

SPORTS

MARCELINE

Lady Tigers bring home 4th place finish from 2013 Final Four

1st Final Four appearance since 1975 for the program

By Jessica Nelson
Editor

Though his team didn't quite make the round of the Final Four it wanted to, Marceline Lady Tigers head coach Kent O'Laughlin said he was very proud of what his squad accomplished during its 2012-2013 season.

A second half rally came up short for the Lady Tigers in the Class 2 girls third place game against Skyline on March 8 as Marceline finished fourth in the state after a 64-53 loss.

"Had too big of a hill to climb in the second half. The girls played to the bitter end, got back within four in the second half battling, we just simply could not quite get over the hump and I couldn't be more proud of the effort that they gave," O'Laughlin said. "Again, it wasn't our best shooting day. That team was red hot in the first half, shooting well over 50 percent from the stripe and the three-point line. Day in and day out a team isn't going to do that but Skyline it was their day to shooting the ball and they're a good team."

"I'm proud of the effort this bunch gave, I'm proud of these two up here [Morgan McCormick and Abby Gauthier]," O'Laughlin continued.

Shooting woes from the field and the free-throw line haunted the Lady Tigers in both of their Final Four games, as the team shot 30.8 percent (16-for-52) from the field against Skyline and 57.6 percent (19-for-33) from the free-throw line.

Skyline led by 15 early in the third quarter but Marceline found its groove on defense, forcing Skyline out of its offensive sync and steadily chipping away at the lead throughout the quarter. Madison McCormick hit a basket with 5:10 left in the game to pull Marceline within four, 50-46, but Skyline's Madisen Berthower hit both free throws just over a minute later as Morgan McCormick picked up her fifth foul of the game, sending her to the bench. Morgan McCormick finished the Skyline game with a team high 16 rebounds and 15 points.

Gladbach led the team in scoring against Skyline with 20 points, including going seven-for-10 from the free-throw line in the loss.

"They weren't in any kind of a flow after halftime and I thought our girls did a good job adjusting at halftime to what they were doing. That's why we got back within four," O'Laughlin said in the post-game press conference. "The difference, the reason I think more than anything as to why we couldn't finish it off was they hit free throws and we didn't. They shot about 70 percent from the line and we were only in the teens for 33 so we didn't shoot very well from the foul line."

Morgan McCormick scored in the paint for Marceline 16 seconds into the

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— Marceline Lady Tigers head coach Kent O'Laughlin

game that proved to be Marceline's only lead against Skyline. Krista Gideon connected on a pair of free throws a minute into the game, tying the game at two all before Ashley Bishop drained a 3-pointer 27 seconds later to give Skyline its first lead of the game, 5-2.

A late second quarter run by New Haven in the March 7 Class 2 semifinal proved to be the difference as Marceline shot 28.9 percent (13-for-45) in the 49-33 loss. Madison McCormick hit a jumper with 3:49 to play in the second quarter, pulling the Lady Tigers within four, 13-9, but the Shamrocks closed out the quarter on a 12-4 run.

Marceline went four-for-18 (22.2 percent) from the field in the first half against New Haven as the team went seven-for-12 (58.3 percent) from the free-throw line. Madison McCormick led the Lady Tigers in scoring in with 11 points, followed by Kendra Gladbach with 10 points and Morgan McCormick with eight.

"It just wasn't our weekend shooting the ball. I couldn't have asked for them to play harder and to get any better looks; they would get the looks but it just simply would not go," O'Laughlin said. "It just wasn't our weekend to get the ball in the basket. 30 percent on the game and you're not going to beat many teams shooting 30 percent."

Marceline closed out its 2012-2013 season with a 27-5 overall record, the Lewis and Clark Conference title and the program's first Final Four appearance since 1975. Regardless of the final score, O'Laughlin noted his team never quit playing.

"It starts off like I told them in the locker room, I wouldn't be more proud to be a part of anything. It was a group that worked their tail off from start to end, they bought into a system. We started the year off a little rocky there and it took a little time but they bought in and got better and better as the year went," O'Laughlin said. "I'm proud to be associated with them and we had three seniors who led by example and hats off to them for the leadership they provided."

Marceline loses Madison McCormick, Gladbach and Gauthier to graduation in May.

BOX SCORE
SKYLINE 64, MARCELINE 53
 Skyline - 21 15 9 19 - 64
 Marceline - 15 9 14 15 - 53
 Scoring - Gladbach 20 pts., Mo. McCormick 15, Ma. McCormick 9, Sydnee Brooks 6, Gauthier 3
 3-pointers - Gauthier 1, Gladbach 1
NEW HAVEN 49, MARCELINE 33
 Marceline - 5 6 11 11 - 33
 New Haven - 8 17 12 12 - 49
 Scoring - Ma. McCormick 11, Gladbach 10, Mo. McCormick 8, Brooks 2, Gauthier 2
 3-pointers - None



photo by jessica nelson

Seniors Abby Gauthier, Kendra Gladbach and Madison McCormick hold the Class 2 girls fourth place trophy following the Lady Tigers' March 8 game against Skyline at Mizzou Arena.



Kendra Gladbach reaches backwards for a rebound in the second half of the Lady Tigers' March 8 loss to Skyline. Gladbach finished her Marceline basketball career with a team high 20 points against Skyline.



photo by jessica nelson

Students hold their hands up during a Lady Tigers free throw attempt during the second half of the Marceline-Skyline third place game on March 8 at Mizzou Arena.

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