

Kline Hits For 30 Points, Explorers Jump To Early Lead, Shells Pull To Within Three, But Marquette Pulls Away

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
December 23 2023 7:34 AM





ALTON - Marquette Catholic leading scorer Braden Kline had another big game, scoring 30 points, as the Explorers jumped to a bit first-quarter lead, with Roxana coming back to within three points at the end of the third quarter. Marquette outscored the Shells in the final quarter by a huge margin to end up taking a 56-36 win over Roxana in a boys' basketball game played Friday night at the Marquette Family Arena.

Both schools were playing in their final game before going on to their respective Holiday tournaments next week - Roxana at the Duster Thomas Classic in Pinckneyville and Marquette at the Columbia-Freeburg Tournament - and both teams were determined to go in with as much momentum as possible.

The Explorers started out by taking the lead after the first quarter 19-8, but the Shells came back to cut the lead to 25-17 at halftime, then pulled to within 34-31 at the end of the third quarter. Marquette jumped out early and ended up outscoring the Shells in the fourth quarter 22-5 to produce the 56-36 final.

To go along with Kline's big night at 30 points for the Explorers, Jaden Rochester came up with 18 points, while Jaylen Cawthon scored four points and both Brody Bechtold and Sean Williams each scored two points.

Aiden Briggs led Roxana with 10 points, while Chris Walleck scored nine points, Sean Maberry had eight points, Evan Wells hit for six points and Michael Silas had three points.





Marquette Catholic Coach Cody Best said his team got off to a great start in the game.

"We wanted to get out and run on them," he said. "Defensively, we played a great second half. Braden and Jaden had big-time games for us."

The Shells are now 5-6 and open up in the Duster Thomas Classic on Dec. 27 against Olney Richland County at 1:30, then will play either Mounds Meridian or Chester in a quarterfinal game at 10:30 a.m. on Dec. 28 at the auxiliary gym or in Thomas Gym. The final is set for Dec. 29 at 8:30 p.m.

The Explorers go to 10-2 and will Group B of the Columbia-Freeburg tournament in Columbia, starting against Waterloo Dec. 27 at 12:30 p.m., then meeting co-host Freeburg later that afternoon at 3:30 p.m., then winding up the group stage Dec. 28 against the Columbia junior varsity at 2 p.m. The final of the tournament is set for Dec. 29 at 6:30 p.m.



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)