

EHS Girls Record 1st Region Win

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Emerald High School's girls basketball team hasn't gotten off to the start in Region 1-AA it would like, but the Vikings might be back on track following Friday night's game. Emerald was out of sync defensively in the first half, but played better in the second half and pulled away for a 49-31 victory over Liberty at Westview Middle School.

Having lost three straight, including their first two region games against Pendleton and Crescent, winning Friday was important for the Vikings' confidence. "That's a big difference between being 1-2 and 0-3, and the way we played in the first half, I didn't think we were going to pull it off because we were real sluggish," Emerald coach Anarie Duckett said. "Second half we picked it up a bit better and especially fourth quarter."

Emerald (11-7 overall, 1-2 region) led by just one point at halftime, but hit three 3-pointers early in the third quarter, including two by Terra Callaham, to take a two-possession lead, 26-21. "That was really big and helped us out to build up our lead so we could put them away," Callaham said. "It wasn't that tough to get looks, but you've got to work."

Nailing those deep shots against the Red Devils' zone defense proved to be a major momentum shift for Emerald. "That was very important. (Callaham) shot the ball extremely well and gave us just a little bit of cushion to pull away and maybe cruise for just a little bit after that, but there's no cruising with this group," Duckett said. "Hopefully, we'll be able to win again the next one, win the next two and get ourselves back in good position."

Amber Green led the Vikings with a game-high 13 points, while Callaham scored all 10 of her points in the second half.

Throughout the first half, Liberty was able to spread the floor thanks to crisp passes that opened up easy looks under the basket. Those passes evolved into turnovers in the second half, in particular in the third quarter. On three straight possessions in the middle of the fourth quarter, the Red Devils had transition opportunities but missed easy layups.

Compounded with the increased number of turnovers the Vikings defense caused, Liberty had little chance to regroup. "They came out more physical and more aggressive, and we're just not the level yet where we can handle that physical(ity) and not give up and give in," Liberty coach Ali Umbarger said. "We get frustrated off of it, and it creates turnover after turnover. We just go on a bit of downhill slide."

LIBERTY (31): Meghan King 2, Dailey Segers 4, Jewel Hendrix 13, Kasey Finley 2, Eudera Cannon 4, Amber King 6.

EMERALD (49): Amber Green 13, Marissa Callaham 8, Kalla Flynn 9, Jordan Smeal 2, Terra Callaham 10, Courtney Scurry 1, Aneisha Bell 4, Caroline Marcengill 2.

Liberty 10 7 10 4 -- 31

Emerald 11 7 14 17 -- 49

3-point goals -- Emerald 3 (T. Callaham 2, M. Callaham 1). Fouled out -- None. Technical fouls -- None.

Records: L (4-9 overall, 0-3 Region 1-AA); E (11-7, 1-2).