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NorCalPreps.com Analyst



the [Message](#)

In a game between the top two teams in Division I girls basketball, Berkeley overcame poor free throw shooting and a slow start to beat Lincoln-Stockton 61-44. The Yellowjackets were led by [Rachel Howard](#) with 15 points and 12 rebounds, but it is the injury status of Trojans' star [Nyre Harris](#) which could have the lasting effect.

The game was close in the first quarter as both teams dealt with foul trouble, but the game came to a stop when Harris suffered a right knee injury at the 2:37 mark. Lincoln still led 17-13 after one thanks to a 9-for-9 effort from the line.

Berkeley began to come to life in the second with a 13-1 run as Howard scored 10 points and [Garysha Youngblood](#) had five points for a 34-27 halftime lead. The game remained at the 7-10 point range much of the second half as Lincoln relied on junior [Ashlyn Crenshaw](#) to score 14 of its 17 second half points. Berkeley on the other hand was able to control the offensive glass to overcome any offensive struggles in ending the game on a 10-0 run. [Jasmin Guinn](#) fouled out with 6:20 left in the game, but the Yellowjackets were able to hold on for the win in a good sign for the rest of the season.

"We had to weather the storm. The top six have experience. The rest of them aren't really experienced," Berkeley head coach Cheryl Draper said. "That's a big confidence boost for the rest of the players."

A key part of this game was the free throw line as Berkeley struggled at 10-for-25 while Lincoln finished 22-for-29. One way the Yellowjackets were able to overcome this margin was their ability to get easy looks on offense through the passing of [Elisha Davis](#) (nine rebounds and eight assists) and also offensive rebounding well. This is the recipe for success this year for Berkeley in addition to playing its pressure defense, which struggled some against the playmaking of Crenshaw.

Looking at the Division I race as a whole, Berkeley has now beaten Pleasant Grove and Lincoln-Stockton on successive weekends and firming up its hold on the top spot. The talent at the top of this division isn't the same as a year ago with these three teams looking to be in the top group. The status of Harris is very important as Lincoln, which relied on Crenshaw for the vast majority of its offensive sets in the second half to go with the shooting of Alysa Valentine and inside presence of senior Teylor McMiller. Finding the depth to pick up any lost production will be important if it wants to win a section crown.

Berkeley (61): [Finnie 16](#), [Howard 15](#), [Garysha Youngblood 9](#), [Gooden 8](#), [Davis 7](#), Guinn 6

Lincoln (44): [Crenshaw 21](#), [Valentine 10](#), [McMiller 8](#), [Harris 3](#)

[Jasmin Guinn](#) 5-foot-7 G Berkeley (2012): An under-recruited senior right now, Guinn is working on changing that this season. While she had six points on the night, they all came on good, hard drives to the basket. She does a nice job of setting up her dribble and can step out and shoot. She participated in the high jump, long jump and triple jump state competitions last year, Draper said.

[Ashlyn Crenshaw](#) G Lincoln-Stockton (2013): The junior scored a game high 21 points to go with a handful of rebounds and three steals. She is dangerous with her dribble, especially going with her right hand, and got to the free throw line 18 times in making 13 of them. Her outside game needs development, but this is a fast rising junior prospect.

[Rachel Howard](#) 6-foot-0 F Berkeley (2013): Howard was one of the most consistent players on the floor with 15 points and 12 rebounds. A number of her looks come off of offensive rebounds inside, but she did have a nice spin move into the paint from the mid-post. She also had two blocks on defense. Howard can continue to stretch her range on offense to enhance her scoring ability.

"Rachel has been working on her vertical flexibility and its starting to show," Draper said. "Her shot selection has been very, very efficient."

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