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Kochinsky hits milestone, game-winning shot

By Nate Foreman, Mirror Sports Staff

POSTED: January 14, 2010

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NORTHERN CAMBRIA - For a few brief moments Wednesday night at Northern Cambria High School, time stood still for Lady Colts senior Breanna Kochinsky.

But a little more than one quarter later, there was no way to slow it down.

With time winding down in a tie game, Kochinsky took an inbounds pass, killed 10 seconds navigating the floor, found some room, and nailed a fade-away jumper from just beyond the foul line with 2.8 seconds remaining to lift the Northern Cambria girls basketball team over previously unbeaten Penns Manor, 61-59, in a midseason Heritage Conference classic.

"It was just a fast shot. I was trying to get it off before the buzzer," Kochinsky said. "I didn't even expect it to go in, and when it did, I was so happy.

"It felt good just to get it off at the end and have it be such a big night like this."

As it turned out, hitting the game-winner was just the icing on the cake.

Kochinsky scored her 1,000th career point on the first of two free throws with 8.9 seconds left in the third quarter.

Play was suspended briefly to recognize her when she hit the milestone.

"I feel like when I was a freshman, I hardly saw the floor in varsity," Kochinsky said. "Just to improve so much and be able to get 1,000 points, it's a great achievement. It just feels really good to have hard work pay off."

The dramatic finish was set up when Northern Cambria (8-2, 5-1 Heritage) twice blew seven-point, fourth-quarter advantages.

Kayla Gillo scored four of the Lady Comets' 11 points in the frame to pull Penns Manor (8-1, 4-1) within 55-52.


Ariel Rocco responded for the Lady Colts, netting four straight points to rebuild the lead, but costly turnovers and forced shots allowed the Comets to chip away.

"Ball control is so important," Northern Cambria coach Eric Thomas said. "At times we had it, and at times we didn't. Down the stretch we struggled. We did good enough for the win, but we've got to get a lot better at that."

As could be expected in a battle of conference and state powers, play was physical.

Midway through the third quarter, Janae Duchack was fouled hard on a drive to the basket. She left the game with what Thomas described as a "probable broken nose" and "she should only miss limited time."

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"I wasn't really happy with some of the physical play there, but we don't back down from anyone," Thomas said. "At the same time, we I want our girls to play under control and I thought they did that for the most part."

Each of Penns Manor's starters reached double figures - led by Autumn Mattis' 14 points - as the Lady Comets built a 38-34 lead at halftime.

"We weren't on top of our defense, especially in that first half," Thomas said. "I wasn't happy with our defense at all. I thought we could have played much better. That was definitely our focus in the second half."

Rocco added 12 points and Jess Rocco chipped in 11 for Northern Cambria.

Kochinsky, who entered the contest needing only 15 points to reach 1,000, finished with a game-high 18 despite not even starting the game.

An illness forced her to miss a practice last week, causing her to come in off the bench.

"It's a great accomplishment for her," Thomas said of Kochinsky. "The good thing too is I think she only had 58 points as a freshman, so she almost did this in three seasons which is pretty impressive."

But even he feels the night was more special than originally anticipated.

"With Bre hitting that big shot at the end, that's the way to remember a 1,000-point night."

Game notes: Kochinsky was 0-for-6 from the floor and 0-for-1 from the free-throw line in the fourth quarter prior to the game-winning shot. ... The Lady Colts shot 25 percent (4-of-16) from beyond the arc, while the Lady Comets connected on 27 percent (3-of-11). Mattis hit each of Penns Manor's 3s. ... Ariel Rocco and Dunchack are each within 100 points of achieving their own 1,000-point mark.

PENNS MANOR (59) - Au. Mattis 5 1-1 14, Reilly 3 5-6 11, Parfitt 4 2-4 10, Ka. Gillo 6 0-0 12, Kr. Gillo 5 0-1 10, Marshall 1 0-0 2, Myers 0 0-0 0, Am. Mattis 0 0-0 0. Totals 24-62 8-12 59.

NORTHERN CAMBRIA (61) - A. Rocco 4 4-4 12, J. Rocco 4 2-5 11, Stiles 2 0-0 5, Dunchack 3 2-3 8, Sedlock 1 0-0 3, Kochinsky 7 3-4 18, Wolfe 1 0-0 2, Delfonso 0 2-2 2. Totals 22-65 13-18 61.

SCORE BY QUARTERS

Penns Manor 14 24 10 11 - 59

Northern Cambria 12 22 17 10 - 61

3-point goals: Penns Manor 3-11 (Au. Mattis 3), Northern Cambria 4-16 (J. Rocco 1, Stiles 1, Sedlock 1, Kochinsky 1).

Records: Penns Manor (8-1, 4-1 Heritage), Northern Cambria (8-2, 5-1 Heritage).

JV: Penns Manor, 51-17.

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