

IMMACULATE GIRLS BASKETBALL

Girls basketball: Montclair Immaculate upsets No. 9 St. Rose by 21

Feb 26, 2021

by Chris Nalwasky

cnalwasky@njadvancemedia.com

Montclair Immaculate hasn't backed down from anybody this year.

While the majority of teams have stuck to localized schedules, the Lions have faced the best of the best in the state such as University, Cherokee, Paul VI, and Saddle River Day, who are all ranked. They lost each of those games, but those contests prepared them for Friday when Montclair Immaculate upset No. 9 St. Rose, 55-34, in Belmar.

"We started playing like we're capable of," Immaculate coach Jimmy Kreie said. "The beginning trials and tribulations have paid off."

St. Rose (9-2) led 14-8 at the end of the first quarter, but it was all Montclair Immaculate after that as it outscored the Purple Roses 47-20 the rest of the way. Kreie said his team's hybrid zone defense stifled St. Rose.



The Lions held Abigail Antognoli to her season-low 14 points and Rosie Scognamiglio to just 10. Four others had just three or two points, respectively.

"We locked up on defense and caused a lot of turnovers," Kreie said. "We came out in the second half in a special zone. Abby and Rosie are very special kids. We locked in on them. We picked up energy."

"I think that's best effort we gave defensively all year."

That defense turned into offense as the Lions were able to record easy buckets inside. Sydney Echevarria-Briscoe was a force as she notched her first double-double of the season with 12 points and 16 rebounds.

"She came in and went off," Kreie said. "She cleared the boards the entire game. She played big."

Tiara Bellamy also scored 11 points while Bukky Akinsola had 10. Akinsola and Echevarria-Briscoe each drained two 3-pointers apiece. Ore Ogunwolere had six points and five

steals.

As a team, the Lions tallied 34 rebounds, 13 steals, seven assists, and a block by Bellamy.

Montclair Immaculate had just two turnovers in the second half.

"We didn't rush," Kreie said. "Everybody did their part."

Despite the abbreviated season winding down, the Lions aren't finished challenging the top teams.

Montclair Immaculate faces No. 10 Manasquan on the road tomorrow, Saturday before taking on No. 2 Trenton Catholic next week.

"We came to challenge shore," Kreie said. "We're an older club now, and we're not backing down from anybody."