

Rams whitewash Senators

BY ERIC JONES
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

COLLEGE BASEBALL

DAVIS & ELKINS 0

SENATORS 5-2

SHEPHERD 4

RAMS 1-3

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

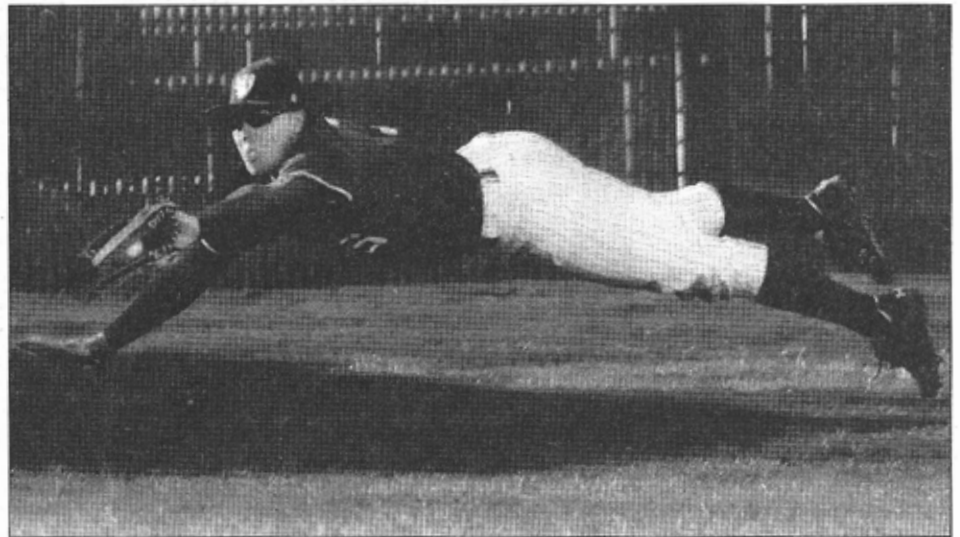
The 5-foot-11, 275-pound starting pitcher is big in stature, and in Shepherd's home opener on Saturday at Fairfax Field, he came up big on the mound as he pitched six strong innings to lead the Rams to a 4-0 shut out of Davis & Elkins.

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."

See RAMS C3



Journal photo by Ron Agnir

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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The Rams and Senators will play today in a double-header 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 just three walks.

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

Sokolis also set the tone for a strong defensive effort by the Rams with a pick-off of Eric Doyle in the third inning and a play in the fifth inning when he threw out Doyle at first after a line shot that bounced off his hand.

The Rams' defense was crucial in the final four innings as Davis & Elkins threatened to score down the stretch.

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

The Ram freshman threw out Brenton Kopecek 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 Caigan 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 Szafran to

make the score 2-0, then Tylor McCain and Tyler Beard followed with consecutive singles to bring home Patrick Aragon 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 Arduini, Nathan Minnich 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 the fundamentals things, keeping those in check."

—Eric Jones can be reached at (304) 263-3381, ext. 234 or ejones@journal-news.net

Shepherd sweeps Davis & Elkins

By TONY GROVE
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — There is still a bit of winter stationed 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 cost 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 after rolling to a 6-1 win in the opener.

COLLEGE BASEBALL

SHEPHERD 6, 5
RAMS 3-3
DAVIS & ELKINS 1, 3
RECORD 8-4

"We probably don't realize, and are not going to realize for a while, how important this is," Shepherd coach Wayne Riser said. "But you go to Georgia and you lose one in the eighth, bottom of the ninth and on a getaway day you lose 5-1. So you start out losing three to a very good baseball team, then you get the snowstorm of the century and you sit for 14 days. You haven't even seen a field, and to come out here ... This was a hard fought series."

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

Michael Lott opened the bottom of the sixth with a single that the Senators second baseman backhanded in the hole but couldn't make the throw in time. Tyler McCain hit down a sacrifice bunt to move Lott to second, and



Journal photo by Ron Agre

Shepherd's Michael Lott hits during the bottom of the sixth inning of the Rams' a 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.

reliever Jake Ross walked Tyler Beard to put Rams on first and second with one out.

Val Arduini followed Beard's walk with an 0-1 single over the outstretched pitching hand of Ross to score Lott and give the Rams the game winning score and a 4-3 advantage. Brian Collins pushed across Beard with a sacrifice fly to give the Rams their final 5-3 edge.

Falling Waters native Paul Chenoweth struck out three in the top of the sixth to pick up



the win, and Kenny Reisinger followed with a 1-2-3 seventh to pick up the save.

"We've got to get better," Riser said. "We've got to get

better on 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 hitters counts. That's always been one of our trade marks, and we know that and continue to work on that. It's game number six, you have to play to be good at it."

After opening the scoring in the nightcap when Lott scored from second on a single to center by Tyler Beard in the bottom of the third, Ram starting

pitcher Pat Smith struggled to begin the fourth.

Houston Darling and Caigan O'Callaghan 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 dove and missed a shot by O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan cruised to third with a triple and scored when Evan Gazza popped out to center.

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Shepherd FROM PAGE D1

The Senators increased the advantage to 3-1 when Eric Doyle took a Smith offering over the Outback Steakhouse sign in right field for a solo home run. Nathan Smith followed Doyle's home run with a single and moved to second on a sacrifice bunt before Smith settled and got out of the inning.

"The thing that will get overlooked is probably the fifth and the job that Patrick Smith did and the maturity he's achieved in getting out of the fifth inning with damage control," Riser said. "He was tired, he was running out of gas a little bit and they got on him. He could have very easily let them get in scoring five runs instead of

three and it's a 5-1 game instead of 3-1 and its over. He kept it there, basically bending, not breaking, and keeping us in it in the fifth."

Trailing 3-1 in the bottom of the fifth, Shepherd got a rare two-out rally that started with back to back doubles by Arduini and Collins. Collins' double scored Arduini to cut the lead to 3-2 before a single to shallow left by Nathan Minnich scored Collins.

Anthony Jackson followed with another single and Szafran walked, but the Rams scored no more as Pat Aragon lined out to right to leave the bases loaded.

The Rams got a strong pitching per-

formance in Game 1 as Collins went four innings to improve to 1-1 on the year. Senior reliever Bryan Wolfe scattered two hits over the final three innings to pick up the save.

Szafran went 2 for 3 and scored a pair of runs, while senior shortstop Aragon went 1 for 1 and drove in three runs.

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 (304) 263-3381, ext. 134 or tgrove@journal-news.net

Shepherd women force way into tourney semifinals

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 floor 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 complet-

ed 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 her 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 Orit 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, includ-

ing 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 WVI-AC 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 Tamez 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.