

# Brookfield & Elm Grove

## THIS MONTH

### JANUARY 2022

## Pastor injured in parade shares his story

Offers advice on how to cope with tragedy

By Derek Johnson  
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WAUKESHA — On Nov. 21, the Rev. Patrick Heppe, who serves St. William Parish in Waukesha, found himself lying on West Main Street with dozens of other people who were injured at the Waukesha Christmas Parade.

He was at the event with the Catholic Community of Waukesha, and the group was marching in front of the Milwaukee Dancing Grannies when a red SUV plowed through the crowd.

Heppe said he didn't hear the vehicle, but at some point after he was knocked to the street, a police officer transported him to Waukesha Memorial Hospital so he could get treatment for a concussion.

At the hospital, the 70-year-old parish priest said he started to talk with other patients to figure out what exactly had happened to make him a patient for the

first time in his life. "I don't think I really knew what was going on until I talked with people," Heppe said.

Now, over a month later, Heppe said he hasn't stopped discussing the night with others, although now he mostly does it to help himself and his parishioners come to terms with the night.

"My best therapy has been talking to other people," Heppe said.

He said discussing the event has helped put it into perspective, especially after he came out of shock a few days after Nov. 21.

He said the other thing that has helped him was a bit of advice that a speaker from the Milwaukee Diocese offered him and other parishioners following the tragedy.

"You realize that in trauma situations, you may heal but it's never over," Heppe said.

Especially over the holidays, Heppe said it's important to realize this, and life will be different for the people who experienced the parade tragedy going forward.

But he said people shouldn't wallow in those experiences either. Instead, anyone who experienced the parade



The Rev. Patrick Heppe, who was injured during the Waukesha Christmas Parade, in his office.

should accept whatever emotions arise and then try to move past them, especially if people are feeling anger about what happened that day.

And Heppe said going forward, he also hopes people will remember the good that came from the parade tragedy more than the bad.

He said he's personally seen how Waukesha has come together during the aftermath of parade tragedy, and if people remember that, some good might come out of this ordeal.

"If you focus on the good things, hopefully we'll transition to a better society," Heppe said.

Anyone who wants to discuss the tragedy, even if they aren't religious, can contact the Catholic Community of Waukesha at ccwauk.org. Heppe also encouraged people to contact their local clergy, or the American Red Cross, if they want help getting through these troubling times.

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## Taking it for the road

Area restaurants see increase in takeout during pandemic

By Derek Johnson  
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and  
Kay Dahlke  
Special to Conley Media

WAUKESHA COUNTY —

In the olden days, before the pandemic, if you asked a passerby, chances are they would say that their favorite takeout food was pizza.

But times have changed. Nowadays, out of respect

for COVID, area restaurants are finding that patrons prefer to eat in the safety of their own homes instead of in dining rooms.

Many restaurants have started offering online ordering, curbside delivery, Uber Eats or Door Dash Delivery and have made it easier to order take-out in person.

Chef Michael Feker, who

owns Zesti in Hartland, 2Mesa in Milwaukee and other culinary ventures across Southeastern Wisconsin, said that more and more people are using these services, too. He said that, while there are still plenty of people packing into dining rooms, most people get their dinners to go because they don't want to worry about COVID-related prob-

lems.

"There are so many unknown variables," Feker said.

Feker isn't the only one who's been seeing this new trend, either. According to the National Restaurant Association, the industry overall is recovering from the pandemic, and the move

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Derek Johnson/Conley Media

The Brookfield Junction building, which will house a Coffeerville at a later date, sits on stilts at 2825 N. Brookfield Road after being moved earlier this year.

# New whistle stop

## Coffeerville Company adding location in Brookfield

BROOKFIELD — Coffeerville Company will be adding a whistle stop in Brookfield's Junction Depot.

In the 1800s the Italianate style depot was the centerpiece of Brookfield's business center that served the area's expanding population.

The Depot location is in keeping with Coffeerville's historic vibe. The Coffeerville's Jackson shop, which opened in June 2016, was converted from an 8,000-square-foot 1800s-era log home that had been owned

by the Metz family since 1848.

Like its Jackson location, the Brookfield Coffeerville will offer freshly-roasted drip coffee – breakfast or cabin blend - teas, smoothies made with fruit, vegetables and organic superfoods and other one-of-a-kind specialty drinks.

The menu will also be similar to that of the Jackson location, with a variety of hoagies and home-made bakery free of high fructose syrup, artificial or hard-to-pronounce ingredients.

Coffeerville will also offer

freshly roasted coffee from the shop's roaster.

The shop is slated to open in May of 2022.

In early November the Depot was moved about 350 feet from its original location, to 2825 N. Brookfield Road, and renovations began.

The Depot's claim to transportation fame will continue — residents will have access to a trailhead for the Waukesha County Fox River bike trail and its connection with the city's Greenway Corridor trail system.

# Tavern League, AAA offer programs to thwart drunken driving

## Ride, towing services can get you home safe — for 'free'

By Brian Huber  
Conley Media  
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With the holiday season upon us, there are lots of warnings and reminders about the perils of drunken driving, and grim statistics are easy to find, but getting home from celebrations — not just during the holidays, but all the year through — comes down to one number.

Zero. As in, that's how much it costs you to get home safely and avoid putting others at risk from getting too merry.

Free. As in, the cost of getting a ride home from a Wisconsin Tavern League member tavern or even getting a tow through AAA, even if you're not a member.

### SafeRides

The Tavern League of Wisconsin's SafeRides program sees member taverns help to arrange free transportation for those who are unable to drive home safely. All one need to do is ask, said Pete Madland, director of Outreach for the TLW. What started out as a local effort in Marathon, La Crosse and Dane counties in the late '80s and '90s has gone nearly statewide, with Tavern League chapters in about 63 of the state's 72 counties participating.

The Tavern League reports it provided 42,327 free rides home from 2,006 member locations across the state in 2020-21. But while those rides were free to users, they cost over \$355,000, a TLW report found. Since 2004, over 1 million rides were provided by the program, the TLW said.

The report lists 47 rides given in 2020-21 for Washington County, with an average cost of \$18.51 and 25 participating establishments. Ozaukee County members numbering nine provided 159 rides at an average cost of \$15.91. No numbers were provided for Waukesha County, with the TLW report showing 21 participating members.

Madland said it is not just for drivers who may be drunk, but also those under the influence of other substances or who feel they can't get themselves home safely.

In 1999, then-Gov. Tommy Thompson signed legislation authorizing a \$5 surcharge on every OWI conviction, which has since risen to \$77, to fund 80% of the costs of the Safe Ride program, Madland said, with local League chapters and members raising the rest.

"It's at no cost to taxpayers. ... This is a great example of government and private businesses working together to address a problem," Madland said.

Find taverns participating in the SafeRide program at [tlw.org/saferide](http://tlw.org/saferide).

Madland said the SafeRide program sees users leave their cars at a scene and get a ride to their home or hotel — it is not for bar hopping.

### 'Last line of defense' against OWI

AAA is also offering what it calls "the last line of defense to keep impaired drivers off the road." Its Tow to Go program will be available this holiday season for revelers who want to get themselves and their vehicles home safely with-

out driving.

Wisconsinites can call 855-2-TOW-2-GO or 855-286-9246 for a ride between Dec. 24 and 6 a.m. Jan. 3, AAA announced in a press release.

When called, a tow truck transports the would-be impaired driver and their vehicle to a safe place within a 10 mile radius. The service is free, yet AAA asks that it be treated as a back-up plan.

Although AAA Director of Public Affairs Nick Jarusz said the service wasn't offered last year, in the past it has removed more than 25,000 impaired drivers from the road.

AAA cited figures from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that showed during the 2019 Christmas and New Year's Day holiday periods, there were more drunk-driving-related fatalities — 210 — than during any other holiday period that year across the U.S.

"AAA is proud to provide this life-saving program during the holidays. Yet we still urge people to identify a safe ride home before they party, and treat Tow to Go as their last resort," AAA said.

But AAA service vehicles are limiting passengers to one per vehicle, with face mask/covering, following COVID-19 safety protocols. Additional passengers must make other arrangements.

Appointments cannot be scheduled in advance to use Tow to Go. It is designed as a safety net for those who did not plan ahead. AAA advises to always choose a designated driver before celebrating. In some situations, AAA may need to make other arrangements to get an individual a safe ride home. Tow to Go may not be available in rural areas or during severe weather, AAA said.

# Marcello launches bid for Brookfield mayor

BROOKFIELD — Former Brookfield Alderman David Marcello has launched a bid to be the city's next mayor, challenging incumbent Steve Ponto.

Marcello, a three-time alderman and former Elmbrook School Board member, said in his announcement the next mayor must keep seeking and implementing new ideas to ensure that the city continues to be an attractive place to live and work. He drew attention to land use in particular as a topic of focus, citing Brookfield Square, city building height regulations and green space allocation.

Marcello was critical of Ponto's support in 2020 for a resolution that, if approved, would have asked Waukesha



Marcello

County government to impose an order requiring masks in buildings when not possible to keep a six-foot distance from others and not in the same household. He was also critical of Ponto's call for removing the property tax increase controls imposed by the state Legislature.

A lifetime Brookfield resident and businessman, Marcello promised to "bring the mayor's office back into the view of those it governs for the good of the governed and those who do the governing."

# County municipalities rank highly in tax friendliness

By Jake Ekdahl  
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WAUKESHA — Waukesha County is home to six of the top 10 tax friendliest municipalities in Wisconsin. That's according to a new study by the financial technology firm SmartAsset, analyzing the most tax friendly places for retirees.

Pewaukee, Delafield, Hartland, Brookfield, Oconomowoc and Muskego all made the top 10 list, coming in second, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, and tenth respectively.

SmartAsset's study analyzed how tax policies of each community impacted a theoretical retiree with an annual income of \$50,000. This income amount is comprised of \$15,000 in Social Security benefits, \$10,000 from a private pension, \$10,000 in wages and \$15,000 from a retirement savings account such as a 401(k) or an IRA.

According to the study, a retiree with an annual income of \$50,000 living in Pewaukee would expect to pay \$7,971 in income taxes and have a property tax rate of 1.34%. They would also expect to pay \$736 in sales tax and \$386 on fuel taxes. This metrics give Pewaukee a composite retirement tax friendliness index score of 36.57. Social Security in Wisconsin is not taxed.

Pewaukee narrowly missed the mark for best in state, falling just short of Richfield, which earned a score of 37.01.

All but one municipality in the state's top 10 are in southeastern Wisconsin. The one exception is Hudson, in the northwestern extremity of the state.

The property tax rate in SmartAsset's study was calculated by dividing the median property tax rate paid by median home value for each city. Richfield reported that based on 2020 U.S. Census statistics, the median home value in the village was approximately \$323,700 and the village's mill rate was \$1.80 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Fuel taxes were determined using vehicle miles traveled, miles driven per capita, nationwide average fuel economy, average gallons of gas used per capita and fuel tax.

To check out the full findings of the SmartAsset story, visit: <https://rb.gy/fqxutd>.

## To go

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to mobile meals is a key driver for that recovery.

In 2019, restaurants and taverns combined for \$864.3 million in sales, the National Restaurant Association said in its 2021 mid-year update in August. That figure dropped to \$649 billion in 2020 as the pandemic took hold, but rebounded to a projected \$789 billion.

Access added by technology, like apps on phones, added to the convenience and sense of security of grabbing food to go means more people are getting dinner on the drive, too.

Although takeout or delivery was the often the only option for restaurants during the pandemic, customers are now going that route more than ever while on-premises dining has improved but is still a less-preferred option, the restaurant group reported.

### Takeout more prevalent

Takeout dining is now more prevalent than dining in, too, the restaurant association reported. Before the pandemic, 58% of people reported getting takeout or delivery for dinner in the previous week, with 37% getting lunch to go, and 28% doing the same for breakfast. That compared to 60% dining in for dinner, 39% for lunch, and 26% for breakfast.

In August, 60% reported getting dinner via takeout or delivery in the prior week, while 48% ate in a restaurant. And 43% had lunch to go while 28% ate in an establishment, and 31% took breakfast on the run versus 19% in-store.



Derek Johnson/Freeman Staff

Donna Sorce, who works at Rochester Deli in Waukesha, prepares a to-go meal.

Area restaurants have seen this trend firsthand, too. Heather Thomas, a manager at Jimmy's Grotto at 314 E. Main St. in Waukesha, said that business slowed down during the pandemic, and that more and more customers have been ordering their dinner to go.

"It's been pretty steady ever since," she said.

And down the road, Dan Strackbein, the owner of Rochester Deli at 143 W. Broadway in Waukesha, said the restaurant's dine-in and dine-out services suffered during the pandemic. But lately, as more and more people want to eat profes-

sionally prepared food, Strackbein said that business has been booming to the point where they've had to turn away catering gigs.

"We're back up to 100%," Strackbein said.

Most restaurants offer their full menu online for ease in ordering. Placing an order is easily done online or by calling the restaurant of your choice. Many offer curbside pickup, so diners don't need to go into the establishment to pick up their orders.

Bon appetit!

Contributing:  
Brian Huber, Conley Media



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THIS MONTH

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Derek Johnson/Freeman Staff

A home in Elm Grove at 1255 Lakeside Drive that was recently listed for \$3.5 million on Dec. 23.

# Elm Grove home listed for \$3.5 million

ELM GROVE — An Elm Grove home that used to belong to the Milwaukee Bucks’ physician is now on the market for \$3.5 million.

It’s the most expensive home for sale in the village by about \$1 million, according to Relator.com, and is being sold by First Webber Realty.

According to the home’s listing page, the 7,880-square foot house at 1255 Lakeside Drive has 13 rooms, a 3.5-car garage and multiple recreation spaces in its lower level. It was

built in 1995, and features a wine tasting room, a four-seasons room and au pair suite with a dedicated stair-case.

It’s seated on 2.16 acres of land within the Indian Hills neighborhood, and it even has a walking path and faces a pond. In 2020, the property taxes for the home were \$45,695, according to First Webber, and it sits within the boundaries of the Elm Grove School District.

In addition to being an impressive piece of archi-tecture, the property

records from Waukesha County also show that the property belongs to the David and Suzanne Haskell Trust. Haskell, who was a doctor who died in 2018 according to his obituary, was the Milwaukee Bucks’ team physician for over 30 years starting in 1974. He also served in the U.S. Army National Guard Reserve, and worked in the field of orthopedics for 46 total years.

Anyone interested in look-ing at the home can do so at <https://bit.ly/3pc9bjQ>.

## ELM GROVE

# Judge rules again for citizens in direct-legislation effort

Petition seeks to have public works projects over \$1 million subject to referendum

By Brian Huber  
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WAUKESHA — A Waukesha County Circuit Court judge on Dec. 17 again ruled for Elm Grove residents seeking to force a public vote on a measure that would submit all village public works projects costing more than \$1 million to a binding referendum.

In January, residents Michael Rohr, Marc McSorley and Jan Termuehlen filed suit against the village and its clerk, Michelle Luedtke, seeking for a judge to order the Village Board to approve the matter or schedule it for a referendum. The suit came after organizers filed a petition Oct. 21, 2020, asking that all public works projects requiring over \$1 million in spending be sub-jected to a binding referen-dum.

Luedtke certified the peti-tion Nov. 4, 2020. But the next day, Luedtke amended her findings, saying the pro-posed ordinance was “insuf-ficient.”

According to documents in the suit, the rejection was based on the fact that such a requirement conflicted with an ordinance passed Oct. 26 — five days after the direct-legislation petition was filed — that set the limit at \$5 mil-lion to trigger a binding referen-dum; there were inconsis-tencies with state law and the proposed ordinance was ambiguous.

The plaintiffs filed suit in January 2021, alleging the Village Board failed to act on it within 30 days of the Nov. 4 certification.

The village sought to dis-miss the action, arguing because the clerk found the proposed ordinance insuffi-cient and not in proper form, she didn’t forward it to the Village Board; therefore the board had no duty to act on it, nor could they.

In May, Circuit Court Judge Michael O. Bohren ruled for the plaintiffs.

But the next month, both sides again asked Bohren to rule in their favor; following the Village Board’s decision May 26 to decline the pro-posed ordinance and not put it to a referendum. Accord-ing to a June 14 brief filed in its renewed motion to dis-miss the case, the village’s rationale is the proposed ordinance with a \$1 million threshold conflicts with the one the village passed with a \$5 million threshold for a referendum, is ambiguous and inconsistent with Wis-consin statutes. It said the \$5 million ordinance was passed Oct. 24, setting up a conflict if the \$1 million threshold sought by the peti-tion certified Nov. 4 were to be considered, as the direct legislation would repeal an ordinance already set by the Village Board.

Further, the village said, the clerk forwarded her cer-tification to the Village Board as directed, the Vil-lage Board made a policy

decision based on its under-standing of the law and denied the petition, so both the clerk and the board actu-ally complied with Bohren’s May order, rendering the mat-ter moot, the village argued in a brief submitted by its attorney, Remzy Bitar.

But Jim Hammes, attor-ney for the plaintiffs, also filed a brief June 14 arguing that the judge should man-date that the village approve the petition or put it to a vote at the next election, which was in November. Hammes argued once a petition on a proposed ordinance is filed with the municipal clerk, the law on direct legislation precludes a municipality from adopting an ordinance on the same subject matter to get around the require-ment that it either be passed or put to the citizens for a vote.

“Indeed, to do so would render the initiative proce-dure as established by (state statutes on direct legisla-tion) meaningless,” Hammes wrote.

Following a hearing Dec. 17, Bohren issued the writ ordering the Village Board to either pass the petition or put it to a vote.

But he also issued “an injunction preventing the Village from entering into any public works contracts,” according to online court records. Bohren ordered that a formal motion be filed by the plaintiffs by Jan. 7, with a reply by the village due two weeks later, a sur-rebutal by the plaintiffs due by Jan. 28 and hearing set for Feb. 7.

Neither Bitar nor Hammes returned messages seek-ing comment before press time.

# Comfort and Joy Ornament Project available to Waukesha community

By Nikki Brahm  
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WAUKESHA — A new art therapy project is available to the Waukesha commu-nity in response to the trau-matic impacts of the Nov. 21 Waukesha Christmas Parade.

The project comes from Mira Newell, an art thera-pist, in partnership with the Red Cross and Wisconsin Art Therapy Association’s Social Action Committee.

“In the trauma response work that I have done in dif-ferent parts of the world, I have found art to be a pow-erful medicine for those things that words won’t quite wrap around,” Newell said.

“In the wake of chaos and fear and pain, there is a great silence, an empty can-vass upon which we can paint the reality we wish to see. We have the opportu-nity to create a world of com-fort and joy (the parade’s intended theme) and to speak words of love and compassion. I believe that this is the greatest gift we can give to ourselves and to the children and young peo-ple struggling to come to terms with all that has hap-pened.”

The project consists of a template available to the community online. The tem-plate is used to create two paper ornaments with mes-sages of hope and healing. Community members are



An example of a completed “healing tree.”

## ‘Healing Trees’ in area

Completed ornaments can be taken to any one of the following participating businesses that have “Healing Trees.”

- Martha Merrell’s Books and Toys
- Plowshare Fair Trade Marketplace
- Allol! Chocolat
- Guitar for Life Cafe
- Waukesha Civic Theatre
- Dave’s Restaurant
- Mary Jane’s Boutique
- A Stroke of Genius Painting Studio
- Thomas Press Inc.
- Otto’s Art Academy
- Vinyl Vault
- Alchemy Artisan Works

For more information and to download the templates, visit <https://wiartherapy.org/events>.

encouraged to keep one ornament and gift the sec-ond to the community.

Businesses through-out downtown Waukesha have been given “Healing Trees” with bare branches to sym-bolize grief and sadness.

“Our vision is that these trees will slowly fill with ornaments as participants

drop them off, bringing comfort and joy,” Newell said.

Thomas Press has donat-ed 400 printed ornament templates which are being distributed to area schools. Pre-printed templates are also available at Martha Merrell’s Books & Toys to take home.



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PREP BOYS BASKETBALL: Brookfield Central 71, Brookfield East 56

# Rohde brings the heat against East

Lancers senior scores 29 in win

By Jim Hoehn  
Freeman Correspondent

BROOKFIELD – Brookfield Central had an edge in experience and height over crosstown rival Brookfield East — and each advantage included Andrew Rohde.

Rohde, a 6-7 senior guard, poured in 29 points as the host Lancers pulled away in the second half for a hard-earned 71-56 victory over East in a Greater Metro Conference boys basketball game Dec. 17 before a packed house at Central.

“This environment is unlike many others,” Central coach Dan Wandrey said. “The gym’s packed, everybody’s ramped up, so it’s nice to have competitive kids and have composure and I thought they handled it really well.”

Central, ranked ninth in Division 1 in the wissports.net state poll, improved to 3-0 in the conference and 5-0 overall. Seventh-ranked East, playing without injured senior swing player Dan Gherezgher, its second-leading scorer, fell to 1-3 in the conference and 2-3 overall.

“That was our goal, just to try and defend as hard as we could and try to figure it out a little bit on the fly here tonight,” said East coach Joe Rux. “I thought that overall, our kids fought pretty hard and now we just keep building from there. But obviously they’re a good team that’s disciplined and is playing really well right now.”

East, which started three juniors, a sophomore and a freshman, jumped out to an 18-12 lead behind a flurry of 3-pointers and stayed close throughout the half.

One possession midway through the first half was indicative of both the Spartans offense and Lancers defense. Following a three-point play by Rohde, the



Kenny Yoo/Special to The Freeman

Bennett Murray of Central reaches for a loose ball against Thomas Pluemer of East during a Greater Metro Conference rival basketball game at Brookfield Central

Spartans worked the ball for 58 seconds before getting a jumper from Matt Schmainda that tied it 20-20.

“They’re a really well-coached team and the offense they run is really well-equipped for their players because they’re great shooters,” Rohde said. “We had the scout team run against us in practice, do the same thing, so we worked on going through those screens and trying to defend it as hard as we can.”

Bennett Murray score on a reverse layin with 1.8 seconds left to put Central up 35-31 at the break.

“What I was most disappointed in was at the beginning, we weren’t exactly following the game plan on how we wanted to defend,” Wandrey said. “We made that adjustment the second part of the first half, and then I thought the second half our defense was outstanding.”

The Spartans pulled within 40-38 on a 3-pointer by Michael Francken, but Central answered with a 12-1 run. Rohde capped the surge with a three-point play to make it 52-39 with 9:36 remaining.

Robert Bloom scored on consecutive rebound putbacks and Rohde drove for a layin to push the lead to 63-46, but Schmainda hit back-to-back 3-pointers and Nollen

Tabaska added a free throw to cut the lead to 63-53 with 4:15 remaining.

“We knew they were going to make a run, so during that free throw, right after they hit that last three and they were at the run, we just kind of regrouped and everybody calmed down and got ourselves back together,” Rohde said.

But the Spartans missed their next six shots, including four from beyond the arc, and Rohde sandwiched a pair of scoring drives around two free throws to push the lead to 69-53.

Schmainda finished with 19 points, including five 3-pointers, sophomore guard Andrew Graf had 16 points and Tabaska 12.

Jack Daugherty, a 6-7 sophomore forward, added 14 points for the Lancers.

Rohde, who was a key varsity reserve as a 6-foot freshman, scored on a variety of drives, converted a pair of three-point plays, hit two first-half 3-pointers, and was 5-of-6 from the line.

“He’s a very skilled player,” Rux said. “He does a great job of not only shooting it, but he’s crafty in getting to the rim. Obviously, that presents a problem. I thought we actually defended him halfway decent, to be honest. There were times where we were right there.”

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL: Brookfield East 53, Brookfield Central 25

# Spartans claim victory in crosstown matchup

By Rob Reischel  
Freeman Correspondent

BROOKFIELD — For Brookfield Central girls basketball coach Mallory Liebl, 11 minutes felt like 11 months.

For East boss Tyler Sexton, the time just flew by.

The visiting Spartans held the Lancers without a point for 11 minutes, 15 seconds during the second half of their Greater Metro Conference showdown Dec. 17. When the mother of all droughts finally ended, East had blitzed Central with a 16-0 run.

That burst helped the Spartans push a five-point lead to 21 and cruise to a 53-25 win.

“We’ve said all year if you can play great defense, you can win any game,” East coach Tyler Saxton said. “Even if shots aren’t going in, you can win every game.”

“These kids are watching film, figuring out who likes to do what, who dribbles with what hand, who’s shooting from where. It’s impressive. So really it’s the girls that are putting the time in to know the other team’s personnel as well as the coaches do.”

The crosstown rivals entered the night as the last two unbeaten teams in the GMC. East’s impressive showing helped it improve to 5-0 in the conference and 8-1 overall, while Central slipped to 3-1, 5-3.

East junior forward Annika Pluemer led all scorers with 23 points, including 17 in the second half. Sophomore guard Shae Kelley added seven points and eight rebounds, while three other Spartans scored at least five points.

Senior guard Alina Prusko led Central with six points.

The Spartans — who play almost all man-to-man with a dusting of 1-3-1 zone — did almost everything correctly during their run. And it’s no coincidence that



Kenny Yoo/Special to The Freeman

Annika Pluemer of East goes for a lay-up against Alina Prusko of Central during a Greater Metro Conference rival basketball game at Brookfield Central

Mike Kelley — one of the top defenders in college basketball earlier this century while at the University of Wisconsin — is now an assistant coach at East and helps run the defense.

Central, which trailed, 23-15, at halftime, pulled within 25-20 after sophomore forward Grace Corragio drilled a left corner three-pointer with 15:25 left in the second half. Amazingly, the Lancers went the next 11 minutes, 15 seconds without scoring as East embarked on its 16-0 run.

In that stretch, Central went 17 straight possessions without a point. The Lancers shot 0-of-13 from the floor in that time, turned the ball over seven times and fell behind, 41-20.

“It’s definitely a credit to them,” Liebl said. “They came ready to play and had a good game plan and put us in positions where we struggled to score.”

“Right now, we just can’t string together enough scoring and enough offense. We’ll keep working, but it’s been a struggle.”

While Central struggled, East’s offense got rolling.

Pluemer had seven points in that stretch, while Kelley added four. Junior post Maddie McGath had three points and freshman guard Addison Doyle added two.

Central’s Brynne Peterson finally ended the drought with a three-point shot that made it 41-23. Then East smacked the Lancers with another 12-0 burst as its lead grew to 53-23.

In all, the Spartans’ surge was 28-2 over a 14-minute stretch.

East scored five straight points late in the first half — a three-ball from Doyle and a driving lay-up by Pluemer — to take a 23-13 lead. But Central crept back within 25-20 early in the second half and it appeared this crosstown showdown would be a dandy.

Then, of course, came Central’s famine.

The win gave the Spartans seven straight games by an average of 20.9 points per game. They allowed just 35.0 points per game in that stretch.

If those numbers aren’t scary enough, these words from Saxton might be.

“I don’t think we’ve come close to reaching our potential yet,” he said. “We haven’t put it all together, but it’s an incredibly talented group, super humble group, tight group, super coachable. Did I expect to be sitting here where we’re at? Kind of, but you never know. But they put the work in, so our potential is limitless.”

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