Rams whitewash Senators

BY ERIC JONES
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Shepherd University's Gerrard Sokolis is an intimidating figure when he steps on the pitching mound.

The 5-foot-11, 275-pound starting pitcher is big in stature, and in Shepherd's home opener on Saturday at Fairfax Field, he came up big on the mound as he pitched six strong innings to lead the Rams to a 4-0 shutout of Davis & Elkins.

After a two-week layoff because of weather, Shepherd (1-3) picked up its first win of the season thanks to an all-around effort in the field and at the plate.

"We didn't know what to expect. We weren't even sure we were going to get this game in," Shepherd coach Wayne Riser said. "It was nice to play in front of the home crowd, and we played well. We'll get ready to do it again tomorrow."

Shepherd freshman Michael Lott goes completely vertical to make a spectacular catch in the Rams' 4-0 win against Davis & Elkins on Saturday at Fairfax Field.

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Rams FROM PAGE C1

The Rams and Senators will play today in a doubleheader starting at noon.

Sokolis (1-0) finished the game with four hits over six innings, including just one hit through the first four innings, with two strikeouts and three walks.

"I'm very encouraged by his outing today, especially the way he pitched ahead in the count," Riser said.

The first of three outstanding defensive plays by left fielder Michael Lott starred in the sixth inning, with Shepherd up 1-0.

The Ram freshman threw out Brenton Kopecz at second on what looked like a sure double, then nailed Marcus Weese at home to end the inning after Weese attempted to score on a single by Cai gang O'Callahan.

Lott wasn't done as he made a diving catch in the eighth inning with two Senators on base. A hit there would have produced runs for Davis and Elkins.

The Senators came away with no runs that inning, while the Rams used a three-run sixth inning to pull away from Davis & Elkins.

With two on and two out, Lott singled in Chris Szalpha to make the score 2-0, then Tyler McCain and Tyler Beard followed with consecutive singles to bring home Patrick Aragen and Lott, giving Shepherd a 4-0 advantage.

Beard led the Rams with a 3-for-4 effort, while Anthony Jackson and McCain both went 2 for 4. Beard, Val Ardhuin, Nathan Munnich and McCain picked up an RBI.

Shepherd finished with four runs on 11 hits and no errors.

"Encouraging is the best way to put it," said Riser of the Rams' win. "It's early, and we're focused on trying to keep those fundamentals things in check."

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Shepherd sweeps Davis & Elkins

BY TONY GROVE
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — There is still a bit of a snowstorm behind the center field wall of Shepherd University's Fairfax Field. It's a ten-foot snowdrift just beside the flag pole to be exact.

But on the field there was no sign of the snowstorm that kost the Rams nearly two weeks of practice and playtime as Shepherd completed a three-game weekend sweep of Davis & Elkins with a come from behind 5-3 victory in the second game of a doubleheader Sunday, extending their win streak to six games.

College Baseball

SHEPHERD 6, 3
RAMS 3-3
DAVIS & ELKINS 1, 3

Record: 14-4

"We probably don't realize how good we are," Shepherd coach Wayne Riser said, "but you go to Georgia and you lose one in the eighth, bottom of the ninth and on a walk-off you lose 6-5, so you start out losing three to a very good baseball team, then you get the snowstorm for a couple of weeks and you sit for 14 days. You haven't even seen a field, and to come out here ... That was a hard fought series."

After knocking out Senator starting pitcher Jared Winder and hitting him to the game 3-3 in the bottom of the fifth, the Rams finished off Davis & Elkins in the bottom of the sixth.

Michael Lot, opened the inning with a single that the Senators second baseman hit into a double play, but couldn't make the throw in time. Tyler McCauley hit a single, a sacrifice bunt put Lot to second, and reliever Jake Ross walked Tyler Beadle to put Rams on first and second with one out. St. Arduini followed Beadle's walk with a 3-run single to right field and gave the Rams the game winning score and a 5-3 advantage. Ryan Collins pushed across Beadle with a sacrifice fly to give the Rams their final 5-3 edge.

Falling Waters native Paul Chorowsky struck out three in the top of the sixth to pick up the save. "We've got to get better," Riser said. "We've got to get better off of offense. We have to get better at the small part of the game. We have to be better situational hitters. We've got to be more aggressive on bases and after that, we're going to be good at it." After opening the scoring in the ninth, Collin T. scored from second on a single to center by Tyler Beadle in the bottom of the sixth.

Rams starter pitcher Pat Smith struggled to begin the game. Houston Darling and Gagno O'Cullagh crossed the plate for the Senators in the fourth to put the Rams down 2-1. Darling opened the inning with a single and scored when the right fielder drove and missed a shot by O'Cullagh, cruised to third with a single and scored when Ryan Guza popped out to center.

Shepherd’s Michael Lot hits during the bottom of the fifth inning of the Rams’ 5-3 win in Game 2 against Davis & Elkins on Sunday. Shepherd won both games of the Sunday doubleheader to sweep the three-game weekend series against the Senators.

See SHEPHERD D3

The Rams return to action for a noon doubleheader on Tuesday when they host Washington Adventist at Fairfax Field in games originally slated for March 3.

— Tony Grove can be reached at (364) 263-3811, ext. 134 or tgrove@journal-news.net
CHARLESTON -- After losing decisively to Seton Hill in both their regular-season meetings with the Lady Griffins, the Shepherd women’s basketball team pulled off a mild upset in the quarterfinals of the WVIAC tournament.

In taming the Lady Griffins, 76-64, Shepherd (the No. 7 seed) forced its way into the semifinals where it met No. 6 seeded Fairmont, which had stopped No. 3 seed Charleston.

Seton Hill opened a 12-point lead toward the middle of the first half. But then the Lady Rams went on a 21-2 scoring tear that had the Lady Griffins and coach Ferne Labati reeling in its wake. The long scoring run found by the Lady Rams enabled them to take a 34-27 lead into the dressing room at halftime at the Charleston Civic Center.

Even though they had attempted only two free throws in the first half, the Lady Rams were shooting 58 percent from the field on 14-of-24. Seton Hill was 14-for-30 (46.7 percent) from the field in the opening half.

In the second half, two successful free throws by first-team, all-conference forward Jordan Burkes brought the Lady Griffins to within 65-61 with just 2:27 to play.

In the final stages, Shepherd didn’t allow the Seton Hill defense to wrest steals away or cause game-changing turnovers. Instead the Lady Rams maintained their collective composure and when fouled went to the free throw line and made 7-of-8 shots in the last 2:27.

Shepherd was able to continue its effective shooting from the field in the second half, where it made 12-of-23 attempts. The Lady Rams made 55 percent of their shot-attempts in all.

Seton Hill cooled off in the second half and was especially ineffective in the last stages. The Lady Griffins made just 27.6 percent of their second-half attempts (8-of-29) and completed the quarterfinal loss with a 37 percent norm from the floor.

Shepherd sophomore Katie Biggs scored 19 points and made 7-of-11 shot-attempts. Biggs also claimed seven of Shepherd’s 39 rebounds. Carrie Saunders, who had her nose bloodied in the first half, went 5-for-10 from the field and 6-of-8 from the foul line to score 18 points. Saunders had five rebounds.

Junior Jerica Hewett added 14 points and made all five of her field goal attempts. She also had seven rebounds as Shepherd out-rebounded the taller Lady Griffins, 39-25, in an important category that was as instrumental in the win as anything.

Camille Wilmer totaled 11 points and led Shepherd with nine rebounds. Freshman reserve Emily Daniel was 4-for-6 from the field for eight points and also claimed six rebounds in her 29 minutes of playing time off the bench.

Burkes had 21 points, Erika Haitz had 12 points, all-conference forward Katie Lintner added 11 points (on 4-of-14 shooting from the floor), and Ori Farchi totaled 10 points and eight assists for the Lady Griffins.

Shepherd’s 20 turnovers were nearly matched by Seton Hill’s 17 floor errors.

Seton Hill was finished with its 22-7 overall record, while Shepherd improved to 17-11 overall.
Pitt Johnstown bounces Rams

JOHNSTOWN, (Pa.) -- Pitt Johnstown was nearly as effective with its shooting against Shepherd in the first round of the WVIAC men's basketball tournament as it had been when it dispatched the Rams by 24 points to finish off the regular season four days earlier.

Playing at home in the conference tournament's opening round, the Mountain Cats made 59 percent of their 56 attempts and sent Shepherd out of the event by grabbing an 83-69 win on Tuesday night of last week.

The Mountain Cats held only a two-point halftime lead even after making 53 percent of their first-half shots.

In second half, Pitt Johnstown made 16-of-24 field goal tries and outscored the Rams by 12 points.

Shepherd made 45 percent of its attempts (27-for-59).

There were five Mountain Cats scoring in double figures, including substitute Rudy Roberts who made all five of his shot-attempts and had 12 points.

Andy Byer scored 19 points, Danny Branch finished with 18, Nick Novak totaled 14 points and center Patrick Grubbs chipped in with 12 points.

Novak made all 13 of his field goal attempts the first time the teams met in Shepherdstown on February 27.

There were three Rams scoring in double figures, including senior Derek Gallagher (17 points), Dave Karlson (10 points) and freshman reserve Sidney McCray (14 points).

Pitt Johnstown had 32 rebounds with Grubbs contributing nine. Shepherd had 27 rebounds with McCray coming off the bench to get six.

Shepherd was as close as it could get in the second half when McCray made a three-pointer that brought them within 57-50 of the Mountain Cat lead.

The 10th-place Rams completed their season at 9-19. Pitt Johnstown, which finished seventh in the regular season race, moved into the tournament quarterfinals in Charleston with a 17-10 record and faced second-seeded West Virginia State.

The other first-round results in games played on various college campuses saw West Virginia State defeat Bluefield 109-59; Alderson-Broaddus stop Ohio Valley 87-72; Fairmont eliminate 93-68; Charleston; slide past Glenville 93-69; West Virginia Wesleyan trim homestanding Wheeling Jesuit; and Seton Hill stop Davis & Elkins 91-74.

The quarterfinal round games in Charleston had top-seeded West Liberty playing Seton Hill, West Virginia State going against Pitt Johnstown, Alderson-Broaddus facing West Virginia Wesleyan, and Fairmont going against Charleston.
Lady Rams' season ended by Fairmont

CHARLESTON -- Kaitlin Snyder and Ashley Vavrek combined to score 55 points as Fairmont eliminated Shepherd, 85-72, in the semifinals of the WVUAC women's basketball tournament played last Friday afternoon at the Charleston Civic Center.

Fairmont moved into the tournament finals, where it defeated regular season titlist West Liberty for the championship and an automatic berth in the eight-school Atlantic Regional.

The Lady Falcons held only a 37-36 lead at the half, but then outscored Shepherd by 12 points while scoring 48 points in the second half.

Fairmont went 13-for-22 (59 percent) from the field in the second half. Shepherd could not keep pace when it made only 14-of-38 (36.8 percent) of its field goal attempts.

Snyder made 11-of-12 free throws and Vavrek converted 13-of-15 free throws she was awarded. Fairmont finished 31-of-37 (83.8 percent) from the free throw line.

Shepherd attempted only 12 free throws and made nine (75 percent). The Lady Rams had starters Emily Daniel and Carrie Saunders foul out. There were only 10 fouls called on Fairmont.

Shepherd had senior center Camille Wilmer with 17 points, reserve guard Jenn Prine with 13 points in 35 minutes playing time. Reserve guard Alex Tanana added another 13 points in 16 minutes of playing time.

Daniels, Jerica Hewett, and Saunders all scored eight points.

The Lady Rams had a 37-35 rebounding edge with Daniel getting eight, Saunders snaring five, Wilmer five, Shelby Fayak four, and Prine four.

Rachel Murray had 11 of Fairmont's rebounds.

Fairmont had 19 turnovers and Shepherd had 18.

The Lady Rams made just 29-of-74 field goal attempts -- 39 percent. Fairmont made 25-of-47 for a 53 percent showing.

Shepherd completed its season with an overall record of 17-12 and Fairmont went to 21-9 overall with the Atlantic Region tournament still on its docket this weekend.