

Ram women edge Concord

BY BEN GIBSON
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — With under a minute to go, Shepherd's West Virginia Conference tournament game Monday night was looking very similar to its loss to Concord last week.

This time the Rams put a different ending, winning 59-57 in the final seconds to advance to the next round of the tournament in Charleston.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

CONCORD 57

LIONS 15-13

SHEPHERD 59

RAMS 16-11

The Rams led for the entire game, but with seven seconds to go sophomore guard Camisha Alexander drove down the lane for a game-tying layup, similar to her game-winning basket against the Rams last week.

Shepherd coach Melanie Ford elected not to call a timeout as the Rams inbounded the ball to Jerica Hewett, who drove the ball down the

court with seven seconds left.

Hewett drove up the left side of the court and down the baseline, going up for an off-balance layup after absorbing contact on the way up and making the game-winning basket.

"I'm used to being injured, knew the team needed me, so I was out there for them, and I just tried to make the layup at the end either way," Hewett said.

Hewett played 38 minutes and was on the receiving end of several charges, playing through obvious pain for most the game.

Shepherd's rollercoaster ride to victory had the fans giving Hewett a standing ovation when she came out of the trainer's room with three bags of ice wrapped around her.

"She's a winner, she puts her heart out there, and you can't complain when she out there giving 100 percent effort," Ford said.

Shepherd led at the end of the first half 34-27, taking advantage of a foul on a last-second layup, and two more shots from the foul line after coach Kenny Osborne argued

See WOMEN D2

Women

FROM PAGE D1

his way to a technical foul.

The Rams led for the entire game before the Lions closed the gap late in the game, leading by as many as 10 points. An overall conservative approach down the stretch by Shepherd allowed Concord to tie the game.

"We worked through the issues in practice we had with game management last week, and maybe were a bit too conservative with the lead," Ford said. Both team's shot poorly from the field,

"... maybe were a bit too conservative with the lead."

— **Melanie Ford**
Shepherd coach

with Concord shooting at 38 percent and Shepherd 35.7.

The Rams were led in scoring by junior guard Carrie Saunders with 14

points, while senior Center Camille Wilmer had 13.

The Lions' offense was led by Alexander, who suffered a knee injury, but looked no worse for wear after she returned to the floor and finished with 21 points.

The Rams advance to the next round of play at 1 p.m. Wednesday when they face Seton Hill, a 92-44 winner over Bluefield State, in quarterfinal action of the at the Charleston Civic Center.

Rams eliminated from WVC tourney

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. — Freshman Aeron Spencer Andy Byer scored 13 of his game-high 19 points in the second half to lead Pitt Johnstown (17-11) to an 83-69 win over Shepherd University (9-19) in first-round action of the West Virginia Conference men's basketball tournament at UPJ on Tuesday night.

The Mountain Cats got 18 points from Danny Branch, 14 points from Nick Novak and 12 points apiece from Patrick Grubbs and Rudy Roberts.

Derek Gallagher led the Rams with 17 points. He was 6 for 10 from the floor with a 4-for-8 effort from 3-point range.

Freshman Sidney McCray added 14 points and grabbed a team-high six rebounds, while junior forward Dave Karlson tossed in 10 points.

Freshman Aeron Spencer handed out a team-high five assists.

UPJ had a 38-36 lead at halftime.

After a McCray 3-pointer got Shepherd to within seven points at 57-50 with 11:14 remaining, Pitt Johnstown used a 13-6 run to extend its lead to 14 points and pull away for the win.

UPJ shot 58.9 percent (33-56) from the floor, while Shepherd had a 45.8 percent (27-59) shooting effort.

Pitt Johnstown forced 13 turnovers and committed 12. The Mountain Cats had a 32-27 rebounding edge.

Shepherd completed its season at 9-19, while Pitt Johnstown advances to the

tournament quarterfinals to face West Virginia State on Thursday.

WOMEN'S COLLEGE LACROSSE

Shenandoah 13, Shepherd 6
WINCHESTER — The Shepherd University women's lacrosse team dropped a 13-6 decision to Shenandoah University in its varsity debut at Shenandoah on Tuesday afternoon.

Freshman Brooke Jones scored the first goal in program history at 23-minute, 8-second mark on an unassisted tally.

Freshman Nicole Ruane had two goals and an assist and sophomore Kaitlyn Drake tallied a pair of goals

to pace the Rams (0-1). Freshman Taylor Moore added an assist.

Sara Mucciari led Shenandoah (1-2) with three goals and one assist. Jennie Ott added a goal and three assists.

Freshman netminder Emily Rachel recorded nine saves for the Rams, while Tori Beasley had seven saves for the Hornets.

Shenandoah had a 32-16 edge in shots, while Shepherd held a 29-24 advantage in ground balls. The Hornets were successful on 11 of 17 clears, while Shepherd was 13 of 28.

The Rams are slated to return to action at 4 p.m. on Thursday when they host Millersville at Ram Stadium.

— Staff reports



Hewett's late field goal keeps Shepherd moving

By Bob Madison

The night had been filled mostly with pain for Shepherd point guard Jerica Hewett.

She had taken two or three headlong spills after being tripped or from collisions with Concord players in the teams' WVIAC women's tournament first-round game at the Butcher Center.

One knee, the one with the floor burn, was sprayed with disinfectant and then wrapped in a Shepherd blue bandage. Then the bandage was removed, but Hewett continued to gingerly move like a person much older than her 20 years.

The bruising and pounding Hewett was taking only com-

pounded her on-court shooting troubles, especially from the free throw line where she missed all four of her foul shots in the first half, including two on technical foul shots.

The game was fraught with error. Mistakes of every stripe and description imaginable.

Shepherd's game-long lead had finally been trumped by Concord's do-it-all-for-the-Lady-Lions guard, Camisha Alexander, whose calculated drive through the lane to a game-tying layup with only eight seconds remaining seemed to presage an overtime period.

But Hewett and her mates rushed downcourt, trying to avoid a draining overtime . . . trying to survive against a Con-

cord team that had just days before dealt them a bitter one-point, homecourt loss in a regular season game.

Could Shepherd find a reasonable shot-attempt before time was gone? If so, who would take the last-second shot?

As it turned out, it was Hewett, who slipped ahead of the retreating Concord defense, who received an assist pass from Jenn Prine and was able to glance an off-balance layup off the backboard -- and in -- with 1.8 seconds left on the scoreboard that then read: "Rams 59, Guest 57".

After Concord's last-gasp pass toward midcourt only resulted in its 18th turnover, the scoreboard still had Shepherd ahead by a game-winning two points and ready to give itself a short celebration as the crowd of about 350 continued to exchange smiles and slaps on the back as their response to Hewett's game-preserving field goal.

The tournament game had the

distinct feel and appearance of a first-look November scrimmage as both sides failed to deliver much of anything positive.

Concord missed its first eight shots. Players stumbled, bumbled, and fell to the floor with alarming regularity. Hewett and teammate Shelby Fayak combined to miss their first 10 shots -- all of Fayak's being two- and three-footers.

At the half, Shepherd somehow had a 34-27 lead after shooting 35.5 percent from the floor, losing seven turnovers, and spluttering through its planned half-court offense.

Emily Daniel had made all four of her free throws, collared five rebounds, and scored six points as Shepherd's most effective player.

On the other hand, Concord was chafed by the inconsistent officiating and had only Alexander and Kristin Kidd contribute to its betterment.

The second half found the

Lady Lions much more aggressive and ready to play defense, possibly because their coach, Kenny Osborne, was sulfurous with his comments toward the officials and took his rancor into the dressing room.

The Lady Rams missed three straight inside shots and Alexander was back as a poison toward Shepherd's winning intentions.

But once Concord moved to within 35-33, Shepherd managed eight straight points to return its lead to 43-33.

Some of Shepherd's misguided steps had cost them personal fouls and the threesome of Camille Wilmer, Katie Biggs, and Fayak were all missing minutes because they were removed with too many fouls.

Alexander tied Concord's fortunes on her find-the-right-shot back . . . and the Shepherd lead dwindled to 51-48 with 6:52 showing.

Shepherd's turnover pattern could not be changed.

Only three missed foul shots by Concord's Jolysa Brown kept the Lady Lions from tying it.

Points by either side were not easily found. Instead, bobbled passes, turnovers, personal fouls, and frayed nerves were all front and center.

Near the end, Shepherd's Carrie Saunders missed the front end of a one-and-one free throw situation -- after Hewett had made 1-of-2 free throws -- and Concord was within two points of crasing all of Shepherd's game-long lead.

Alexander filtered down through the lane and rose to shoot her game-evening layup. Eight seconds were left.

Time enough for Hewett to get all the balm and all the solace she needed for what had transpired during the game's first 39:59 of playing time.

Time enough for her to glance her close-in shot high off the backboard . . . and through Concord's heart.

Unerring Cats unravel Shepherd

By Bob Madison

When Shepherd faced Pitt Johnstown last night in a first-round game of the WVIAC tournament, it is probable that the Mountain Cats won't be able to shoot 71.4 percent from the floor . . . or that guard Nick Novak won't be able to go a remarkable 13-for-13 with his never-miss marksmanship.

If the Mountain Cats can shoot as well as they did at Shepherd on Saturday afternoon while coasting to an impressive, 94-70, win that marred the Rams' Senior Day ceremonies, then Pitt Johnstown can make reservations for Charleston and the tournament quarterfinals on Thursday.

Coming into Saturday's last home game for seniors Derek Gallagher and Tyrone Roach, Shepherd had a two-game winning streak. But the Mountain Cats seemed bent on destruction right from the outset, disregarding the Shepherd pressure and crisply moving to an 11-3 lead.

Novak did not miss. And he was joined by massive center (6-foot-8, 270 pounds) Patrick Grubbs on the inside and left-handed straffer Danny Branch on

the perimeter as the threesome routinely plundered the Rams' defense.

For Shepherd, there was no relief in sight. No respite of any kind for the Rams.

Pitt Johnstown fired out to a 23-9 lead. Few Mountain Cats' shots missed. Fewer Shepherd shot-attempts found their mark. And when it came to securing the fallow Shepherd shot-attempts, it was Pitt Johnstown who found the rebounds.

Not only were the Mountain Cats finding the soft spots in the Shepherd defense, but their stone-faced defense made finding any opening by the Rams a difficult task.

It actually took Roach's three-pointer just before the first-half horn to keep Shepherd within 43-28 at intermission.

Could the Rams find some chink in the Cats' armor?

If there were any chinks in the armor, they were not apparent.

Certainly, there was no achilles heel concerning Pitt Johnstown's lethal offense.

In the second half, the Cats would drill 18-of-22 field goal tries, an alarming (for the properly stunned Rams) 81.8 percent

scope of accuracy.

How are you going to make any progress against a team that is over 80 percent accurate? You aren't if you are Shepherd.

Branch left-handed in several of his rainbow jumpers. Novak was not going to miss -- even once.

The difference between the teams went to 56-34 . . . and halfway through the second half it was 76-50.

The Cats rolled through a desperate Shepherd press. When you miss only four shots in a whole half, you can roll through a jungle in Borneo or a swamp as uncharted as the Okefenokee in southern Georgia.

When the bulls-eye busting Mountain Cats had wrapped up their 16-11 season, all that was left to ponder was "could they do it again when the same teams meet in Johnstown tonight?"

Not much attention could be paid to the scoring of Roach (18 points), Dave Karlson (16 points), Chad Moore (12 points), and Aeron Spencer (10 points) after seeing Novak throw in his 29 points, Branch his 20 points, and Grubbs his weighty 17 points.

Accurate field goal shooting by Moore, Spencer carries Rams

Shepherd was able to repel a second-half surge by visiting Concord and used its high-percentage shooting from the field to finally defeat the Mountain Lions, 92-85, in one of the Rams' final games of the WVIAC regular season.

The Rams made 61 percent of their two-point field goal attempts (27-for-45) and 57 percent of its three-point tries (11-for-18) to mostly atone for their mediocre free throw shooting -- 27-for-47 (57 percent).

Chad Moore tossed in 28 points -- the season-best for the freshman from Handley High in Winchester -- and fellow freshman Aeron Spencer also had a season-best 22 points as the Rams improved their WVIAC

record to 9-12 and their overall mark to 9-17.

Moore was 8-for-9 from the floor, made his only three-point attempt, and went 11-for-15 from the foul line. Spencer was 8-for-11 from the field and made 5-of-7 free throws.

The Rams also got 18 points from senior Tyrone Roach and had 10 points from reserve Jonathan Motichka, who was playing in his first game in three weeks.

Concord, which left the Butcher Center with a 4-17 conference record and 5-21 overall mark, had Kortea Johnson score 19 points and Matt Parker add another 18 points.

After leaving the floor at half-time with an eight-point lead (47-39), Shepherd moved out to a 22-

point lead in the second half . . . only to see Concord come rushing back.

The once-formidable lead was sliced to only four points at 80-76 with bout 3:30 remaining to be played.

Motichka then scored five straight points to return the Rams to a nine-point lead.

There were 34 personal fouls whistled against Concord and three Mountain Lions -- including two reserves -- fouled out. Shepherd was tagged with 20 personal fouls and didn't have anybody foul out.

Moore had nine of Shepherd's 28 rebounds. Concord collected 36 rebounds.

Even with their second straight win, the Rams stayed in 10th place in the WVIAC.

Concord women overtake Shepherd

Concord finished its women's basketball game at Shepherd with a 15-4 run that overcame a double-digit deficit and gave the Lady Mountain Lions an improbable 94-93 win at the Butcher Center on Wednesday.

The loss was Shepherd's third straight and left the Lady Rams with a 13-8 record in the WVIAC and a 14-11 overall mark. Shepherd remained in seventh place in the league regular-season standings. Concord improved to 11-10 in the conference and moved to 14-12 overall.

Jolysa Brown led the Mountain Lions with her 29 points and Camisha Alexander posted another 21 points. It was Alexander's steal and subsequent layup in the final seconds that completed the stirring Concord late-game comeback. Shepherd's Jerica Hewitt missed a potential game-deciding shot near the final horn.

Other double-figure scorers for Concord were Sydney Lindsey (18 points) and Kristin Kidd (13 points).

Not often does a team place six players in double figures and lose as Shepherd did . . . but not often does a team yield 94 points, either.

Scoring well for the Lady Rams were Camille Wilmer (19 points), Hewitt (15 points), Carrie Saunders (14 points), Katie Biggs (14 points), Emily Daniel (12 points), and Shelby Fayak (10 points).

Brown led Concord's rebounders with eight, while Shepherd was paced by Daniel's 10 rebounds. Shepherd had 31 rebounds and Concord had 28.

The hurried pace of the game led to numerous floor errors by both sides with Shepherd guilty of 22 turnovers and Concord committing 20 turnovers.

Both teams shot well in both halves with the game being tied

at 50-50 at the half.

Concord made 58.6 percent of its first-half shots and 58.5 percent of its second-half field goal attempts. The red-hot Lady Lions made 8-of-12 three-point attempts.

Shepherd connected on a sizzling 64.3 percent of its first-half attempts . . . and still could not get a lead. The Lady Rams then came back and connected on 53.7 percent of their second-half field goal tries.

Concord made 24-of-31 (77.4 percent) of its free throw tries, including an 11-for-14 showing from Brown. Shepherd attempted only 18 free throws and converted 15 of those (83.3 percent).

Shepherd had a 10-point lead near the five-minute mark of the second half . . . and could not hold it. The Lady Rams could produce only four points in the end-game minutes after roasting the Lady Lions for 35 minutes.

Wilmer, SU secure home game

By Bob Madison

After it had dropped three straight conference games, the Shepherd women were in some danger of falling far enough through the WVIAC standings to miss hosting a first-round game in the post-season tournament.

That pitfall was avoided by Saturday's 88-81 win over Pitt Johnstown at the Butcher Center.

It was an uplifting sequence of effective offensive minutes that boosted the Lady Rams to a comfortable lead . . . and actually enabled them to coast home with the win that earned them seventh place in the regular season standings and a first-round home game on Monday against Concord, the 10th-place finisher.

In the opening minutes, Shepherd had the game's first six points, but six turnovers in the first five minutes kept its production from being higher.

More Shepherd turnovers by Melissa Furr and Carrie Saunders kept its point total in check . . . and the lead was only 12-11 with 11:10 left in the half.

The Lady Rams may have been squandering their offensive missions with too many turnovers, but they were mastering the Lady Cats on the boards . . . eventually outrebounding them, 26-14, in the first half.

From a 16-16 tie, Shepherd

scored the next eight points as reserve Emily Daniel scored inside with spin moves and adroit layups.

When the half closed with Shepherd holding a 40-36 lead, it had been the 12 Lady Rams' turn-overs that had partially negated their 12-rebound advantage and 50 percent shooting from the field. Daniel, Camille Wilmer, and Katie Biggs had all scored 10 points, but Saunders and Jerica Hewitt were scoreless.

After only four minutes of the last half, Shepherd had gone ahead, 54-40, with the continued inside presence of Wilmer, Shelby Fayak, and finally some points from Saunders.

Three minutes later, the Shepherd lead had grown to 65-43.

At the 12:12 mark, starting guards Hewitt and Furr had been replaced with Shepherd holding a commanding 22-point lead.

Pitt Johnstown installed a half-court trapping defense against the new non-scoring guard duo of Alex Tamez and Jenn Prince.

Without either Hewitt or Furr, the offense was concentrated inside.

With just 3:47 showing, the lead was still 77-57 as its inside points were not interrupted.

But the last few minutes caught Shepherd by surprise and the Lady Cats kept using Tamez turnovers and a barrage of perimeter jumpers to outscore Shep-

herd, 24-11, in a blizzard of almost-meaningless points.

The final margin was Shepherd's shortest lead since the 18:47 mark of the half.

By securing seventh-place, the Lady Rams earned a tournament home date against Concord, a team that had beaten them in Shepherdstown on February 24.

The WVIAC announced its all-conference teams and Shepherd's senior center Wilmer was selected to the second-team.

The nine-member first team had Player of the Year Donita Adams (Glennville), Sheena Aden (Pitt Johnstown), Alexandria Barnette (West Virginia State), Lydia Besidenbaugh (West Virginia Wesleyan), Jordan Burkes (Seton Hill), Katie Lintner (Seton Hill), Ashley Vavrek (Fairmont), Lindsey Kentner (Charleston), and Tori Hansen (West Liberty).

The eight-member second team had Camisha Alexander (Concord), Kourtney Booth (Wheeling Jesuit), Jolysa Brown (Concord), Andrea Dalton (Pitt Johnstown), Tareana Dixon (Charleston), Kristen Golden (Glenville State), and Shalisa Hill (Davis & Elkins) in addition to Wilmer.

The Freshman of the Year was Salisha Hill of Davis & Elkins and the Coach of the Year was Steve Tierney of regular season champion West Virginia Wesleyan.

Rams upset the Griffins, make semis

Shepherd faces No. 6 Fairmont today

CHARLESTON — Seton Hill left Shepherd's Carrie Saunders bloodied.

Saunders and the rest of the Rams left the Griffins bruised and beaten in the quarterfinals of the West Virginia Conference tournament Wednesday afternoon at the Charleston Civic Center Coliseum.

Seventh-seeded Shepherd shot 55 percent from the field to record a 76-64 upset over No. 2 Seton Hill in the opening game of the WVC quarterfinals.

The Rams, which shot less than 35 percent during both regular season losses to Seton Hill, grabbed control of the contest with a 21-2 burst over a nine-minute stretch late in the opening half to erase a nine-point lead by the Griffins.

The Rams moved into the semifinals against sixth-seeded Fairmont, against which the Rams split regular-season meetings. Fairmont knocked off No. 3 Charleston, the defending WVC tournament champion.

Shepherd led 39-34 at intermission and came out of the locker room with a 16-7 run to build their biggest lead at 55-41 on Emily Daniel's jumper.

Seton Hill chipped away at the lead and closed to within four points at 65-61 with 2:27 remaining following a pair of Jordan Burkes free throws, but the Griffins could draw no closer. Shepherd connected on 7 of 8 free throws in the final 1:52 to put the game on ice.

Katie Biggs paced Shepherd with 19 points and seven rebounds. Saunders, who left the game briefly late in the first half with a bloody nose, added 18 points and six rebounds. Jerica Hewett tossed in 14 points for the Rams. Camille Wilmer also scored in double figures with 11 and ripped down a game-high eight rebounds to help the Rams, the conference's top rebounding team, own a 39-25 edge on the glass.

See RAMS C3

Rams

FROM PAGE C1

"Having Saunders and Biggs shoot like they did down here — the Civic Center has a different atmosphere — they stepped up," Shepherd coach Melanie Ford said. "Saunders coming off the injury in the first half, I don't think she missed."

Burkes topped Seton Hill with 21 points and six rebounds. Erika Haitz provided 12 points, six rebounds and five steals. Katie Lintner ended with 11 points and Orit Farchi recorded 10 points and eight assists for the Griffins.

Seton Hill (22-7), which saw a 13-game win streak snapped, now awaits the verdict of the NCAA Division II Women's Basketball Committee on a possible at-large bid. Shepherd (17-11) must win the conference tournament to qualify for the eight-team East Regional.

"It is always exciting upsetting the No. 2 team," Ford said. "We were comfortable, though, since we played them twice this year. Our girls came out determined today."

Fairmont downed Charleston 64-62 as the Falcons swiped the ball as Charleston tried for a tying basket at the buzzer.

The Rams and Fairmont play at 1 p.m. Friday.



SHEPHERD PHOTO

The Shepherd women's softball team opened its season last weekend by winning all four games it played. The Lady Rams swept a doubleheader from Chowan (NC) and repeated the sweep on Sunday against Virginia State. Shepherd is at home on Friday, March 5.

Shepherd softball selected ninth by league vote

By Bob Madison

The pre-season vote of the WVIAC softball coaches left Shepherd standing in ninth place for the coming 2010 conference season.

The Lady Rams were placed toward the middle of the predicted conference standings. Shepherd's season was slated to begin this past weekend with games in Mufreesboro, North Carolina against Chowan.

Missing from last year's team that finished with a 23-23 overall record and a 15-13 WVIAC mark are pitcher Erica Snoddy (7-4 with a 2.22 ERA), Caitlin Davis (.327 average), Amy Edmondson (.324 average), Amanda Orkoskey (.296 average), and Rae Johnson (.285 average).

Two second-team All-WVIAC players do return in shortstop Courtni Williams (.326 average and 13 RBIs) and pitcher Tricia Bettura (10-9 record with a 2.44 ERA). Bettura also batted a healthy .322.

Infielder Chelsie Oals hit .315 as a freshman shortstop in 2009. Outfielder Amber Dudek hit a solid .281 with 18 RBIs. Pitcher/infielder Nicole Pitcock slipped from her 2008 performance and went 6-10 on the mound with a 4.71 ERA while batting only .190.

Infielder Cammi Orlandi, who has been consistently capable on defense, batted just .177 last season. Part-time starters back are catcher Kris Durham, who had 44 official at-bats and hit .159; third baseman Allie Brambeck, who had 41 official at-bats and hit .220; and infielder Delaney Bell, who had only 24 official at-bats and hit .250.

The freshmen on the 2010 team include pitcher Brooke Stambaugh from Century High in Sykesville, Maryland; outfielder Bianca Biondillo from Canfield, Ohio; outfielder Cassie Mand from Westminster, Maryland; utility player Lexi Matula from Chesapeake High in Pasadena, Maryland; and utility player Tiffany Farmer from Martinsburg High.

Upper classmen new to the program are pitcher Amber Collier, a junior transfer from defending conference champion West Virginia Wesleyan who played in high school at William Monroe in Virginia, and junior Megan Holmes, a utility player who prepped at Musselman and comes in from Hagerstown Community College.

The Lady Rams will have only nine home dates with the first scheduled game in Shepherdstown against conference foe West Liberty on Friday, March 5.

West Virginia Wesleyan was the conference coach's choice to win the championship again in 2010.

As is almost universally the case, a college softball team's success or failure rides with its pitchers. All WVIAC playing dates call for doubleheaders to be played . . . and some of the schools try using only one pitcher to start both games.

Shepherd is again a darkhorse in the conference reckonings. Should the Lady Rams rise above the predicted ninth-place it will be because of their pitchers and the prowess of the defense.