

## Heights wins big against Syracuse

Friday, 20 December 2013 11:22

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By JASON EPP

Leader & Times

KISMET — The Southwestern Heights Lady Mustangs turned up the defensive pressure, grabbing 19 steals on their way to a 54-32 win over the Syracuse Lady Bulldogs.

“Number one thing – our defense came to play tonight,” Lady Mustangs coach Barry Mellen said. “We try to represent our home court as best we can and our defense definitely set the tone.”

After a seesaw start that gave the Lady Mustangs an 8-7 lead with just over two minutes left in the first quarter, Heights went on a 12-0 run led by Nelly LaPoint’s threes to end the first quarter and start the second.

Syracuse had a distinct height advantage, but that did not keep the Lady Mustangs from forcing the ball into the post. Heights did not score many points in the paint, but did get to the free throw line from there.

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“We haven’t done that early this season because we were intimidated,” Mellen said. “The last few ballgames we’ve started to understand we have to be balanced, inside and out.”

Heights finished the first half 8-12 at the charity stripe, and held a commanding 30-11 lead at the break.

Heights continued to suffocate Syracuse with their defense, starting the second half with a 15-5 to go up by 29 points with two minutes left in the third.

Even with the convincing win, Mellen says there is a lot of room for improvement with his team.

“Way too many times where two or three are in the right position but the others are not,” Mellen said. “Too many turnovers. We work too hard on defense to give it right back. Probably the biggest thing we have to do is get better at blocking our.”

Jackie Loya led the Lady Mustangs offense with 19 points. Loya was 5-9 from the field, and 8-8 at the free throw line. She also had nine steals and grabbed six rebounds.

Nayelly LaPoint added 12, and was 5-8 from the field, including a pair of threes.

Heights (3-2) now breaks for Christmas and will return to the court Jan. 7th when they host Holcomb.

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