I enjoy watching the non-Football Bowl Subdivision football playoffs because most kids that I talk to only know FBS schools. I have told them on more than one occasion that there’s some really good football at the Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA), as well as Division II and III, but most kids watch FBS schools on television and think that any number less than one means inferiority.

I can tell from personal experience that that kind of thinking is inaccurate. Still, I enjoy the FCS series on television and have finally discovered that we have a number of kids playing for various teams, some still alive in the playoffs, and others eliminated.

Delaware (12-2), which will play in the FCS National Championship game Jan. 7 against Eastern Washington (12-2), has several Howard County residents on its roster, including Jeff Javier (Howard), Derek Coleman (Marriotts Ridge) and Jake Geiser from Columbia, who graduated from DeMatha.

Villanova, which lost in the semifinals to Eastern Washington, has Aaron Conway (DeMatha).

Shepherd College, a Division II school from West Virginia, has Brian Taylor, Mike Franklin and Aaron Dailey, all from Long Reach, and A.J. Bonavitacola, from Howard High.

Former Oakland Mills quarterback Justin Sottler, now of Division III Wesley College, of Dover, Del., tried to keep his team afloat in the playoffs with a 24-for-43, 256-yard performance against Wisconsin-Whitewater, but it wasn't enough.
COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Rams' Steele to play in Cactus Bowl

Shepherd University senior Deante Steele has been selected to play in the Cactus Bowl on Jan. 7, 2011, at Javelina Stadium in Kingsville, Texas.

Steele, a first team All-West Virginia Conference selection as a return specialist for the third straight year, had a 20.8-yard kickoff-return average and a 9.7 punt-return average this season. He set an NCAA Division II record with his 11th career kick-return touchdown in a win over West Liberty, and his 13 career return touchdowns tied a Division II record.

The Cactus Bowl will feature 88 Division II players from across the country.
Former Potomac star to play in Cactus Bowl

By Staff reports

Deante Steele, a former cornerback/return specialist for Potomac’s football team, will represent Shepherd University’s squad in the Cactus Bowl on Jan. 7 at 7 p.m.

Steele is the first Ram to take part in the Bowl since Dervon Wallace in 2008.

The game features 88 Division II players from around the country.

Steele was a first team all-conference selection as a punt returner for the third straight year.

He averaged 20.8 yards per kickoff return and 9.7 per punt return.

He set an NCAA Division II record with his 11th career kickoff return for a touchdown this year against West Liberty.
The year in review: December 2010

11:38 PM EST, December 30, 2010

Editor’s note: This is the 12th installment in a 12-part series looking back at some of the biggest local, regional and national sports stories of 2010.

3 — The HCC men’s basketball team beats previously unbeaten Frederick, 96-88.

4 — Shepherd University beat Mercyhurst College 49-14 in NCAA Division II football playoffs.
LOCAL UPDATE: Two River Ridge District products and Concord University teammates, ex-Pulaski County nose guard Josh Miller and former Christiansburg punter Brad Cox, were named second-team All-West Virginia Intercollegiate. ... Patrick Henry graduate Joseph Mesadieu, a senior at Glenville State, was named honorable mention at running back.

Troy McNeill, a redshirt freshman from Lord Botetourt, finished the season as the No. 1 punter for Shepherd College in Shepherdstown, W.Va. Shepherd went 12-2 this year and was ranked seventh in Division II, its best finish.
Steele to play in Cactus Bowl

BY ANDREW BARTOLINON
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Deane Steele’s stellar college football career will continue for one more game as the Shepherd University senior cornerback and return specialist will be playing in the Cactus Bowl this Friday.

The Cactus Bowl, which brings together the best 88 Division II players in the country, will be played at Javelina Stadium in Kingsville, Texas.

Steele, who was chosen to play as a return specialist in the bowl, is the first Ram to play in the Cactus Bowl since Darrent Wallace in 2008.

“Playing in the Cactus Bowl is a big honor. It’s one of the biggest games in Division II,” Steele said. “It’s a way of getting exposure and there’s a lot to prove when I get out there.”

Steele has already proven he’s one of Division II’s top players as he’s a two-time All-American and has been a first team all-West Virginia Conference selection as a return specialist the last three seasons.

He leads a 201.4 kickoff return average and a 9.7 yard return mark this season alone.

His 13 touchdowns, all on returns, are the NCAA Division II record.

Steele also set a Division II record with 11 career kick return touchdowns. He scored his 11th during the West Liberty game this season.

The selection of the Cactus Bowl is to bring the top athletes from more than 135 universities around the country, many of whom will go on to play in the NFL.

Shepherd coach Monte Caster is extremely pleased with Steele heading to Texas to represent the Rams in the Cactus Bowl.

“As a coach, I’m excited and proud for him. He was a big contributor to our team’s success,” Caster said. “It’s a great feeling as a coach to see him go and I hope he gets a chance to show his ability during the game.”

“There’s going to be a lot of opportunities down there. A lot of scouts are attending, and I’m hoping that Deane is able to further his football career after college.”

As for Steele, he’s focused on putting on a good show.

“You gotta be on your ‘A’ game when you go down there. Hopefully, I can do that,” he said.
Fifth straight win for Lady Rams

Shelby Fayak, Carrie Saunders, and Emily Daniel combined to shoot 19-for-30 from the field and score a total of 54 points as the Shepherd women’s basketball team repulsed a second-half surge by visiting West Virginia State to post an 85-74 WVIAC win on Monday evening at the Butcher Center.

The win was Shepherd’s fifth straight and kept the Lady Rams positioned near the top of the 15-team conference standings. Shepherd is 5-1 in the WVIAC and 7-3 overall. West Virginia State fell to 1-5 in the WVIAC and 3-9 overall.

The Lady Rams held a 44-36 lead at the half. But the Yellow Jackets moved to within 54-50 with 11:41 left in the game.

Shepherd responded well to the challenge and was able to outscore the Yellow Jackets, 13-4, over the next three minutes to move in front, 67-54.

The longest lead the Lady Rams enjoyed was at 70-54 with 7:11 showing.

West Virginia State lost despite going 29-for-54 (53.7 percent) from the field and 15-of-19 (78.9) from the foul line.

Shepherd’s player rotation was cut back to eight players from the 10 or 11 players coach Melanie Ford usually plays.

Saunders was Shepherd’s leading scorer as she went 6-for-9 from the field, including 5-of-6 from three-point range. Saunders scored 22 points. Daniel was 7-for-13 from the field and made 4-of-5 free throws for 18 points. Fayak went 6-for-8 from the floor and made both her free throws to post 14 points.

The Yellow Jackets had only two players that made much offensive headway. Chelsey Davis totaled 27 points on 12-of-16 from the field and 3-for-3 from the foul line. Melissa Ford checked in with 22 points on 9-of-15 from the floor and 4-of-5 from the foul line.

No other West Virginia State player could score more than eight points. The four Yellow Jacket substitutes logged a combined 59 minutes but managed only eight points between them.

The game’s leading rebounder was Shepherd point guard Jerica Hewett, who claimed nine of her team’s 38 rebounds. Daniel and Saunders both had seven rebounds.

West Virginia State had 31 rebounds with Sharena Atkinson getting six.

Saunders had six assists, Hewett had five, and starting guard Jenn Prine had four for Shepherd which totaled 21 as compared with West Virginia State’s 16 assists.

Turnovers were a negative consideration for both teams, but the Yellow Jackets were worse off than was Shepherd with its 29 floor errors, while the Lady Rams were guilty of 23 floor mistakes.

Shepherd is back at home tonight (Wednesday) when it hosts conference rival Glenville at 6 p.m.
Shepherd football news

The Shepherd football team has been selected as the WVIAC Sportsmanship Champions by a vote of the conference’s head football coaches and game officials.

The award was begun in 2008 by the conference’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Shepherd receives a traveling “WVIAC Championship Champion” banner for one year.

WVIAC Commissioner Barry Blizzard noted: “Game environment and sportsmanship are defining issues for Division II. We’re proud to be part of this initiative by honoring teams that conduct themselves the right way.”

Shepherd return specialist Deante Steele has been invited to play in the Cactus Bowl in Kingsville, Texas on January 7.

Previous Shepherd players appearing in the Cactus Bowl were running back Dervon Wallace and defensive back James Rooths.

The rosters of the two teams at the Cactus Bowl have 88 players from Division II schools from all over the country.
Shepherd wins second in row

BY NATE MACZUZAK
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

SHEPHERDSTOWN — There wasn’t much the Shepherd men didn’t do right in a 85-68 win against Glenville on Wednesday at the Butcher Center.

Four players reached double figures, the Rams kept the Pioneers off balance on both ends and Shepherd started its first win streak of the season while improving to 5-6 overall, 2-4 in West Virginia Conference play.

“I think overall we played a really good ballgame,” Shepherd coach Justin Namolik said. “Overall I’m happy, but this game is over with. It would be nice to keep the win streak going Saturday, but it starts tomorrow at practice.”

Redshirt freshman Brantley Osborne paced the Rams with 21 points, Jonathan Motichka and Marcus Pilgrim added 13 apiece and Sidney McCray finished with 10 during a

See MEN D3

Rams hold off Pioneers

BY BEN GIBSON
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The physical nature of Wednesday night’s game was closer to hockey than basketball, but the Shepherd Rams knocked off Glenville State 102-93 and handed the Pioneers their first West Virginia Conference loss.

The Pioneers closed the gap to within one point late in the game, but they couldn’t break the Rams hold on the lead.

“There was times when we bent a little bit, but we came back, but we didn’t break because we have a team that has been in this position before and knows when to fight,” Shepherd coach Melanie Ford said. “They know when to stick to our guns and stick with what was working on offense and defense.”

The Rams, who won their sixth in a row, had held as much as an 18-point lead in the second half, but Glenville’s constant rotation of players and fullcourt press defense

See WOMEN D3

Shepherd’s Jerrin Prine scores two of her 24 points in Shepherd’s win over Glenville, in the background is Hedgesville graduate Miranda Reed.
Men  FROM PAGE D1

lights-out, 3-point shooting performance that came on the heels of a 92-88 upset win against California, Pa., on Dec. 30.

The Rams shot 78 percent from beyond the arc in the second half to pace a 52-percent effort.

Osborne and Motichka led the way with three 3-pointers each, and Aaron Spencer, Pilgrim and McCray added a pair apiece as the Rams finished the night 12 of 23 from long range.

Shepherd took its biggest lead of the night at 24 points (69-45) on Osborne’s final 3-pointer of the night with 7 minutes, 23 seconds remaining in regulation.

“That kid can shoot,” Namolik said of Osborne, who finished with an 8-for-11 effort from the floor and 3 for 5 from 3-point range.

After a slow start, Glenville’s Nick Dent and Justin Caldwell began heating up late in the second period.

Dent hit all four of his game-high 3-pointers and Caldwell tossed in 14 points after the intermission to help the Pioneers cut the Ram lead to 74-64 with 3:25 remaining. But Shepherd finished strong to cruise to its second straight victory.

“The one thing we keep talking about is playing all 40 minutes, executing our stuff and playing together,” Namolik said. “It got a little hairy there at the end, but we stayed composed, executed some of the changes we made in the last week.

“This is an offensive league. Dent and Caldwell are hard to stop all night. We did a great job defending them. We talked about that before the game. It is tough to keep guys like that from making shots. But we stayed composed and made minor adjustments on Dent. We put (Motichka) on him, and I think he stopped him really well.”

Caldwell led Glenville with 21 points and Dent finished with 18.

It was Shepherd’s night from the tip, however, as the Rams moved out to a 7-0 lead on five points by Osborne.

Glenville cut the lead to 7-5 before Shepherd went on a 12-4 run, punctuated by an Osborne layup off a Motichka assist for a 19-9 lead with 11:20 remaining in the first half.

Motichka led the Rams with four assists.

Glenville trimmed the lead to six points (19-13) on a Jeffrey Lewis putback midway through the first, but that was as close as the Pioneers got the rest of the night.

The Rams held Glenville to 1-for-7 shooting from 3-point range in the first half. The Pioneers picked up their shooting in the second half to finish the night 41 percent from beyond the arc.

Morgan McDonald, who played prep basketball at Musselman, led Shepherd with six rebounds, adding eight points to top both of his season highs. McDonald posted his high-water marks with seven points against Cal and four rebounds against Alderson-Broaddus.

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Women  FROM PAGE D1

slowly cut Shepherd’s lead. The Pioneers cut the lead to one with just over three minutes left in the second half, but the Rams hit their final nine free throws to hold on for their eighth win.

While both combined for 46 fouls, that number alone doesn’t do justice to the pushing and shoving by both teams. The Pioneers’ full-team substitutions were more like shift changes, giving the WVC showdown the feel of a hockey game.

“I did a poor job conveying to our team how physical this game was going to be,” Glenville coach Bunky Harkleroad said. “We talked about it and talked about it, but I don’t think we kept our composure and reacted to it the way we should have.”

Shepherd guard Jerica Hewett was well suited to the physical play and was already sporting a black eye from an earlier win. She picked up a few more bumps and bruises but scored 14 points and grabbed a game-high 17 rebounds.

“Falling down and getting back up, I find humor in it because people think I’m going to stay on the ground,” Hewett said. “Coach Ford gets us ready in the weight room to play a game like this.”
Todd Stanford's column on boys basketball: Guards of a feather (http://dailyitem.com/o200_sports/x126037528/Todd-Stanfords-column-on-boys-basketball-Guards-of-a-feather)

By Todd Stanford
The Daily Item (http://dailyitem.com)

As the ball floated into the air for the tipoff of Tuesday night's Mifflinburg/Shikellamy clash, the two opposing guards stood shoulder to shoulder.

And rightfully so.

Waiting for the tip to be contested were the Wildcats' Zac Hoy and the Braves' Tyler Pratt, two of the best guards in the Heartland Athletic Conference. Although neither player would have a great night by their lofty standards, the HAC-I battle ultimately came down to a duel between the two. With his team trailing 41-40 in the final seconds, Pratt started to back Hoy down in the paint, but Hoy swiped the ball away and Mifflinburg ultimately got possession en route to a 43-40 win.

The two teams will meet again on Jan. 29 and possibly again in the District 4 playoffs.

But I don't want to use this space to handicap any future matchups between the Wildcats and Braves. No, I want to talk about both Pratt and Hoy and point out how well they're both doing at continuing traditions at their respective programs. Both teams have had some great guards in recent years. Mifflinburg had Brad Musser, Tim Devanney and, more recently, Keith Fogel.

On the Shikellamy side, there's been the Moyer brothers, Nick and Brad, Kyle Snyder and Brantley Osborne.

Pratt, a 5-foot-9 junior, and Hoy, a 5-10 senior, are both making their cases to join those respective pantheons — a fact that pleases both of them.

"(The Musser and Fogels) live on my street," says Hoy, whose father, Eldon, has coached Mifflinburg for 14 seasons now. "I'd watch them (playing pickup games) and try to pick up things from each person."

Hoy had plenty of opportunity to do just that, as he was the team statistician when he was younger.

"(Fogel) was a lot more athletic than I was," says Hoy, who considers himself more like Musser. "(Musser) was more fundamental. But you try to use pieces from everyone. (Fogel) was really quick, and (Musser) was more like a true point guard."

Like Musser and Fogel, Hoy has also scored more than 1,000 career points. He hit the milestone in a win over Loyalsock last month, with both Musser and Fogel in the stands watching.

When asked if he thinks he's done a good job following in the Mifflinburg guard tradition, Hoy takes a

Continued on the next page
"That's for other people to decide," he says. "I'm just trying to do what I know works for me. ... The pullup jumper is my thing; it's what I do well."

Like Hoy, Pratt knows the great guards who have gone before him. As a kid, he idolized the Moyer brothers. He even plays with them and Andrew Brown (a Shikellamy grad who played with the Moyers and is now an assistant with the program) in a men's league during the offseason.

"I definitely think they've been the biggest impact on me," says Pratt, who should close in on 1,000 career points next year. "Going through middle school and seeing them play ... it makes me want to get (a title) for myself, but also for those guys." (Shikellamy's one District 4 championship was in 1979.)

Pratt currently learns at the feet of Snyder, now a volunteer assistant coach for the Braves. But he's also in frequent contact with Osborne, who plays at Division II Shepherd University in West Virginia. Pratt was a freshman on the varsity the year Osborne was a senior.

"Being able to see him every day in practice, we would always go after each other," Pratt says. "We would go after each other every day. Off the court it was a completely different story. We were like brothers."

When asked which former Shikellamy player he most emulates, Pratt names a trio.

"I want to be as fast as Nick (Moyer) was and I want to be able to shoot like Brad (Moyer)," he says, "with a little Brantley mixed in."

— Sports reporter Todd Stanford covers high school boys basketball for The Daily Item. E-mail comments to tstanford@dailyitem.com (mailto:tstanford@dailyitem.com).