

Kline Drops 30 And Joins 1,000-Point Club – Explorers Rout Maryville Christian

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON – Friday night was a key Gateway Metro Conference game inside Marquette Catholic High School’s gym.

But not many were worried about that. They came to see the Braden Kline show.

Kline came into Friday’s game with 970 career points as an Explorer. He needed a big, 30-point performance to reach an elusive milestone.

So, what did he do?

He scored the first seven points for Marquette as it went on to beat Maryville Christian 79-32, improving to 9-2 on the season and 4-0 in the GMC.

Kline didn't stop there. He finished the game with exactly 30 points, leading all scorers and becoming just the 10th player in Marquette history to join the 1,000-point club.

"He came out on a mission," Marquette head coach Cody Best said about Kline. "It was cool to watch. His teammates were all about it too. He wanted to do it tonight, and it's a heck of an accomplishment."

But if you would've asked Kline himself, he didn't think he'd get it done tonight.

"To be honest, no," he said. "I knew I had a chance, but it required me to leak out a lot, get some easy layups, turn defense into offense, and we were able to do that tonight which feels good."

He notched 30 points midway through the third quarter and when he did everyone in attendance went wild. If it didn't happen against Maryville Christian, there was a good chance Kline would have done it next Friday when the Explorers host the Roxana Shells.

"It was a lot of fun, I enjoyed being able to do it at home," Kline said. "That was something I was really looking forward to. Thank you to my teammates and every who's helped me along the way, my coaches, I couldn't have done it without all of them."

Kline, a typical three-point shooter, dropped 30 while only scoring two threes, something his coach was even prouder about.

"He's going to be the top guy on everybody's scouting report," Best said. "With the amount of muscle and strength that he's put on this year, that's what I think has been so key for him. He's not just a shooter anymore. He's been going to the rack, knocking down free throws. We're all happy for him."

The Explorers led from start to finish. Thanks to Kline's quick start, they led 25-8 after the first quarter and 43-18 at halftime.

"He sets a tone from the beginning," Best said of Kline. "Everybody kind of figured he was going to do it."

Kline scored 20 points in the first half, setting himself up with a good opportunity to finish the job in the second.

Next to his 30-point performance, Jaden Rochester added 16 points and Brody Bechtold added 11.

It was the second time Kline has scored 30 or more points this season.

After a 65-55 setback to MICDS at McKendree University a week ago, this was Marquette's third straight win.

"We're rolling," Best said. "We've got one more game before the break, a chance to get to 10-2 before we go to the Christmas tournament. We're all excited. The thing with this group is the chemistry. It's fun being at practice, fun being around the kids, and fun getting a front-row seat."

The Explorers host the Shells on Friday, Dec. 22, at 7:30 p.m.

"They don't have the best record, but they're going to be a good team," Best said. "It's going to be a dog fight on Friday, but it'll be fun."



