

Sports



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Senior No. 23, Aundrea Miller looks down court during a home loss Feb. 4 against St. Mary's. The ladies head to Salem to take on No. 1 Salem Academy in the first round of the state playoffs Feb. 25, tip-off is at 4 p.m.

Cougar loss puts them on road to face No. 1 seed

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Lady Cougars outplay St. Mary's for 2nd in league

The "Star Spangled Banner" being played solo on a French horn seemed to be a sign that this was going to be a good game. The Ken Mann Gymnasium was packed with pride, excitement and dressed in red and black Wednesday night. Even though the Lady Cougars got off to a slow start, only scoring four points in the first quarter, they held the St. Mary's Crusaders to nine with good defense which prevailed throughout the game. At the start of the second quarter, Ibixica Alvarez of St. Mary's hit a 3-pointer and it looked like it

might become a long night for the Cougars. But the Cougs had a better idea; they caught up by starting to hit some close in, open shots and really got the crowd going. Courtney Scott made good on the hoop and the harm for three and Aarika Brooks hit her third free-throw half-way through the period and then the score was 14-18. Next, defensive specialist, Roza Jonas got busy leading a tenacious defense to hold the Crusaders' scoring to a manageable level. Both teams were playing with a high energy level, but it was the Cougars who were willing to push themselves further. Before the end of the first half, Aundrea Miller owned the court by slamming in a difficult layup. As the half ended at 17-20, it was clear from the players' faces and crowd who had the momentum.

After the half, Tori Johnson hit a shot after being fouled by the Crusaders sharpshooter, Adrian

Birmingham, and then with Miller hitting two free-throws of her own, the game was tied. Brooks then laid one in to take the lead that the Cougars would build on the rest of the way. Johnson hit a long two to give her five points in the third and Brooks again with two more free throws along with Jonas dumping in a shot to make the score Cougars 32, Crusaders 23 at the end of the third. Amid the crowd noise level, Miller started the final period with a steal and drove it down for two, then made two free-throws, then a layup through the heart of the Crusaders defense for an 11 point lead. Johnson then took over and converted two on a long pass from Miller, and then hit her signature 3-pointer. St. Mary's coach Richard Vasey called a timeout to extend their season a couple more minutes, with 1:05 left in the game, but by the time the Crusaders Maddie Wheelock had

fouled out and Scott had hit two more from the charity stripe, it was all over, except for the cheering and recording the score, 47-33. The Lady Cougars won the right to travel to Lakeview Friday as second place in the Southern Cascade League. (The winner will take on the first place Honkers in a mirror image rematch of last season's heartbreaker.)

Lakeview plays spoiler again

Just two days after playing a very demanding game at home against St. Mary's, the Lady Cougars were on the bus Friday for the long ride to play their nemesis Lakeview Honkers to begin sorting out their ranking and schedule for the state playoffs. Coach Serena Barry said,

"Illinois Valley (14-9) had a chance to avenge its 2016 loss to Lakeview in the title game, but were outplayed from the beginning." Kenzie Johnston scored a game high 15 points for the (16-8) Honkers, who outscored Illinois Valley in all four quarters. Lakeview committed 19 fouls to Illinois Valley's 10, but with the deeper bench, it worked in their favor as it got a little rough out there at times. The final score was Cougars 27, Lakeview 49. Tori Johnson and Aundrea Miller each scored eight points, Aarika Brooks - five, Courtney Scott - four and Roza Jonas - two. The Lady Cougars have a week to rest and prepare for their state playoff game set for Saturday, Feb. 25. These young ladies, including their coach, have been over-achieving all season. Don't think that they won't keep that going Saturday!

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<p>Art's Red Garter</p> <p>Pool Tourney Tuesdays - 6:30</p> <p>KARAOKE Wednesdays @ 9 p.m.</p>	<p>GUPPY</p> <p>Friday, Feb. 24 5:30 PM</p> <p>from Taylor's Country Store</p>	<p>Wild River HANDCRAFTED FOOD & ALE</p> <p>LIVE MUSIC Saturday the 25th @ 6 p.m.</p> <p>Every Wednesday Open MIC Night 6 - 8 p.m.</p> <p>J Barley Fridays @ 6 p.m.</p>	<p>KARAOKE w/ Steve - OH Friday, Feb. 24 @ 9 p.m</p> <p>Saturday Pool Tourney @ 7</p> <p>Free pool on Sundays</p> <p>Sportsman Tavern</p>	<p>The SPOT</p> <p>Hump day Karaoke w/ Jammer Dave 8-midnight</p> <p>Open Mic w/ B Thursdays @ 7 p.m.</p> <p>OPEN: Tues. - Sat. 6 PM - MIDNIGHT</p>	<p>Ripple Effect Feb. 24 @ 9 p.m., \$5</p> <p>Eat @ McGrew's!</p> <p>541-596-2202</p>
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