

Inability to protect lead against Germantown extends Hawks' home losing streak

Things looked quite rosy for the Grafton girls' basketball team late in the third quarter of a North Shore Conference game last Friday.

With less than 30 seconds left, guard Kaitlyn Brandenburg sank a pair of free throws that put the Black Hawks up, 40-32, and seemingly in control against Germantown.

But that's when the home team's highlight reel ran out.

Fueled by the high-energy play of guard Melissa Klemm and center Eliza Wortman, Germantown quickly wiped out the deficit and roared to a 58-47 victory that stunned the home fans and left Grafton coach Bob Maronde shaking his head.

"We just seemed gassed in the fourth quarter," said Maronde, whose team lost for the fourth straight time at home and fell to 3-3 in conference play.

"We're not a veteran team, and we just don't have the feel and understanding of when to control the ball and when to go out and attack."

It was Germantown that did nearly all the attacking down the stretch. The Warhawks (4-2) started a 26-7 run that closed the game with a three-pointer by Klemm in the final seconds of the third quarter that pulled them within 40-35.

During the final period, the 6-foot-2-inch Wortman took over inside and scored 11 of her 14 points for the game. She went 7-for-9 at the free-throw line in the final seven minutes as Grafton struggled to stay in contention.

The Black Hawks pulled within 51-47 with 2:23 left on two free throws by Emily Fatla but couldn't score again during a flurry of hurried layups and three-point tries.

"We had an eight-point lead and then we let Klemm take an open three in the corner," Maronde said. "We didn't guard them, and it really cost us."

Late fade leaves GHS girls looking for answers

Written by Steve Ostermann

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Klemm, a senior, did most of the damage by repeatedly answering each Grafton run with a basket of her own. Her game-high 18 points included nine in each half, and she had eight steals and four assists.

Wortman, the Warhawks' best front-line player, failed to score in the first half before breaking loose the rest of the way.

The Black Hawks, who had a four-game winning streak snapped and fell to 7-4 overall, were led by Myranda Tyler's 11 points.

Abbey Benzschawel and Hannah Eichler added nine and eight points, respectively, but Grafton was missing a leader at crunch time.

The Black Hawks also struggled against Germantown's trapping defensive pressure and turned the ball over repeatedly.

"Germantown has a very good team that's senior dominated," Maronde said. "We just didn't have the answers."

Grafton will try to get back on track this Friday when it hosts Port Washington (1-5) at 5:45 p.m. The game will be part of a co-ed doubleheader that includes the boys' contest at 7:30 p.m.