

Ursuline vs. Chester (PA)

Wednesday, January 25th 2011

by Ann O. Nymous

Chester, PA: The Ursuline girls' basketball team traveled to Chester High School in nearby Chester, PA on Tuesday, for its 6th and final scheduled out-of-state match-up of the 2011- 2012 season. The Raiders were 8-3 overall upon boarding the bus yesterday afternoon in nearby Wilmington, DE. The girls' in-Delaware record was 6-0, while out-of-state they were 2-3, having dropped two 1 point games at the buzzers of both the St. John The Baptist game in the *Diamond State Classic* and last week's Cardinal O'Hara game at UA. Out-of-state games vs. notable regional teams are a strategic part of Coach John Noonan's annual scheduling, in preparation for tougher in-Delaware opponents and the Raiders' inevitable appearance in DE – Girls State Basketball Tournament.

Sit at an Ursuline game and listen to the whispers in the crowd and one would think that the Raiders are unbeatable in-State.....one notable DE Girls Basketball commentator was recently heard to say, courtside, *"There's no way an in-State team can beat these girls!"* No doubt, Coach N would like NOT for his girls to hear such rhetoric, as we all know *"you play 'em for a reason"*....just ask the girls from Cardinal O'Hara, the 10th ranked team in Pennsylvania and a "destination school" for Philly regional basketball talent, which came within 1 second and 1 point of losing to Ursuline, last week. With upcoming games against in-state rival St. Mark's (the teams play twice in February), Caravel, two-time perennial State Champion Sanford, and a repeat game vs. a tough Padua team (earlier game = 52 – 37 UA), the Raiders and their coaches are taking on all comers but taking none for granted, and their effort and performance this afternoon, in Chester, clearly showed it.....

.....Though this battle proved somewhat disappointing as far as Ursuline's out-of-state tune-ups go!!! Chester High School, which boasts a monolithic building, a 1,000 plus student enrollment, a gigantic gym facility, and the nationally ranked Boys Basketball program that plays there, had barely enough players to field both JV and Varsity teams on Tuesday night. The JV team showed 6 girls, that's right 5 starters and one substitute. Of these players 2 – 3 were "swing players" who showed up on the Varsity roster, which brought their number up to 9 - 10 players; several of these "swing players" got meaningful minutes in the Varsity game.

Ursuline had the match in hand early, with the score at the end of the 1st quarter = 19 - 6 UA. The most interesting hic-up for the Raiders occurred with 4:40 left in the 2nd quarter when Freshman Point Guard and floor leader Adriana Hahn picked up her second foul, relatively early, affording Freshman Courtney Wallace some significant first half minutes. By half-time, the score was 29 – 12 and the Raiders,

though not nonchalant, certainly did not demonstrate the same focus, energy, and “defensive swarm” which they displayed last week vs. Cardinal O’Hara.

The 2nd half proved an opportunity for some of the younger Raiders to get on the court and gain valuable game time, with notable “6th Woman” Laura Hurff having her best outing of the year, dropping 9 points on the Clippers. Imani Coles, Kailyn Kampert, Courtney Wallace, and Miranda Hill all had field goals for the Raiders and got in the box-score. Hahn led all Raiders with 18, including three “3’s”. Chester’s Point Guard, #3 Janera Handy played a very composed ballgame in leading her team with 23 points, and was the high scorer for the evening. Other Clippers who contributed were La’Naysia Dixon with 7 points and Camry Adams (a “swing player”) with 6 points. The final score was UA 60 – Chester 39.

While yesterday’s matchup did not, likely, meet Coach Noonan’s objective of putting the UA girls in a tough match-up vs. a renowned out-of-state opponent, he got his girls into an away venue, a big (think St. Mark’s sized) gym, and kept them focused for at least a half. (Notably, there were more Ursuline fans who wandered up I-95 for the late afternoon contest, than there were local fans rooting on the home team!) Hopefully, Chester will rebuild its roster and come to Ursuline for a more competitive rematch, next year, as in years past when the Clippers have been a worthy opponent for their out-of-state nemesis.

Ursuline has games on Thursday and Monday, respectively, vs. Diamond State Athletic Conference Opponents Wilmington Christian and St. Thomas More.....while the team won’t be allowed to look past anyone if the Coaches have their say, most of you www.DelawareGirlsBasketball.com readers are, no doubt, looking past these and looking forward to “the Big One” next Thursday, February 2nd at St. Mark’s High School (JV at 6pm, Varsity at 7:15pm).

Bonus JV Coverage: The Junior Raiders headed up to Chester 8-1 Tuesday, as well; the girls’ in-Delaware record was 7-0, while out-of-state they were 1-1, including a 4 point loss to Archbishop John Carroll in December and a 2 point victory over Cardinal O’Hara’s JV last week at UA. Again, the kids from Chester lacked depth, if not determination, and UA prevailed handily 48 – 26 in a game which, like the Varsity, presented an opportunity for the coaches to substitute liberally and give numerous players some court time. Perennial starters Val Quinones, Courtney Wallace, Miranda Hill, Julia Fury-Bastian, and Lindsay Russell all commanded significant stat lines in two quarters of play, each. More importantly, “new kids” contributing to the box score by finding the bottom of the net included (forgive me if not all inclusive) Rebecca Clark, Kiera Wendel, Christine Ford, Nicole Raiford, and Alyssa Irons. Like the Varsity Raiders, the JV has upcoming opportunities to show its “stuff” vs. good in-state competition in upcoming games vs. in-State St. Mark’s, Padua, Caravel, and Sanford.