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FRIENDLY COMPETITION *above* While waiting to get the ball, sophomore Cannon Zubeck laughs with his opposing player about a bad call the referee made earlier in the game. "The ref made a bad call about a foul, and we were kind of joking about it," Zubeck said. "I got the ball after we laughed about it, but we lost the game." *photo by Josie Mangine*

HOOPED RIVALRY *right* Playing against SM Northwest, senior Paxton Ochs goes up for a basket against a former teammate. "We have a past player from our team that is now on their team, so it was fun to play against him and have that little rivalry moment," Ochs said. "I was pretty amped up; the whole game was pretty close." *by Finley Feagans*



UNDER THE LIGHTS *top right* After hearing his name get called for the starting lineup, senior Pearson Knold runs to shake his teammates' hands before the tip-off. "I was definitely more nervous than in other games because everyone from school was there," Knold said. "I felt better after I had the ball in my hands." They ended up losing 51-56 against Rockhurst. *photo by Zella Hanazel*

HYPE CULTURE *left* Getting hype on the bench, senior Hudson Lucas cheers for his teammate, senior Paxton Ochs. "When anyone scores, the crowd pops, it just makes everything way more hype," Lucas said. "It's part of the culture of the team, just to get hype for our teammates." *photo by Josie Mangine*

EYES ON THE PRIZE *bottom* During the annual Rockhurst vs. SM East basketball game, senior Vince Kopp tries to pass the ball. "There was so much adrenaline, so there wasn't time to really think," Kopp said. "In the locker room, it was good vibes; we knew we played well." *photo by Charlotte Reinjes*



REACHED
500 CAREER
WINS!

SHOUT OUT

"It's a great accomplishment and, just means you've done it for a long time. This is year 38 of coaching and year 30 at Shawnee Mission East. It's very rewarding. I've coached a ton of great kids and been around a ton of great families. I'm very fortunate to be in the position I am and I don't take that lightly. It's special to be a part of playing basketball at Shawnee Mission East."
COACH SHAWN HAIR

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

SM EAST WON THE ANNUAL ROCK VS. EAST CHICK-FIL-A CHALLENGE AND THE PROCEEDS WERE DEDICATED TO A LOST LOVED ONE OF AN EAST TEAM MEMBER

CONTEST DETAILS:

- Annual contest that is repeated for each "Stateline Showdown" (the SM East vs. Rockhurst basketball game).
- At the beginning of the contest SM East and Rockhurst's athletic departments pick their respective causes they would like the proceeds to go to if they were to win.
- SM East chose Coaches vs. Cancer to recognize the Zubeck Family.
- The Ward Parkway Chick-fil-A is the host of the contest.
- Between the two schools, whichever buys the most Chick-fil-A wins. SM East won.

"Every year, Ward Parkway Chick-fil-A has a challenge, and whoever eats more items from Chick-fil-A gets a shoutout at half time. It feels good to know that our school wants to be competitive. It's pretty cool that we won, especially because Rockhurst is a lot closer, so it's like we're more dedicated. I went to Chick-fil-A a lot, and I get the same thing every time, a Chick-fil-A sandwich and fries."

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SHOOT FORWARD

AFTER A CLOSE LOSS TO ROCKHURST AT THE MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM, THE BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM KEEPS PUSHING FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

Almost 5,000 voices echoed the school song throughout the Municipal Auditorium while the basketball players walked back to the locker room with towels over their heads.

Every single player was silent. Completely silent. They just lost to Rockhurst. At her biggest game of the year. At the biggest arena of the year. In front of the biggest crowd of the year.

Rockhurst continued their undefeated season — and beat SM East for the fourth year in a row. But this year wasn't like those ones. The ones where SM East lost 52-68, 54-66 or 38-45.

This time, they only lost 51-56.

This time, they almost pulled it off.

And that was with an unfamiliar level of chaos, too. For the first time, the SM East vs. Rockhurst game was held in the Municipal Auditorium with

10,700 seats. In previous years, only upperclassmen could get tickets, but this time, there was room for the entire student body.

"I had to stay calm under the pressure with all the players and all the fans and whatnot," senior Stephen Hlobik said. "But, it was more just excitement. I was super excited to play in front of my whole school."

Coaches told the players not to think about it. Worrying would just make them play worse. Instead, they focused on their defense leading up to the game. They were already consistent on offense and shooting; defense was just the missing piece.

And it worked.

"It was probably our best game we've played all year, and as a team, it was a game where we thought we could win," sophomore Cannon

Zubeck said. "We're just gonna keep building off it."

So when head basketball coach Shawn Hair talked to them after the game, he wasn't upset. He was proud.

The team didn't dwell on the score. They did the best they could. After the game, they went over to junior Brooks Dillon's house to play some more. They didn't say a word about the loss.

"It was sad but definitely needed," Zubeck said. "It was a good time because we were all together."

And on Monday, they came back to their usual gym and started warming up for another regular practice.

"The season is not over. We have seven games left," Zubeck said. "And with the way we've been playing, I think we could go 7-0."