



Staff photo by Ric Dugan

Brunswick's Tatum Smith, middle, keeps possession of the ball as Walkersville's Fatmatta Bangura, left, and Makayla Harrell try to take the ball away in Monday's game at Brunswick High School.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

BREATHING ROOM



Roaders' Bel hits pair of 3-pointers to keep Lions at bay in victory

■ Brunswick 51, Walkersville 35

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BRUNSWICK — As Brunswick's Juliette Bel dribbled the ball up the floor midway through the fourth quarter, she and her Railroaders teammates sought any way to stop Walkersville's late surge.

For Bel, that manifested in a pull-up 3-pointer. She hadn't made a shot all game to that point. She swished it. Just over 30 seconds later,

she did it again, finding all net on another triple.

Suddenly, Brunswick could relax again. The Roaders were back up by 16 points, which proved to be the final margin in their 51-35 home win over the Lions Monday night. Brunswick

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Staff photo by Ric Dugan

Brunswick's Madison Greenwood, left, gets a steal on a pass intended for Walkersville's Nahlaya Johnson-Freeman.

Breathing room

(Continued from B1)

earned its first girls basketball victory over Walkersville since Jan. 25, 2022, and just its second in at least 20 seasons.

"I'm really pleased with us learning how to win early," Roaders head coach Sam Connelly said. "I thought it might be later in the season when we got to that point because of how young we are."

In the past, that's been the case for Brunswick. Wins have often been few and far between. Slow starts to a season typically spiral.

But the Roaders (2-2) pulled their record even, though it's early. And that's a potential building block for a squad that has seven underclassmen, starting three of them Monday.

Brunswick won for the second time in four days after knocking off Clear Spring on Friday. In that contest, and again Monday, the team finally found its chemistry after pulling together a largely new roster this season.

"Our first couple games, we weren't really into it all together," junior forward Zoey Roberts said. "But in these last two games, we've really focused on getting the ball to each other, helping on defense and everything."

That's a major change from a season ago, when the Roaders struggled to bond on the floor.

"It's more about we and less of me," Bel said of the change in chemistry.

As juniors, Bel and Roberts are two of the more experienced players who have seen through a number of difficult Brunswick campaigns.

And they have experi-

ence in stanching the opponent's momentum, like Bel did with her 3s and Roberts did with her game-high 11 points. She's a visible front-court presence, working hard to put back misses, draw fouls and keep her team organized.

"I think it's really all about making sure you always are watching the ball and staying focused on that," Roberts said. "If you make a bad play, you get back, you hustle for the ball, you make sure that everybody knows where they're supposed to be."

The Roaders are doing a better job of that, though they're still a work in progress, with Connelly noting his team's inconsistencies in its half-court offense.

But Brunswick pieced together enough to win Monday, leading wire-to-wire and by double digits for the entire second half. Sophomore guards Joedyn Njinyah (10 points) and Emme Miller (nine points) made key buckets, with Miller knocking down a 3 late in the first half.

"The biggest point of emphasis has been getting them to play varsity basketball and understand the speed of their decision-making," Connelly said. "I think it's always a big step for any freshman or sophomore to play at that level if they're not used to it."

"It's just trying to coach through those moments and me reminding myself on the bench that I've gotta coach through those moments and not really get frustrated."

Senior guard Kierstyn Senuta led the Lions (0-2) with a 10-point effort, eight of which came in the second half.