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Sports

Greenwood Overcomes Slow Start

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Greenwood Ariel's Moton, center, drives to the basket between Emerald's Amber Green, left, and Courtney Scurry at Saturday at Lander's Finis Horne Arena. (Staff photo by T.M. James.)

The storyline for the yearly meetings between the girls basketball teams from Greenwood and Emerald high schools might change at some point, but Saturday was not that moment. Just as they have in nearly every matchup with the Vikings, including two games earlier this season, the Eagles once again proved to be the superior team, rolling to a 55-17 win at Lander University's Finis Horne Arena.

Saturday's win was the Eagles' third over Emerald this season. Greenwood also beat the Vikings on Dec. 9 and again in the finals of the Bearcat Classic on Dec. 22. Greenwood (13-1) shot poorly through the first quarter and a half, but the Eagles quickly found their touch and began making buckets in transition off Emerald's turnovers. "I told them, 'Every morning after we play, The Index-Journal says Greenwood has a hard time starting, so let's not let them say that today,'" Greenwood coach Susan Thompson said.

"Now it will say that it took us a whole quarter to get started, but it did. "Probably playing games back-to-back like that is tough on them too, but once they got in the flow they did (well.)"

The Vikings (10-6) managed to pull within four points, 12-8, early in the second but Greenwood closed the half on a 23-2 run keyed by senior Syteria Robinson, who had 14 of her 18 points in the first half and hit two 3-pointers in the second quarter to spark the Eagles' run. "We're just kind of slow to get started some times," Thompson said. "We didn't make any adjustments at halftime. We just continued to hustle, play hard and have fun."

Sticking with their standard trap defense to force turnovers, Greenwood allowed Emerald just five points in the third quarter and entered the final period with a 29-point lead, 44-15. "Defense was the main key for us," Robinson said. "I mean, if you don't have defense, you really can't do anything. Playing hard defense was the

best thing for us.”

Emerald committed two quick turnovers and Greenwood converted for a 4-0 lead to start the game. Marissa Callaham hit a pair of jumpers to tie it up, and the Vikings managed to limit the Eagles to just 12 points in the first period before Greenwood began outplaying them. “We’ve had some close games with them that we just haven’t been able to pull out, but we couldn’t even score 20 points against them tonight. That’s embarrassing,” Emerald coach Anarie Duckett said. “So, I don’t know, their defense was just too much for us (Saturday).”

EMERALD (17): Marissa Callaham 4, Aneisha Bell 6, Amber Green 5, Kalla Flynn 1, Courtney Scurry 1.

GREENWOOD (55): Shay Andrews 16, Ariel Moton 4, Syteria Robinson 18, Courtney Raiford 4, Shaniqua Hunter 6, Maranda Ethridge 3, Alex Tsantakis 2, Jasmine Aull 2.

Emerald 6 4 5 2 -- 17

Greenwood 12 23 9 11 -- 55

3-point goals -- Greenwood 3 (Robinson 2, Andrews 1). Fouled out -- None.
Technical fouls -- None.

Records: E (10-6 overall); G (13-1).