

McLaughlin lifts St. Joseph's in opener



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FRONTENAC • St. Joseph's junior center Kelly McLaughlin was up to the task Friday afternoon.

With the girls basketball game tied and just more than 30 seconds left to play, McLaughlin picked up a rebound, scored as she was fouled and made the subsequent free throw.

McLaughlin's play lifted the host Angels past Dexter 64-60 in the opener of the St. Joseph's Turkey Shootout.

“I just knew I had to get the rebound, that's all I was focused on,” McLaughlin said. “I just had to get to it.”

The season opener was tied three times in the final quarter before McLaughlin's heroics sealed it for the Angels, the No. 7 team in the STLhighschoolsports.com large-schools rankings.

McLaughlin led all scorers with 27 points, and junior guard Mallory Stock scored 11. Sophomore forward Alex Kerr added 10 for St. Joseph's, which trailed by two after one quarter but then rattled off 17 consecutive points to start the second quarter to lead 27-12.

“We definitely had a lull there in that second quarter,” Dexter coach Chad Allen said. “We got down pretty good. I thought St. Joseph's did a good job sprinting back and getting in their zone because we were definitely trying to push the ball down the floor.”

Senior guard Dakota Reynolds had 21 to lead the Bearcats, including a 4-point play with 17.9 seconds left in the third quarter to pull within 48-41 of the Angels.

The Bearcats forged a tie for the first time since the second quarter when freshman guard Chayla Mosby converted a layup with 4:34 left. But McLaughlin's three-point play in crunch time spelled the difference for the Angels, who wrap up their Turkey Shootout at 4 p.m. Saturday against defending Class 5 state champ Rock Bridge.

“I was thrilled because we were finally getting to the right spots on the floor,” St. Joseph's coach Julie Matheny said. “We got the passes to the right places and we were able to finish it. I think we may have had a little bit of beginner's nerves. You've got to give Dexter a ton of credit, though. They worked so hard to fight back. They always do.”