied 13 of her points in the first half Thursday and Croft had 9 as the Storm took a 32-22 halftime lead.

South Elgin actually started the game with six quick fouls to none for St. Edward (5-11). That forced the Storm out of their pressure defense, and they didn't get whistled for another foul for a quarter and a half.

Trailing 12-3 after one quarter, St. Edward played South Elgin to a 20-19 second quarter behind 13 points from senior Sam Ottinger and 8 from sophomore Brooke Biggins.

But with the team fouls reset at halftime, South Elgin turned up the pressure in the third quarter, and quick transition points from Raina Yang and Croft quickly extended their lead to 38-22. The Storm ended up scoring 23 points in the third quarter to go up 55-36. They led comfortably the rest of the way.

Morgan Meinicke hit four straight free throws and Madison Spantiko made a layup to complete the scoring.

"We told them at halftime the first three minutes (of the third quarter) are huge," Storm coach Dan Mandernack said. "We are either going to extend it to 19 or 20 or they throw the first punch and it's a game.

"We got matched up with some really tough teams (at Dundee-Crown). At the end of the day you learn a lot about yourself. Going through our first adversity. It's kind of humbling but we knew it was going to be tough. We have bigger games coming up."

St. Edward also played four games over the holiday break going 2-2 at the Lisle tournament.

"We're not putting complete games together yet," St. Edward coach Michelle Dawson said. "That's our big focus. Being complete players on the court offensively and defensively and putting complete games together physically and mentally."

Biggins led St. Edward with 18 points Thursday. Ottinger scored 16 hitting four 3-pointers. Dawson was encouraged with her team's rebounding Thursday and said they are working to limit turnovers.

"There's a lot of positives to build on both coming out of the tournament and today's game," Dawson said. "That's all we can do now is to keep our heads up and keep pushing and keep working on what we can improve on. It's a great group of kids. Everybody is contributing on one end of the floor or another."