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Sports

## Eagles Pull Away From Emerald

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Greenwood's Courtney Raiford, left, drives to the basket against Emerald's Terra Callaham on Tuesday during the Eagles' 66-32 victory at Lander's Finis Horne Arena. (Staff photo by T.M. James)

For about a quarter, Emerald High School's girls basketball team was able to hold its own with Greenwood, but that's about all the Eagles allowed.

Greenwood outscored Emerald by 30 points over the final three periods and earned a comfortable 66-32 victory over the Vikings at Lander University's Finis Horne Arena.

The Eagles led by just seven following the first quarter, but they began playing a smothering fullcourt defense that shut down the Vikings' scoring options. Greenwood opened the second period on an 11-1 run and Emerald didn't score its first field goal until halfway through the period.

Greenwood coach Susan Thompson hadn't employed the halfcourt trapping defense this season, but wanted to utilize it against Emerald. "We didn't press at all the first (quarter), and that's something new I wanted to try a few times before we go to Hillcrest (tonight)," Thompson said. "We just wanted to make sure they knew what they were doing and tried it a few times tonight."

The approach proved to be effective, and Emerald struggled at times to even get the ball beyond midcourt against the trap. "They picked up their defensive intensity a little bit, and we just kind of crumbled and got out of things we normally do," Emerald coach Anarie Duckett said. "It pushed us out of our offense obviously. We went a little brain-dead on some things we normally do, and they just completely forgot to run certain things that we run."

The Vikings scored 18 points in the first half and Greenwood led by 17 at intermission. Greenwood forward Syteria Robinson, playing out of position at the four spot with Shaniqua Hunter out, keyed a 6-0 Eagles run to open the third quarter and led all scorers with 29 points. "Sy can do that, and she's great about running the floor," Thompson said. "She just seems to have the ability to be where the ball bounces and Sy played out of position at the four spot down in the post, so she stepped up and did her job tonight."

Playing against a difficult Class AAAA opponent like Greenwood was more challenging for Emerald in light of the recent death over the weekend of Emerald math teacher Caleb Wieter. The Greenwood and Emerald boys and girls teams wore black bars on their jerseys and a prayer was

delivered before the girls game in his memory. "It's real tough and a couple of them got upset after we said the prayer and that kind of brought everything back to them, but it's something they've got to work through -- that we've all got to work through," Duckett said. "It's been real tough on everybody."

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