

NSC leaders too much for Lady Hawks

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Germantown, Bay stay several steps ahead of Grafton girls in North Shore games

A jolt of basketball reality brought the Grafton girls' team back to earth last week.



After winning five straight games, including four in North Shore Conference play, the Black Hawks put their restored confidence on the line against the league's top two teams.

But co-leaders Germantown and Whitefish Bay had no trouble handling Grafton, building early leads and steadily pulling away for convincing wins.

The pace was particularly tough on the Black Hawks in a 70-42 home loss to Germantown on Friday.

After a competitive first quarter left Grafton trailing by only 13-9, Germantown broke things open with a 26-9 surge in the second period.

"We ended up turning the ball over way too much," said Black Hawks coach Steve Reinhardt, whose team fell to 5-6 in NSC play.

"We played well in the first quarter, but then we allowed their pressure to get to us. You've got to learn how to compete against the better teams, and we've haven't done that yet."

Germantown (10-1) kept the heat on with scrappy defense that triggered its up-tempo offense. The Warhawks, who held a 39-18 lead at halftime, finished the night with 11 three-point baskets.

Thirteen Germantown players scored, led by Erika Berry, whose 14 points included a trio of

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threes.

Paige Groth and Bridget Kelley had 10 points for the Warhawks.

Grafton got solid efforts from Rachel Schmitz and Rachel Ruona, who had 14 and 11 points, respectively. However, none of their teammates had more than six points.

“Our biggest problem is inconsistency,” Reinhardt said.

“We have two or three good plays in a row and then eight bad ones in a row. Once we fall behind, we can’t afford to make mistakes and still come back.”

Reinhardt said he was more satisfied with his team’s play in the second half, when it was outscored by only 31-24. But the Black Hawks couldn’t overcome their first-half struggles.

“So many of our turnovers were unforced,” Reinhardt said. “You can’t give teams 25 extra possessions in a game and beat them.”

Whitefish Bay 50, Grafton 28

Poor ball handling and cold shooting sealed the Hawks’ fate in a road loss Feb. 4.

Grafton fell behind, 12-3, in the first quarter and was unable to regroup. The deficit reached 25-12 at halftime and 36-18 after three quarters.

“We turned the ball over 38 times. That killed us,” Reinhardt said.

Kayla Borden’s eight points led the Hawks, who made only 10 field-goal attempts.

Bay (10-1) got 19 points from Emma Jankowski and 13 from Ashley Reed.

Image Information: RACHEL SCHMITZ led the Grafton girls’ basketball team with 14 points, but it wasn’t enough to keep Germantown from scoring a 70-42 win. Photo by Sam Arendt

Grafton’s lone bright spot was a solid defensive effort against standout Maya Jonas, who had only two points.

The Hawks (12-7 overall) will look to get back on track this Friday when they host Port Washington in a 5:45 p.m. conference game.