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Sports

BEARCAT CLASSIC: Emerald Uponds Liberty

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Emerald's Courtney Scurry, left, prepares for a layup Friday against Liberty at Lander's Finis Horne Arena. (Staff photo by T.M. James)

In the midst of trying to advance in the Bearcat Classic, the Emerald High School girls basketball team also got some preparation Friday for the start of Region 1-AA play in January. The Vikings overcame relatively poor shooting effort for a 48-36 victory over Liberty in the first round of the Bearcat Classic at Lander's Finis Horne Arena.

Emerald will face Ninety Six at 5:30 p.m. today in the semifinals. It will be the third meeting of the season between the two teams after the Vikings won the first two. Emerald joined the Region 1-AA this season and will face Liberty twice more before the season is over. "We'll see them two more times in the region and of course, they'll see us two more times in the region," Emerald coach Anarie Duckett said. "So we'll know what to prepare for and they'll know what to prepare for."

Emerald opened the game on an 8-0 run and held the Red Devils to just one field goal in the first period. Terra Callaham hit back-to-back 3-pointers to open the game and Liberty didn't score until less than four minutes remained in the quarter.

Both teams struggled shooting the basketball in the second quarter. Emerald scored its first basket of the quarter at the four minute mark on a layup by Marissa Callaham. The Vikings then went on a 6-0 run to close the half, keyed by two putbacks by Amber Green, who scored 10 of her game-high 16 points in the first two quarters, primarily in the lane. "I can either jump over somebody or I can box them out, so I think that's where my niche is," Green said.

Green, who hit the game-winning shot for Emerald against Ninety Six on Dec. 12, has evolved into the Vikings' most reliable scorer. "She's real smooth and she likes to take that little jump shot," Duckett said. "You can't say enough about her quickness or her defensive ability. She causes a lot of people to turn the ball over just with her jumping ability itself and she's a real asset."

The Vikings played man-to-man defense in the first half to moderate success. They held Liberty to four field goals as the Red Devils had trouble hanging on to the ball against

Emerald's pressure. Liberty also had several scoring opportunities inside, but missed open shots.

Emerald is primarily a zone defense team, but man-to-man is something Duckett believes the team will need later in the season. "We tried to work a little on our man-to-man and see if we could do a little better on the help side than we had in the past," Duckett said.

LIBERTY (36)

Kasey Finley 10, Eudera Cannon 6, Amber King 4, Becca McGuire 6, Jewel Hendrix 8, Casey King 2.

EMERALD (48)

Terra Callaham 9, Amber Green 16, Courtney Scurry 5, Marissa Callaham 7, Ashley Norton 2, Kalla Flynn 5, Aneisha Bell 2, Tiffany Lane 2.

Liberty 2 6 14 14 ♦ 36

Emerald 13 11 12 12 ♦ 48

3-point goals ♦ Emerald 2 (T. Callaham 2). Fouled out ♦ None. Technicals ♦ None.

Records: L (2-7 overall); E (6-1).