

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Crean Lutheran girls eliminated in regional playoffs

By [TIM BURT](#)

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Crean Lutheran's girls basketball team was solid against Bellarmine-Jefferson for the first quarter Tuesday night in the semifinals of the CIF Southern California Division 5 playoffs.

The Saints led, 12-8, after one quarter. But Bell Jeff from Burbank had too much firepower in the second quarter, outscoring the Saints, 15-3, on its way to a 50-35 victory at Crean Lutheran.

"It was brutal, we just couldn't buy one for the life of us," said Crean Coach Kelsi Walker of the second quarter.

Crean Lutheran finished the season 20-12 under Walker, the former Foothill and Woodbridge basketball player. It turned out to be the best season in school history. Crean Lutheran had four wins last year.

"It's good experience, especially for my younger girls, to play at this level and learn," Walker said. "It's taken them a long time to believe. Probably halfway through this season, they started believing they could win, and you could see, they believed they deserved to be on the court, so I'm proud of them."

Bel-Jeff had a 23-15 lead at halftime and outscored the Saints, 20-9, in the third quarter.

Crean Lutheran (20-12) made a slight run in the fourth quarter, cutting the lead to 47-35 with 2:42 left but that was as close as the Saints could get.

Kylie Needham scored 9 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead Crean Lutheran. Catheryn Tuccinardi had 8 points and Shannon O'Malley six points for the Saints, who lost to Heritage Christian, 59-46, in the CIF 5AA finals.

Cosette Balmy and Dalila Rincan had led Bell-Jeff (28-3) with 17 points.

Crean Lutheran fans formed a tunnel after the game to send off the Saints into the locker-room, like they had done for the team's other games this season.

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