SU baseball Rams are ranked seventh

The Shepherd baseball team will open its season on Friday in Martinsburg, West Virginia against St. John's College in the first round of the Wasatch Athletic Conference. The game will be held at 3:00 p.m. at the Wasatch Athletic Complex. Shepherd has won back-to-back games against West Virginia State University and has an overall record of 7-1. Shepherd's starting pitcher, Jonathan Ford, allowed only one hit and struck out six batters in the game. Shepherd's catcher, Matt King, had a hit and scored two runs. Shepherd's victory moves them to 2-0 in the Wasatch Athletic Conference.

Shepherd women untroubled by Blues

Shepherd women's basketball team remained unbeaten in the Wasatch Athletic Conference after they defeated Bluefield College 79-60 on Saturday. The win moves Shepherd to 11-0 in the conference and 14-1 overall. Shepherd's leading scorer, Jennifer Handy, had 20 points and seven rebounds. She also had four steals and two blocks. Shepherd's other leading scorer, Allison Sanders, had 15 points and nine rebounds. The team had 25 assists and 16 turnovers. Shepherd's defense held Bluefield to 31% shooting from the field and 18% from the three-point line. The team also had 14 steals and 10 blocks. Shepherd's head coach, Mike Meadows, said, "We played a solid game defensively and were able to dominate the game from start to finish." The game was played at the Shepherd University gymnasium and was attended by 500 spectators. Shepherd's next game is on Monday against Central Washington University at 7:00 p.m. in the Wasatch Athletic Conference.

Shepherd starters enough to beat Bluefield, 67-60

Shepherd's baseball team played a double-header against Bluefield College on Saturday. Shepherd won the first game 67-60 and the second game 5-3. Shepherd's leading hitter, Tyrese Brooks, had a home run and a single. Shepherd's pitcher, Jonathan Ford, allowed only four hits and struck out seven batters. Shepherd's catcher, Matt King, had a hit and scored two runs. Shepherd's other leading scorer, Matt Johnson, had 10 points and five rebounds. The team had 18 assists and 12 turnovers. Shepherd's defense held Bluefield to 39% shooting from the field and 24% from the three-point line. The team also had 10 steals and 6 blocks. Shepherd's head coach, Mike Meadows, said, "We played a solid game defensively and were able to dominate the game from start to finish." The game was played at the Shepherd University gymnasium and was attended by 500 spectators. Shepherd's next game is on Monday against Central Washington University at 7:00 p.m. in the Wasatch Athletic Conference.

Shepherd baseball players are looking to build on their success in the Wasatch Athletic Conference. The team has an overall record of 14-1 and is tied for first place with Central Washington University. Shepherd's next game is on Monday against Central Washington University at 7:00 p.m. in the Wasatch Athletic Conference.
Fast-starting WL races past Rams

By Ben Gibson

Shepherdstown - Coach Melanie Ford hoped for a better start Saturday afternoon at home for Shepherd, but the West Liberty Hilltoppers didn't back down and put the Rams in trouble.

The Rams couldn't keep up with the Hilltoppers as Shepherd lost 96-71 at the Busher Center.

The loss was the Rams' first since coach Melanie Ford lost the interim tag when Shepherd University officially hired her as the head coach this past weekend.

It was also the second time the Rams were trailing by at least 20 points in the half, the first time coming in a 97-64 loss to the Hilltoppers.

"I'm just excited to be able to work with this team," Ford said. "West Liberty is the team we have to beat to compete in the conference."

Ford said her team needs to work on defense and rebounding to have a chance to win.

The Hilltoppers led 14-10 after the first half and the Rams came within six points early in the second half.

"We just didn't have the defense to stop them that first half," Ford said. "We have to get better in the second half and start to make runs to get back in the game."
WL rocks Rams

BY NAM MACPHERSON
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The West Virginia Conservatory top-ranked West Liberty Hilltoppers handed a rough loss to Shepherd University 6-15 overall and 6-10 in the WCAC.

MEN’S HOOPS
WEST LIBERTY 106
SHEPHERD 68

A commendable first-half effort allowed Shepherd to stay within six points of the nationally ranked Hilltoppers (19-1, 15-1). The game was paced by a 2-1-6 West Liberty run to open the second half to push the Rams, who had won five of six games before Thursday’s loss in Wheeling Jesuit.

“I was really proud of how we played in the first half,” Rams coach Jordan Namik said. “I think we really played as if we had to win. But overall, I never had that feeling that you normally have against West Liberty, where you feel like you have a chance to win.”

West Liberty’s Jordan Fortney scored a game-high 18 points, while guard Jordan Namik scored 10 points for the Rams.

Men

FROM PAGE C1

goal coming in was to hold them under 70 points. You are not going to hold West Liberty under 65. I thought we were doing a good job,” West Liberty head coach John Winingham said. “Our defense has been good all year. Our defense has been good all year.”

West Liberty’s Jordan Fortney scored a game-high 18 points, while guard Jordan Namik scored 10 points for the Rams.

“West Liberty’s coach really had a good game plan,” Namik said. “He was able to get the ball to his better players in the second half. We need to do a better job defending them.”

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Turning it around

After a 1-12 start, Shepherd has improved to win 5 of its last 9

BY NATE MACZUKA  
SHEPHERDSTOWN — It wasn't the beginning to the season he envisioned, but Shepherd University men's basketball coach Justin Nnollik said some leaders Tyrese Ross and Derrick Gallaher have never allowed the younger Rams to lose focus of what is at stake: The future of the program.

After a 1-12 start, the Rams (6-6, 6-11) have won five of their last six games and are looking to finish the season on a strong note.

Nnollik praised both Ross and Gallaher after Saturday's loss to No. 20 West Liberty (19-1, 13-1) at the Baker Athletic Center, saying the two senior leaders have never allowed the Rams' effort to waver.

Ross scored in a career-high 28 points against the West Virginia Conference top-ranked Hilltoppers. Gallaher was next on the scoring list with 13 points.

"We haven't been what we wanted from a record standpoint, but I really admire both of them as leaders," Nnollik said. "I'm not sure who's had the most impact, but they've never disappointed me. What I love is they are a huge part of what we are going to do here last." After an ice-cold start, Shepherd got its winstreaking win against VMI in the first game of the year. The Rams followed the trend in a 90-76 win over Furman (17-3, 12-3), which felt like their biggest win of the season.

"What I've been most proud of this season is that we've been on the front end of the best every time, but we don't quit," Nnollik said. "It has been easy for them to quit, not only against West Liberty, but we've won in other games. They just never do, and that's really due to them as players. They won't let each other quit."

Shepherd has faced its share of challenges — namely youth and inexperience. Saturday's win over West Liberty, the Rams started two freshmen, but they entered the half trailing one of the nation's top 20 teams by just seven points at 42-30. Nnollik said, "I'll never forget them. They are a huge part of whatever we are doing here now."

Overall, the Rams will have a chance for a 11-11 record in conference play. After Monday's loss at Salem International, Shepherd has five games left, all conference contests. They will have to face Ohio Valley Thursday and Furman Sunday. The Rams return home to Seven Hill on Monday. Shepherd will play 24-4 Pitt-Johns on Feb. 27. Nnollik, who led the Rams with 13 points on Monday, said the team will be "on fire" to get back to the state.

Shepherd is 1-7 in the 65-66 season and look to be a big part of the change.

See TURNING C1
West Liberty sends Lady Rams back to fourth place

The Shepherd women’s basketball team was favored to suffer the same fate as in their previous game against West Liberty, but they surprised everyone by winning the game and moving to fourth place in the WVIAC regular season.

The Lady Rams went on to win the game and move back to the conference’s top spot just before West Liberty came to the Beaver Creek last Sunday.

The Shepherd women’s basketball team was just as short-lived as its first time here. West Liberty topped the Lady Rams in their three games, including a 96-72 victory.

West Liberty had beaten the Lady Rams in the last three games, including a 46-37 win on the road, but the Lady Rams proved too strong in the final 15 minutes.

In the second half, the Lady Rams took control of the game and won 108-66 in the WVIAC and 107-66 in the WVIAC regular season.

Hewett nets 22 as Shepherd nets first place

WHEELING - There was one point between Shepherd and West Liberty, and the Lady Rams were up 22 points on the field. They were down 36-34 at the half, but went on to win 47-43.

Shepherd had 47 points, 13 rebounds, nine assists, and seven steals. West Liberty had 43 points, 13 rebounds, and six assists.

The Lady Rams were 11-3 in the WVIAC and 11-3 overall. West Liberty was 7-5 in the WVIAC and 8-1 overall.

Hewett scored a game-high 22 points on 4-for-4 shooting from the floor. She also had four assists and a steal.

The Lady Rams have now reached first place in the WVIAC twice this season. Their next opponent will be the team they defeated, West Liberty, who they defeated in December.
SALEM -- How weary was Shepherd after playing its third game in five days?

After logging hundreds of miles and many, many hours on the highway going to Wheeling (and back), playing 30th-ranked West Liberty at home, and then climbing back in their vehicles for a more than three-hour trek to Salem in just five days, Shep-

derd’s men fell to the win-

slam Tigers, 75-68, on Mon-

day night in Harrison County.

How did the Rams do in their mini-marathon of three games?

They lost all three.

Shepherd was stationed in 10th-place with its 6-10 conference mark. The Rams were 6-15 overall.

After leading only 25-26 at the half, West Liberty had made only 17-of-39 of its field goal attempts.

... and when the second half be-

gan the Hilltoppers were nearly

unhindered by anything the Rams

tossed at them.

West Liberty would double Shepherd’s second-half scoring total -- nothing 64 points

comparing with the Rams’ 32

points.

From the floor, the Hilltoppers were 36-for-61 (64.4 percent) in the last half. They made 34-of-

16 (45.2 percent) of their three-

point attempts as well as 6-of-9

free throws.

Shepherd was not able to find the same sort of scoring rhythm in the last half as displayed by the stepladder Hilltoppers.

The Rams made just 7-of-36

(20 percent) of their second-half field goal attempts. That lack luster figure included a 2-for-12 (16.7 percent) showing on three-

point attempts. At least the Rams were proficient from the free line, scoring more than half of their points with a 14-for-16 (87.5 percent)

showing.

field goal that couldn’t be saved by the 16-for-33 (48.5 percent) showing from the free line.

"Because they had been outscored by 30-30.

Derek Gillagher maintained his late-season scoring pace and just the Rams with 15 points on

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Spencer scored 14 points on

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ished with 11 points, but made

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churned six rebounds.

Dave Kuenen led the Rams with

eight rebounds and nineteen

Shepherd’s Coach Ford gets permanent status

Shepherd recently removed the “interim” tag from his position of women’s basketball head coach Melissa Ford’s title. Ford, who had been hired on an interim basis following the resignation in July of 2009 of former women’s coach Jodi Runner, is now in her second season as the head coach of the Lady Rams.

In 2009-10 women’s games through Saturday, Feb-

uary 13, the Rams were 11-1 in the WVIAC and 12-8 overall and in fourth place in the conference.

Until the Lady Rams took this past January to WVC Liberty they were in first place in the conference.

The currently closest women’s race also saw the Lady Rams in first place one other time this season before they lost two-straight games and fell to sixth place.

Ford was Runner’s assistant coach for all seven years of the former head coach’s tenure as the leader of the Shepherd women’s team.

Ford is a graduate of the University of Charleston, where she played four seasons (1996-2000) of basketball for the Lady Golden Eagles. Prior to coming to Shepherd the same year Runner was elevated to the head coaching position, Ford had spent time coaching at Wheeling Jesuit where she compiled work on her master’s degree in business administration.

The WVIAC has not had a five-game-all tie between seven teams with Charleston leading through March 13.

The Lady Golden Eagles connect on 37.5 percent of their seven field goals attempted.

The Lady Rams shot 37 percent.

Shepherd registered an

unusually high 43 field goals. Shepher

had the 20 field goals as a team.

The Rams went to Salem next Monday night in another WVIAC game.

Shepherd’s Coach Ford

gets permanent status

High-flying West Liberty

unleashed a winning second-half scoring spurt to provide the Rams with a 30-point advantage by the end of the second half.

Shepherd was outscored, 30-30.

"Because they had been outscored by 30-30.

Derek Gillagher maintained his late-season scoring pace and just the Rams with 15 points on

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were proficient from the free line, scoring more than half of their points with a 14-for-16 (87.5 percent)

showing.

field goal that couldn’t be saved by the 16-for-33 (48.5 percent) showing from the free line. West Liberty, ranked 11th in the WCVIAC, had six

Westerners. The Tigers won curved throughout with a team-high 12 FGs.

Drew Karlovic led the Tigers with 15 points on 5-for-8 from the floor and 3-of-5 free throws, and Brooks Lauver tallied 18 points on

4-for-7 from the floor.

Shepherd was in 10th-place in the WVIAC while Salem re-

mained in 8th-place in the 16-

team league.

Shepherd was not able to find the same sort of scoring rhythm in the last half as displayed by the stepladder Hilltoppers. West Libertyensesed its 30-point advantage by the end of the second half.

Shepherd was outscored, 30-30. Shepher-

50 percent) showing from the free line. Because they had been outscored 30-30.

Derek Gillagher maintained his late-season scoring pace and just the Rams with 15 points on 4-of-10 from the floor. Aaron Spencer scored 14 points on 4-of-7 shooting. Roach finished with 11 points, but made only 4-of-12 shots. Chad Moore scored 10 points on 4-of-6 and churned six rebounds. Dave Kuenen led the Rams with eight rebounds and nineteen

Shepherd was not able to find the same sort of scoring rhythm in the last half as displayed by the stepladder Hilltoppers.
SU men fall to Wheeling; Catich scores late bucket

WHEELING - Trailing by two points and with just seven seconds remaining in its Thursday night WVIAC men's game against visiting Shepherd, Wheeling Jesuit salvaged a scintillating 76-75 WVIAC win when Steve Catich made a three-point field goal.

Catich led the Cardinals with 20 points, going 8-for-13 from the field, including 4-for-4 from three-point range. Brandon Bazillo scored 14 points for the Cardinals and Obi Ukwuegu added another 12 points as Wheeling Jesuit improved its WVIAC record to 10-4 and its overall mark to 13-6.

Shepherd was 6-9 in the WVIAC and 6-14 overall.

The Rams were able to place five players in double figures with Tyrone Roach topping the scoring list with 17 points. Dave Karlson notched 14 points, Chad Moore 12 points, reserve Sidney McCoy 12 points, and Anton Spencer 11 points.

Karlson had 11 rebounds and Moore had eight. Moore led Shepherd in assists with six.

In the game's final frantic minutes, the lead changed hands on almost every possession.

Spencer had given the Rams a 75-73 lead with his three-pointer with 14 seconds left. But Catich answered with his own three-pointer that silenced the Rams.

Wheeling Jesuit shot well from all angles, making 53 percent of field goal attempts and 73 percent of its three-pointers - 8-of-11. The Cardinals only tried six free throws and made four of those.

Shepherd made 46 percent of its field goal tries, including a 57 percent showing from three-point range. The Rams tried just 11 free throws and made nine of those (82 percent).

The Rams had a 12-rebound margin, but still lost. Shepherd was credited with 38 rebounds and Wheeling Jesuit 26.

Wheeling Jesuit had a 32-27 lead at the half.

Shepherd had two games in the next three nights, hosting first-place West Liberty on Saturday and traveling to meet Salem on Monday. West Liberty was the nation's 20th-ranked team when it came to Shepherdstown.
Shepherd’s Smith honored by the coaches association

BY BEN GIBSON
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The American Volleyball Coaches Association has named Shepherd University volleyball coach Sarah Smith one of its Thirty Under Thirty Award recipients.

The award highlights up-and-coming volleyball coaches across the country at all levels.

“We are very proud of the smart, energetic young people who are choosing to enter our profession,” said AVCA Executive Director Kathy DeBoer. “This second strong class of overachievers means the future is bright for both volleyball players and the AVCA.”

Smith has led the Rams to an overall record of 60-91. This season Smith helped engineer a 21-12 mark and a second place West Virginia Conference record with a 12-2 league standing. It was Shepherd’s best finish since the 1982 season.

“It was a shock, to be considered a top coach under 30 [years old],” Smith said. “I think it is quite an honor.”

The award will highlight the success of the Shepherd volleyball team, and possibly help in recruiting.

“I don’t think it will have a big change in who we recruit, but I think it may sway some kids thinking about going to small Division I programs,” said Smith.

Smith says she feels humbled by the award.

“It is great to receive the award, but I think it also says a lot about our players, the school and the program,” she said.

The nominations came out in the fall, with the requirement that the coach be younger than 30 in 2010. Of the 30 recipients, 19 are assistant coaches and 11 are head coaches; nine are NCAA Division II women’s coaches, eight are NCAA Division I women’s coaches, three are NCAA Division III women’s coaches, three coaches NCAA Division I-II men, two are from two-year colleges, two are coaches on the club level and one is a high school girl’s coach. The winners of the award were announced in the February and March edition of Coaching Volleyball.

“It is quite an honor, I don’t know if it has quite sunk in yet, but I think it’s starting to,” Smith said.

It may have already hit home in the minds of some recruits, however.

“It is starting to sink in when I get congratulated on the recruiting trail,” Smith said.

— Ben Gibson can be reached at (304) 263-8931, ext. 131
Rams turn up pressure to gain win

The Rams' fullcourt press helped pull out a 66-64 win with a late rally against the Seton Hill Griffins.

The Rams, which struggled shooting most of the night, finally got going down the stretch.

"Coach asked us who was going step up, and we all stood up and told him we'd play," Chad Moore said.

Aaron Spencer hit a jumper to cut the deficit, and a missed shot allowed senior guard Derek Gallagher to take the ball down and hit a 3-pointer to cut the Seton Hill lead to four.

Using their fullcourt press, the Rams responded by forcing several turnovers.

The Rams took a two-point lead after Tyrone Reach scored six points during Shepherd's 11-point run.

"We just listened to coach, we didn't care how many points we were down, we just knew we had to keep playing," Roach said.

The Griffins responded with two quick baskets to take a two-point lead, but the Rams shut down the Seton Hill offense for good with under a minute to go.

Spencer stole the ball, quickly passing to Moore, who took the ball in the lane and tied the game with 21 seconds and won it with 11 seconds left.

A missed shot and a traveling call on Emmanuel Jackson ended the Griffins' chances to tie the game, giving the Rams a critical win as the West Virginia Conference tournament approaches next month.

"I told them at halftime they maybe had fooled me, maybe they were going to give up," Napolit said, "but they came out and finished the game strong."

The Rams got off to a slow start, as the Griffins were hitting most of their shots early, shooting 59 percent from the floor, led by their guards, sophomore Chris Giles and freshman Justin McCoy, who both ended the first half with 10 points each.

The Rams struggled to find the basket in the first half, shooting under 40 percent, but the Rams five 3-pointers in the first half helped keep them in the game, along with the defense winning the turnover battle 13-9.

Shepherd allowed a short scoring run by Seton Hill at the end of the half, allowing the Griffins to take a 35-32 lead.

The Rams were led in scoring by Moore with 19 points, while Roach and Gallagher both contributed 16 points. Chris Giles led Seton Hill with 21 points.
Concord nips Ram women

BY BEN GIBSON
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Some mistakes in the final few seconds doomed Shepherd in its game against the visiting Concord Lions Wednesday night at the Butler Center, resulting in the Rams' fourth consecutive loss.

The Rams held a double-digit lead for most of the second half but found themselves on the losing side of a 94-93 score at game's end.

"We let them score 94 points, that's just not defense," said Shepherd coach Melodie Ford.

It was a shaky contest of soros, with a multitude of big scoring runs assisting both teams through the game. Concord scored the game's last six points, including guard Camisha Alexander's game-winning layup with six seconds remaining.

"You don't come to Shepherd and leave with a win without playing with some heart," said Concord coach Kenny Osborne. "We showed a lot of heart and came up with some rebounds there at the end after Shepherd kicked our butts on the boards for 17 minutes."

Shepherd took a slight advantage in the opening minutes of the half with senior center Camille Wilmer scoring the first basket against the Rams. "I think we're going on a five-point run to take the game's first substantial lead."

The Rams committed 10 turnovers in the first half, and Concord seemed to take advantage of each one in a seven-point lead.

The Rams erased the Lions' lead with a 15-4 run of their own, grabbing a four-point advantage near the end of the first half.

Concord managed to tie the game at 46, and the two teams battled back and forth until the halftime buzzer sounded, each team locked at 50.

"You don't come to Shepherd and leave with a win without playing with some heart. We showed a lot of heart and came up with some rebounds there at the end after Shepherd kicked our butts on the boards..." — Kenny Osborne

Concord coach percent.

Shepherd broke open the game to start the second half, riding a 13-3 run to take a 10-point lead that they kept for the first 11 minutes of the second half. The Lions cut the deficit to four, but the Rams kept Concord from putting together any long scoring runs while building the Shepherd lead back to 10.

Concord put together a 8-0 scoring run to cut the lead to two with three minutes left, but Shepherd stopped the Rams' run before they could tie the game.

The Rams pushed their lead back to six, but the Lions were not going to go down easily.

Sophomore guard Holly Babb sank a 3-pointer to bring the deficit to three, and after a pair of empty possessions for the Rams, a Shepherd foul sent Concord forward Sydney Lindsey to the line with just over thirty seconds left.

Lindsey drained each shot, giving Shepherd a 93-92 lead with half a minute to play. Concord was able to seize control of the game, with the ball rolling away from the rim.

Hewett was able to get a shot off before the buzzer, but the ball rolled off the rim.

Concord was led by center Jolyea Brown, who led all scorers with 29 points.

The Rams had six players in double digits, with Camille Wilmer pacing the team with 19.

Shepherd's three-game skid is their second of the year.

The Rams play their final regular season game at home against the Pitt-Johnstown Mountain Cats on Saturday at 2 p.m.

Shepherd tames Lions

BY BEN GIBSON
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Shepherd Rams posted their second consecutive win by beating Concord 95-85 Wednesday night at the Butler Center, but they almost let it slip away.

The Rams pulled away after taking a 47-45 lead with 12 minutes to go in the first half.

The Rams slowly built their lead up to 11 during the first half, before Concord cut the lead to 4-7-56 in halftime. An eight-point lead quickly expanded to 22 as senior guard Tyree Roche knocked down two 3-pointers during the Rams' 16-1 run to start off the second half.

Concord paid no attention to the scoreboard and adjusted by using a full-court press and double-teams to stifle the Shepherd offense. Conversely, the Rams let the Mountain Lions score almost at will going down the stretch.

"I thought we handled the full-court press well, but we weren't doing our job on defense," Shepherd coach Justin Nunn said.

The Mountain Lions cut the lead to 28 points, but the Rams were able to hold on for their second straight win.

"We led by 22, and sometimes it is hard to hold onto that when you keep looking up at the scoreboard, but a win is a win," Nunn said.

Freshman guard Chaz Moore led the Rams with 28 points, including one 3-pointer, while freshman guard Aaron Spencer added 22. The Mountain Lions were led by freshman guard Keita Johnson with 19.

The Rams close out their regular season at home against the Pitt-Johnstown Mountain Cats.
Fairmont dims Shepherd chances

FAIRMONT — A 73-59 loss to the Fairmont women on Saturday at Joe Retton Arena left Shepherd in seventh-place in the WVIACh regular season race and all but eliminated the Lady Rams from title contention.

Shepherd had been the Lady Falcons in Shepherdstown.

Ashley Vavrek made 13 of 14 free throws. Katlin Spencer added 15 points, Mo Gatuso had 10 points, and Rachel Murray scored another 10 points.

The Lady Rams, 13-6 in the WVIACh and 14-9 in all their games, had point guard Jerica Hewett score a team-high 16 points. Shelby Payak notched 14 points, Katie Biggs totaled 10 points, and Carrie Saunders also chipped in 10 points.

Near the end of the first half, Shepherd went on a 14-2 scoring run to assume a 30-26 lead at the half.

But Fairmont later countered with an 11-0 scoring tear itself in the second half to ease away to the victory.

Shepherd was hurt throughout by its 25 turnovers. Fairmont had only 13 turnovers.

The Lady Rams had a 35-31 rebounding advantage and made 13-of-15 free throws.

Fairmont converted 21-of-22 (95.5 percent) of its free throws.

The last game of the Shepherd regular season schedule is on Saturday when the Lady Rams host Pitt Johnstown at 2 p.m. on their home court at the Buscher Center.

Falcons trim Rams in WVIAC game

FAIRMONT — Shepherd's chances of hosting a first-round game in the WVIAC tournament took a hit on Saturday when the Rams fell, 77-73, to Fairmont at the Falcons' Joe Retton Arena.

Fairmont had a slender 36-32 lead at the half.

The Falcons held a lead as long as 10 points in the second half, but Shepherd rallied and was trailing only 75-73 with 16 seconds left after Aaron Spencer converted two free throws.

Isaac Thornton then shoved the Fairmont lead back to four points when he made two free throws with only 12 seconds showing.

Thornton scored 20 points and Terrence Green added 15 for Fairmont. Mike Henderson (14) and Pete O'Connor (10) also scored in double figures for the Falcons, who were in third place in the WVIAC with a 15-4 league record and a 20-4 overall record.

Shepherd, which was still mired in 10th place and needed to finish at least eighth to host a first-round tournament game, had a 7-12 conference record and a 7-17 overall record.

Chad Moore scored a game-high 21 points for the Rams. Moore, who also claimed nine rebounds, was 10-of-13 from the field.

The Rams shot 50 percent (27-for-54) from the floor and made 11-of-12 free throws. The Falcons likewise made 50 percent (27-for-54) of their field goal attempts. Fairmont was nearly as comfortable at the foul line as Shepherd, making 20-of-22 free throw tries.

Shepherd committed 11 turnovers and Fairmont had 16 turnovers. The Falcons had a 31-26 rebounding advantage. The Rams complete their regular season on Saturday at home when they face Pitt Johnstown at 4 p.m.

Gallagher, Rams top Ohio Valley

VIENNA -- Continuing his late-season scoring surge, Shepherd's Derek Gallagher notched a game-high 20 points as the Rams picked up a 78-56 win over Ohio Valley last Thursday.

The Rams led a halftime, 39-26.

Tyron Roach added 18 points for the Rams, who improved to 7-11 in the WVIAC and 7-16 overall with the conference victory. The Fighting Scots were 4-14 in the WVIAC and 5-18 overall.

Gallagher connected on 7-of-14 field goal attempts, including making 3-of-7 three-point attempts. He was 3-for-4 from the free line. Roach was 8-for-11 from the floor and made both his three-point tries. Roach converted all four of his free throw attempts.

Freshman Chad Moore was another double-figure scorer for the Rams with his 11 points. Moore also had six rebounds. Dave Kaslo scored nine points and had eight rebounds. Freshman Aaron Spencer chipped in with his nine points. Moore led the Rams with four steals.

Donavin Virson paced the Fighting Scots with 16 points. Rodney Espy led Ohio Valley with eight rebounds.

Shepherd held a slight, 36-33, rebounding edge.

Ohio Valley was hurt by its 21 turnovers, while the Rams committed only 13 turnovers.

Shepherd’s 7-for-18 (38.9 percent) shooting from three-point range was beneficial in its win.

The Rams attempted 11 more free throws than the Fighting Scots tried. Shepherd was 17-for-25 (68 percent), while the Fighting Scots were just 10-for-14 (71.4 percent).

Shepherd was in 10th place in the 16-team conference regular season standings, while Ohio Valley was in 14th place.

The Rams close out their regular season schedule with a pair of home games -- tonight (Wednesday) at 8 p.m. against Concord in a make-up game, and then on Saturday when Pitt Johnstown visits for a 4 p.m. game at the Butter Center.