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Sports

Emerald Rolls Past Panthers

By KEVIN FIORENZO/ kfiorenzo@indexjournal.com

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ABBEVILLE -- Emerald High School's girls basketball team can credit junior Aneisha Bell with getting it back into Tuesday's game at Abbeville, even if she didn't recall much of what she had done. Bell scored 13 unanswered points over the course of the first and second quarters to help lead the Vikings to a 63-41 victory over the Panthers in a Region 1-AA matchup.

The win kept Emerald (15-9 overall, 5-4 region) in playoff contention going into its final game of the season Thursday at Walhalla. "We still have the possibility for a three-way tie for second based on what everybody else does and what we do on Thursday," Emerald coach Anarie Duckett said. More performances from Bell like the one she gave Tuesday will help in that regard. She led the Vikings with 24 points, including 14 in the first half.

Abbeville opened the game on an 8-2 run, but Emerald slowly crept back in the game and Bell put the Vikings ahead 10-8 with 2:32 on the clock in the first period. She was the only one on the court to score any points until Abbeville's Brittany Owens, who had 24 points of her own, hit a layup midway through the second quarter, but by that point Emerald was already ahead 21-10. "I didn't know (I scored 13 points in a row)," Bell said. "When they kept passing out to the middle, I was kind of afraid to shoot it at first, but I kept on driving and it kept going in."

Bell was able to get a number of easy looks inside in transition as the Panthers began consistently turning the ball over, something they've struggled with all year. Making matters worse for Abbeville was the fact its starting point guard, Jessica Moore, was kicked off the team after being suspended from school for disciplinary reasons. "That's the problem we've been having. We'll start out well, like when we won two in a row, and in the first half it seemed like we were in it, but then after halftime we just came out cold," Abbeville coach Brenda Jackson said. "That third quarter was the difference in the ballgame."

Abbeville trailed by just seven at halftime, but the Panthers made just two field goals through the first four minutes of the third period and were outscored 19-8 for the quarter, falling behind 46-28. "We beat them at home the first time we played them pretty easily and sometimes it's hard to play them after you've beaten them that easily," Duckett said. "I told them that we had to be more aggressive on defense, get some steals and get some easy baskets because we weren't getting it off our offense."

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