The Lady Trojans defend their basket during the game against Carney-Nadeau Jan. 28. Kelsi Hendrickson (14) and Adel Isaacson (30) pursue the dribbler, with teammates Lexi Gussert and Kendra Campbell (15) guarding the lane.

CRYSTAL FALLS—A 12-0 scoring run midway through the second half proved decisive Jan. 31, as Kingsford dealt Forest Park's girls team its first loss of the season, 52-51, here Jan. 31.

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On Jan. 28, the Lady Trojans had no trouble defeating Carney-Nadeau 78-35. They enter this week with a 14-1 record and are 10-0 in Skyline Conference play.

Vs. Kingsford: The battle with Kingsford was close from start to finish, with 11 lead changes and four ties. The Lady Trojans never led by more than five nor trailed by more than eight.

The Flivvers' 12-0 rally put them up by eight early in the fourth quarter, but baskets by Lexi Gussert and Gina Graff helped cut the lead to one, 50-49, with 1:17 left.

Three time-outs later, it was still 50-49 with 33 seconds left. Next, Gussert drove the left side of the lane and released a one-handed shot that found the twine. Trojans, 51-50, with 19 seconds left. The big crowd of Red and Black fans cheered FP's first lead since late in the third quarter.

Last shot: But the cheers died seconds later—as the Flivvers' Lauren Smith quickly drove down the lane and scored, putting Kingsford back in front, 52-51, with 9.9 seconds left. Trojans Coach Jeff Syrjanen used his final time-out to set up one last shot.

"We wanted the ball in Lexi's hands—who wouldn't?—and we said, 'You create, and we'll see if we can get something.'"

It came down to Gussert's shot near the three-point line on the right—it went off the front of the rim. "We got a shot," said the coach. "Maybe she hits that shot, sometimes she doesn't. But I'd rather have her take a shot like that than try to do something else."

Back and forth: When the teams met in Kingsford Dec. 7, Forest Park won 57-45. This time, the first half was close, as the teams traded rallies. FP trailed by four midway through the second quarter, but threes from Kelsi Hendrickson and Sierra Robarge put the Lady Trojans up 24-22.

Kingsford led again just before halftime, but Gussert was fouled as she tried a three at the horn. Lexi made all three free throws, putting FP in front 27-26.

Gussert scored FP's first 11 points of the second half for a 38-34 Trojan lead—but momentum swung when Kingsford's Sam Fleming hit a three. Then a stolen pass, and Carlee Benzie made a lay-up. Next, Courtney Qualley scored and Benzie cashed in a nice pass to put Kingsford up 43-38 after three. Qualley's three-point play made it 46-38 early in the fourth.

"We kind of were losing our shooters in the third period," Syrjanen said later. "We were asking our young guards to stay home—and the temptation of sinking and trapping was too great. That got us in a bit of a hole."

The Flivvers cooled off, though, and baskets by Gussert and Graff fueled an 11-4 Forest Park run that set up the final minute.

Slight edge: The stat sheet told the story: The Lady Trojans' shooting was a bit off—they made 31% of their tries to Kingsford's 38%. The Flivvers also had a slight edge in free throws and

rebounds. Not a big edge … but enough to win a one-point game.

"Kingsford came out and defended us very well," said Syrjanen. "and they really put some pressure on our scorer [Gussert]." Kingsford's pressing defense also seemed to get the Lady Trojans out of their game.

It was a good lesson for the team, the coach said. "They [the Flivvers] play the kind of pressure we're going to see down the road. That's why we asked to play them twice a year."

Gussert led Forest Park with 29 points, followed by Robarge's seven and Sam Nylund's six. Qualley's 15 points led Kingsford, Benzie had eight, and Andrea Roell and Sam Fleming both scored eight.

Numbers: FP team: 18-58 FG (31%), 6-21 3's (29%), 9-11 FT (82%), 24 rebs; 13 turnovers. Kingsford team: 21-55 FG (38%), 5-13 3's (38%), 5-8 FT (63%), 26 rebs.

FP stats: Lexi Gussert, 29 points, 2x3, 7 rebounds, 3 blocks; Sierra Robarge, 7 pts; Sam Nylund, 6 pts, 7 rebs, 3 stls; Kendra Campbell, 5 rebs; Maria Stankewicz, 4 asts, 5 stls. Kingsford stats: Courtney Qualley, 15 pts, 2x3; Carlee Benzie, 9 pts, 6 rebs, 4 stls; Andrea Roell, 8 pts, 7 rebs; Sam Fleming, 8 pts, 2x3, 8 rebs.

Flivvers	14	12	17	9	--	52
Trojans	14	13	11	13	--	51

Vs. Carney: Against the Wolves, Gussert scored the first basket, Lauren Murray came back with two for Carney—and Forest Park scored the next 19.

Gussert scored 17 in the first quarter alone and another six in the second frame. FP led 26-7 after one quarter and added the first 14 of the second quarter to lead 40-7. At halftime, the Trojans led 48-15.

With the game well in hand, the Lady Trojans seemed to downshift in the third period, and Carney scored eight straight, trimming FP's 33-point halftime lead down to 26. Autam Wery had seven in that run.

FP flipped the switch back on in the fourth frame, ending the game as it had begun, with a 19-2 scoring blitz. Gussert scored nine of them.

She finished with 36 points, Jessica Bawyn had nine, Sierra Robarge added eight, and Stankewicz and Campbell added six apiece. For Carney, Murray scored 16.

Numbers: FP team: 31-68 FG (46%), 7-19 3's (37%), 9-15 FT (60%), 20 turnovers, 11 steals, 42 rebounds. Carney team: 13-64 FG (20%), 4-17 3's (24%), 5-8 FT (63%), 16 rebounds, 19 turnovers.

FP stats: Gussert, 36 points, 3x3, 8 rebs, 5 asts, 5 stls, 3 blocks; Jessica Bawyn, 9 pts, 5 rebs; Sierra Robarge, 8 pts; Campbell, 6 pts, 8 rebs; Kelsi Hendrickson, 3 asts. Carney stats: Lauren Murray, 16 pts, Autam Wery, 10 pts, 5 rebs.

Wolves	7	8	16	4	--	35
Trojans	26	22	9	21	--	78

Coming up: The Lady Trojans visited nonconference Baraga on Feb. 4 and head to West Iron on Feb. 7. Their next home game is Feb. 11 against Iron Mountain.