

A group of underclassmen kept the Eastern Lady Musketeers in Tuesday's (Jan. 14) game against visiting Charlestown, but it was a group of seniors that helped seal the 60-58 over-time victory. "That is a great high school ball game," said Eastern Head Coach Mike McBride. "Obviously, it's better to be on the winning side of it, but both teams really battled. Charlestown is a good team. This game came down to whoever had the ball last and fortunately it was us." With the score tied at 51-all and time winding down in regulation, Eastern's Katie Ernstberger had her pocket piked by Charlestown's Kaitlynn Henning.

Henning drove the length of the floor and scored what seemed to be the winning basket with 4.3 seconds remaining.

Turnabout being fair play, Ernstberger took the ball on the in-bounds play, drove the length of the floor and earned a trip to the free throw line with one-tenth of a second remaining.

Ernstberger hit both free throws, tying the score at 53-all and sending the game into over time.

"You better make them!" that's what was going through my mind," she said.

The Lady Musketeers' Brooke Rodewig scored the first four points in over-time giving her team a 57-56 advantage.

Eastern maintained the lead thanks to Rebekah Feist. She grabbed an offensive rebound and then hit one of two free throws keeping the margin at two, 58-56 with less than a minute remaining.

The Lady Pirates worked the ball into the paint and tied the score at 58-all off a basket by Justice Burdin.

Eastern had the ball with 43 seconds remaining. Head Coach Mike McBride told his team they were going to run the offense and the only way there were to shoot is if they got a wide-open layup. If the open look didn't develop, he'd then take a time out.

The latter is what happened and during the time-out he drew up a play for Ernstberger to get to the rim.

"I told the girls that every Charlestown player is going to be drawn to (Katie) so they had to be ready to grab the rebound," McBride said.

Things unfolded, just as McBride anticipated. Ernstberger used a high ball screen from Brooke Rodewig drove the lane and four Lady Pirates moved her way.

The shot was long and Hamilton grabbed it in front of the rim and put it in as the horn sounded, sealing the win.

"I was there waiting for Katie to dish it to me," Hamilton said. "I thought maybe she got fouled, but I went up and grabbed it and it is just so exciting!"

Ernstberger said when the ball left her hand she knew there was a teammate under the rim.

"It means a lot," Ernstberger said. "It's a big conference win and it means a lot. It's good to get a conference win here."

Ernstberger, Feist, Hamilton, Rodewig were all the heroes late, but several other players helped put the Lady Musketeers in the position they were.

Trailing by four, 32-28, McBride called on sophomore Morgan Martin, freshman Taylor Drury and junior Kaitlyn Stewart.

All three, with the help of another sophomore, Bailey England got EHS headed in the right direction.

The biggest impact from a scoring standpoint came from Drury.

She had a career high 12 points, seven of which came during a third quarter run that saw the four-point deficit turn into a five-point lead heading into the final quarter.

Aiding in the building of the lead was England who scored two off a steal and five points from Ernstberger.

Charlestown never went away, however, and continued to battle throughout the fourth quarter.

Ernstberger finished the game with 23 points and she played every minute of the game.

McBride said he was happy to see his senior guard taking the reigns of the team.

"The third quarter for Katie was huge," McBride said. "We were going to stick with the ball screen action until they made an adjustment and they weren't making much of an adjustment. Tonight's game is just validation for Katie, because she has just worked so hard to get herself to that position. Not every kid would want to be at the line trailing by two, but Katie wanted it. She took hold of the moment and knocked them down."

McBride said while certain players will get credit for Tuesday's win, he knows everyone who stepped on the floor contributed.

"Our group is coming along," he said. "We have a lot of depth now that Kaitlyn Stewart is progressing and building confidence. I trust our girls. I trust them to make plays and understand the game. I think tonight it showed, when we play with confidence we are really good. Everybody did a phenomenal job."

Rodewig had her second consecutive double-double scoring 10 points and grabbing 12 rebounds.

Eastern is 9-5 on the season and were back in action Tuesday, (Jan. 21) at Austin.