Lexi Gussert drives to the net during Forest Park's decisive third quarter rally against Bark River-Harris Nov. 30. The Lady Trojans outscored the Broncos 23-7 in that quarter and won 63-57.

CRYSTAL FALLS—Lexi Gussert shouldn't expect a Christmas card from Bark River-Harris' basketball team. Not after what she did to them Nov. 30.

The Broncos had Forest Park on the ropes at the Eddie Chambers Gym, building up a 13-point lead in the first half—only to see Lexi and the Lady Trojans dominate the third quarter 23-7 and go on to a 63-57 win. __PUBLIC__

Lexi scored 15 of FP's 23 points in the third quarter and 41 of its 63 overall. Her 41 points may be a Forest Park single-game record—Coach Jeff Syrjanen didn't know as of Saturday morning.

Combined with their 50-34 win over North Central on Nov. 27, the Trojans are 2-0 both in the Skyline Conference and overall. Don't forget, this is the team that had a preseason shorter that anyone else's.

Rematch time: The Bark River game was their first encounter since the Lady Trojans edged the Broncos 50-47 in the regional title game last March 8.

The Trojans led 7-4 early, but Bark River rallied with a 12-0 run to take a 16-7 lead. As that was going on, FP sophomore guard Adel Isaacson aggravated a lower back problem and left the game.

Isaacson is one of only three varsity-tested Trojans—the others are Gussert and Kendra Campbell (on crutches with an ankle injury). Once Isaacson left, Forest Park was unsteady, and Bark River made the most of it, forcing turnovers and running fast breaks.

"We seemed to be rushing against them," said Syrjanen. "We had a lot of turnovers—15 in the first half. A lot of it had to do with our young team that hadn't faced that pressure yet." Bark River figured out FP's press, beat it and got easy baskets.

The Broncos led by 12 early in the second quarter. FP steadied a bit and cut the lead to seven, but BRH came back to lead 37-24 at halftime. Sarah Madalinski led the Broncos' romp with 20 points in the first half.

New plan: At halftime, Coach Syrjanen told his troops there is plenty of time to come back—and switched to a man-to-man defense, focusing on Madalinski and Kylie Van Brocklin, who combined for 31 of Bark River's 37 first half points.

The new defense helped, Forest Park was more composed, and Bark River lost momentum, especially after getting called for seven fouls in the first 4½ minutes. "What Bark River did to us in the first half," said Syrjanen, "we did to them in the second half. I felt our energy was a little better than theirs."

FP broke the Broncos' press much better after halftime and wasn't getting trapped. Kelsi Hendrickson helped get the ball upcourt and set up FP's half-court offense.

Sam Nylund and Sierra Robarge had big baskets for FP, and then there was Lexi. She had 10

of FP's 12 points early in the third quarter, including two treys from the right. She later added another two and another trey to put FP ahead for good—the Trojans led 47-44 after three.

Creativity: "We just seemed to be able to get her open more in the second half," said the coach, "or else she created a lot of it herself. She moves so well on the floor and creates and finds openings for herself.

"When they were covering her, she was able to find teammates for easy shots."

Bark River battled back to tie it at 53, but FP scored the next nine on Maria Stankewicz's outlet hoop, Jessica Bawyn's free throws, Robarge's 12-footer and Gussert's drive. That wrapped up the win.

Gussert was spectacular, of course, and her teammates rallied. "It takes a team to win that game," said the coach, "and we had a complete team effort, top to bottom. Everybody who was on the floor was giving it all they had all night long."

Team stats: FP: FG 25-65, 38%; 3's, 5-10; FT, 8-15. Broncos: FG, 18-80, 23%; 3's, 3-13; FT, 18-26.

FP stats: Lexi Gussert, 41 pts (16-26 FG, 5-8 3's), 14 rebs, 3 stls, 3 asts, 3 blks; Sierra Robarge 10 pts, 4 rebs, 3 stls; Jessica Bawyn, 6 pts, 7 rebs; Sam Nylund, 5 rebs, 3 stls; Maria Stankewicz, 5 asts. BRH scoring: Sarah Madalinski, 31; Kylie Van Brocklin, 12.

Broncos	20	17	7	13	--	57
Trojans	11	13	23	16	--	63

Jetpack: In the season opener against North Central, Forest Park broke out to an early 10-3 lead. The aggressive Jets rallied to tie it 12-12 early in the second quarter but put FP in the bonus moments later.

The Lady Trojans dominated for the rest of the half, 22-7, to lead 34-19 at intermission. They made hay at the line (9 of 11) in the second frame. Gussert scored 10 in that quarter, and Sam Nylund, in her first varsity game, had six.

"We tried to up-tempo the game early," said the coach, "and it got us off to a good lead. We got them in a little foul trouble. And our quickness—you can see we're going to be a little quicker team this year."

Neither team made much of a run in the second half, and for about six minutes the score was stuck at 42-28.

Nice debuts: Gussert led with 20 points—she missed a few minutes due to fouls and later had leg cramps. Bawyn backed her up with 10, and Isaacson and Nylund both scored eight.

Nylund has been moved from guard to forward this year and did well in her varsity debut, and so did Bawyn at center. "We're really pleased how our young kids played tonight."

Last year, the Lady Trojans lost its first two games, at North Central and Bark River. "It took us out of the conference run right off the bat. Now we control our destiny."

Team stats: FG, 16-52, 31%; 3's, 1-5; FT, 18-22, 82%. Jets FG 12-57, 21%; 3's, 1-5, 20%; FT 9-15. Rebs: FP 30, NC 22.

Trojans stats: Lexi Gussert, 20 pts, 9-10 FTs, 10 rebs, 6 asst, 7 stl; Jessica Bawyn, 10 pts, 5 rebs; Adel Isaacson, 9 pts, 3 rebs, 3 asts; Sam Nylund, 8 pts, 8 rebs. NC scoring: Morgan Wells 11, Darcy Rochon, 10; Dana Rochon, 9.

Jets	9	10	9	6	--	34
Trojans	12	22	8	8	--	50

Coming up: The Lady Trojans are on the road for three, visiting Carney-Nadeau (Dec. 4), Kingsford (Dec 7) and Mid Peninsula (Dec. 11). Their next home game is with Watersmeet Dec. 14.

Even with the short preseason, the Lady Trojans will be very busy in December. By the time Santa goes down the chimney, FP will have played eight of its 20 regular season games