

Saturday April 6, 2019
Mystics 16, Liberty 11

Mystics overcome slow start to clinch Championship title

The Liberty dominated in the first-half, however, the Mystics overcame a slow start to clinch the Championship title. The Liberty played suffocating defense for the majority of the first half, confusing the Mystics players. While the Mystics played solid defense, the Liberty held an edge on the offensive end. The Liberty found scoring from Alexis Juliano (5 points, 2 rebounds, 2 steals, 1 block) and Kaylee Juliano (2 points, 4 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 steals, 1 block) late in the first quarter, after doing a very good job of moving the ball around and getting solid shots. Each player also played great defense, along with Kiyanna Harris (1 points, 5 rebounds, 3 steals, 1 block), in the quarter, disrupting virtually every Mystics' pass and snagging many steals. The Liberty held a 4-0 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The Liberty continued to hold the hot hand for much of the 2nd quarter. Alexis Juliano scored another basket early in the quarter off a nice take to the basket off a screen from Ella Waliszewski, and then Ella Waliszewski knocked down a free-throw on the next possession. The Mystics finally found their mojo in the middle of the quarter, thanks to a basket from Maddie Ringler (6 points, 2 rebounds, 1 block) off a fancy pass from Brittany Day (3 points, 2 assists). Late in the quarter, Kyler Shiesley (5 points, 3 rebounds, 1 steal) added a basket by converting a nifty floater. She also added a free-throw in the frame. The Liberty held a 9-5 lead after Avery Geartz (2 points, 3 rebounds) added a put-back off an offensive rebound.

The Mystics turned the corner in the 3rd quarter, only surrendering one point. This defense was led by the efforts of Brittany Day and Natalie Endres (2 steals), who stepped up in big ways for their team. This defensive pressure created turnovers, which the Mystics then used to push the ball up the court and get good looks at the basket. Maddie Ringler and Brittany Day each scored a basket in the quarter off nice give and goes. The Mystics also found great defensive play late in the quarter thanks to the efforts of Marissa Rickard (4 rebounds), Hailey Bronson (2 rebounds, 1 block), and Kyler Shiesley, effectively shutting down the Liberty. The Liberty held a 10-9 lead at the end of the 3rd, but the Mystics held the momentum.

The Mystics spread the ball around effectively in the 4th quarter, breaking through the Liberty's pressure. Overall, this was led by the play of Sophia Waliszewski (2 points, 2 rebounds), who kept the defense on their toes thanks to her shifty moves to the basket. Maddie Ringler got things going on offense by scoring off a nice pass from Brittany Day. This gave the Mystics a one-point lead. Then, Sophia Waliszewski hit a jumper from the corner after breaking a couple of ankles to extend the Mystics first lead of the afternoon. Kyler Shiesley then added a mid-range jumper to help her team pull away. Late in the quarter, the Liberty threatened with a sharp press, however, the Mystics broke the full-court pressure thanks to a perfectly placed pass by Marissa Rickard to Maddie Ringler. Ringler then pitched the ball ahead to Brittany Day, who was fouled and knocked down a championship-sealing free-throw.

The Mystics defeated the Liberty, 16-11, earning the 7th-9th grade girls championship title.

Congrats to both the Mystics and the Liberty on their great seasons!