

Mansfield struts stuff over King Philip

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By PETER GOBIS

WRENTHAM

— And the second-best high school girls' basketball team in the Hockomock League is, arguably, Mansfield High.

The Hornets led from start to finish, riding four 3-point baskets from senior Sydney Mulkern (18 points), the floormanship of senior guard Maddy Bendanillo and the presence in the lane of senior Maggie Danehy (16 points, 11 rebounds) to a 53-44 conquest of King Philip Regional High Friday night.

In winning their fourth straight game, the Hornets (7-3, 6-2) hit on six of 13 shots from the floor in each of the first two quarters to take a 32-17 margin at intermission. "The teams are similar, a lot of good athletes,"

Mike Redding, the Mansfield coach said. "Both of us really have to work to score points. I think the difference was that we made the open shots when we got them and we play solid defense every night."

Behind a pair of Mulkern 3-point shots, Mansfield assumed a commanding 44-23 advantage at the four-minute mark of the third quarter.

KP outscored Mansfield 27-21 in the second half, committing just two third quarter turnovers, scoring the final eight points of the quarter. But, facing a 13-point (44-31) deficit entering the fourth quarter, the Warriors (6-3, 5-3) could not buy a basket — shooting 4-for-16 from the floor and missing 11 of 20 free throws overall.

"They're the fastest team that we've seen, we were a little shell-shocked," Amy Siggins, the KP coach said of the Warriors being unable to find lanes to the basket, open looks or chances for offensive rebounds. "That shock of how tough they are, how fast they are was the difference."

Meanwhile, both Faye Veilleux and Shannon O'Connor got into foul trouble, unbalancing some of the Warrior rotations.

"It wasn't falling for us," Siggins added. "They're (Veilleux, O'Connor) both leaders, they allow to have a flow to the game — when they're together it's something really special."

Five points from the hand of Mulkern, including a 3-pointer, put Mansfield into the lead at the outset of the game. Then in the final minute, Erin Daniel twice finished off fast-break feeds from Rebecca Hottleman for a 14-8 edge.

Mulkern hit another 3-pointer at the outset of the second quarter for the Hornets. Then Emily Vigeant drilled the first of her two trifectas and Kara Bendanillo hit a 12-foot baseline jumper from the right to put Mansfield in front 23-12.

And in the final two minutes, twice Danehy converted offensive rebounds into baskets. "With her athleticism and great instincts, she gets us those extra points," Redding praised Danehy.

The Warriors climbed back into contention at the end of the third quarter as Caroline Aaron hit two free throws and a basket in low off of an O'Connor feed, while Veilleux scored in the lane and O'Connor hit a 15-foot jumper.

"Foul trouble impacted them," Redding added of KP's mere total of 17 first half points. "We kind of played our regular rotation and took advantage of that. "We have some good balance. We can be better offensively, but we're still finding ways to win."

King Philip returns to action Tuesday at North Attleboro, while Mansfield is on the road to Stoughton.

Mansfield 53, King Philip 44

MANSFIELD (53)

Daniel 2 0-0 4, Vigeant 2 0-0 6, Mulkern 6 2-2 18, B. Bendanillo 1 4-6 1, Santos 0 0-0 0, R. Hottleman 0 0-0 0, Kemp 0 1-2 1, K. Bendanillo 1 0-2 2, MacIvar 0 0-0 0, Danehy 6 4-7 16, totals 18 11-19 53.

KING PHILIP (44)

Mason 0 0-0 0, James 0 1-2 1, Leroux 2 2-2 7, Keswick 0 0-0 0, Butler 0 0-0 0, Veilleux 5 1-4 11, Aaron 2 4-4 8, O'Connor 6 1-3 13, Roy 0 0-0 0, Glaser 2 0-1 4, Cummings 0 0-0 0, totals 17 9-20 44.

Mansfield	14	18	12	09—53
King Philip	08	09	14	13—44

3-point goals—Msf. 6 (Mulkern 4, Vigeant 2), KP 1 (Leroux).

JV's: Msf. 56-30.

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Strong First Half Propels Mansfield to Win at KP



Senior guard Sydney Mulkern had another strong performance for Mansfield, with a game-high 20 points, including four three-pointers, and helped the Hornets hold off KP on the road. (Josh Perry/HockomockSports.com)

WRENTHAM, Mass. – King Philip came into Friday’s game on a high after scoring 73 points and winning by 42 on Tuesday, but the shots that all seemed to go in against Stoughton mostly stayed out against Mansfield. The Hornets, on the other hand, were on fire. They knocked down six three-pointers through three quarters and built their lead to as many as 21 at one point in the third.

Mansfield rode that quick start to a 53-44 victory that keeps the Hornets two games back of league-leading Franklin and alone in second place in the Kelley-Rex division.

“We didn’t think we could play zone the whole night but they never forced us out of it,” said Mansfield coach Mike Redding. “Foul trouble impacted them a little and we kind of played our regular rotation and took advantage of that. Both teams have a lot of great athletes and both of us need to work to score points but we did a good job making open shots when we got them.”

Sydney Mulkern was the spark for the Hornets on Friday, scoring a game-high 20 points, including 14 in the first half. She got off to a quick start, knocking down a three and driving to the basket for a quick 5-0 lead. Mulkern scored on the break, following a pinpoint pass by Becca Hottleman, and added a layup in traffic off an inbounds pass by Kara Bendanillo (four assists).

KP’s offense struggled to get into any rhythm and wasn’t helped by first quarter foul trouble for top scorers Faye Veilleux and Shannon O’Connor.

“That really affects us because they’re both leaders, they allow us to have a flow to the game, they keep us calm, and when they’re together it’s really something special,” said KP coach Amy Siggins about the early foul trouble. “They’ve been getting used to that the last couple of

games (following O'Connor's return from injury) and in a tough game like this they needed to lean on each other."

O'Connor scored four points in the first and assisted on an Emma Glaser basket that cut the Mansfield lead to two, but the Hornets got four quick points to lead by six after one.

Mulkern kept the hot shooting started with a three in the second and then Emily Vigeant added a pair of threes before halftime as well. In between, Maggie Danehy got started on the offensive end by crashing the boards and getting five points in the quarter. KP tried to hang around by getting a spark off its bench, with sophomores Caroline Aaron (eight points) and Glaser contributing.

Mansfield led by 15 points at the break and looked to put the game away in the third. Danehy hit a couple of jumpers and Mady Bendanillo scored on a put-back. Mulkern added two more threes and the Hornets pulled away to take a 44-23 lead.

"They're the fastest team we've seen so far," Siggins said, "and I think we're shell-shocked a little first half and I think we adjusted second half. It just wasn't falling for us the way it was the other night. Sometimes it's that and you just have to pick it up in other places."

KP tried to climb back into the game and make things interesting down the stretch. The Warriors went on an 8-0 run to close out the third with O'Connor hitting a pull-up jumper, Aaron getting to the basket, and Veilleux finally able to get some touches around the basket.

The momentum the Warriors gained during that stretch couldn't carry over to the fourth because they just couldn't find the range from the outside. Veilleux hit a jumper off a Faith Roy assist and O'Connor hit a mid-range shot on an inbounds pass from Kendall Mason, but KP wasn't able to significantly cut into the Mansfield lead.

"We played really well on offense in the first half and the start of the third we were great but then we kind of went dead and the defensive intensity for them picked up," Redding explained. "I liked the way we played, they battled back and we had to fight our way through the fourth quarter with all the pressure."

Danehy tried to keep the Warriors at bay when she created three chances on one possession before scoring on an offensive rebound for the third time in the game. "Maggie is just so active on the boards," Redding said. "Meg [Hill] dominated the boards for us but Maggie does it in a very different way with athleticism and great instincts and gets us those extra points."

After knocking down six three-pointers on Tuesday night, Julia Leroux made KP's first three of the night with the game's final shot and got the Warriors as close as they had been since the second quarter.

"This is the first time we've seen it," Siggins said about Mansfield's ability to stop KP from getting out on the break. "I think we outscored them in the second half and that's good, but I attribute a lot of the first half to that shock of how tough they are, how fast they are." The Hornets continue to hang around in the league title race, trailing Franklin by two games with one head-to-head meeting left on the schedule.

"This was a huge road win," Redding remarked. "Every game is like an elimination game. You can't have a hiccup or you're done, so this is a big one for us."

Mansfield (7-3, 6-2) will stay on the road on Tuesday night with a trip to Stoughton, while King Philip (6-3, 5-3) will head to North Attleboro to face the streaking Rocketeers.