WC's Caison Signs With Shepherd

Warren County senior Damien Caison signed a national letter of intent Friday to play football at Shepherd University.

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Reporter: Matt Estreich

Caison expects to play fullback, H-back or tight end for the Rams. He could see significant time next year as a freshman.

Shepherd finished the 2010 season ranked #7 in Division II.
"He has every excuse to fail, but he hasn't," Ballou Coach Moe Ware said of Delonte Edwards, right, who has committed to play at Shepherd University.

From car thief to honor roll

Shot twice by 16, Edwards turned his life around and will soon head to college as a QB prospect.

BY ALAS GOLDENBACH

The blood on the hands of 16-year-old Delonte Edwards was his own, and it told him much more than he had just been shot.

As he lay on a bed in the emergency room at Greater Southeast Hospital, waiting for his mother to arrive, waiting for doctors to tell him whether he would recover from the wound about six inches below his amputee, Edwards knew he needed more than a gun and water to clean his hands.

He realized he'd had enough. Enough of stealing cars. Enough of robbing other kids for dinner money. Enough of street fights over petty neighborhood beef. Enough of waiting days in a marijuana haze.

"That night, I told myself that I wanted something different," said Edwards, a high school freshman at Ballou at the time of the Feb. 10, 2008, shooting. "I was tired of this life. Nobody was giving me anything. I had to get it myself."

Three years later, the 6-foot, 160-pound Edwards is coming off a football season that earned him second-team All-Met honors as a quarterback at Ballou, and Friday night, he will be honored at the Pigskin Club of Washington's 73rd annual awards dinner as one of the area's top players.

He is committed to play this fall at Shepherd (W.Va.) University, but while most standout high school football players depend on athletic scholarships, most of Edwards's tuition will be paid through the College Success Foundation's Achievers Scholarship, which is funded through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Edwards has become an honor roll student, whose guidance counselor Kira Rowe says:

"I had to make a decision. I didn't want to be average. I wanted to be great, not a C student. I wanted to be an A student," Edwards said of his academics.
Ballou's Edwards finds his path from the streets to a scholar

"And do, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." — John F. Kennedy

"It's like a college student walking through this building. You just see something that's so special in how he approaches his work." — Coach Moore

"I'm just going to hang on." — Edwards

"It's a pretty rough road." — Edwards

"That's not my fault." — Edwards

"I've been through a lot," he explained. "I get upset at my mother a lot of times because she

EDWARDS FROM D.C.

she doesn’t make it."

Around the halls of Ballou High School, "D.C. Edwards" is a nickname for the 19-year-old student who is often seen wearing a suit and tie. He is a member of the football team and a senior at the school. His classmates call him "D.C.", but he prefers to be called "Edwards".

Edwards was born and raised in Southeast D.C., a neighborhood that is known for its high poverty rate and high dropout rate. Despite these challenges, Edwards has managed to excel in his studies and in sports. He is a straight-A student and a starting varsity player on the football team.

"I'm just going to hang on," he said. "I'm going to work hard and make it."
Shepherd men fight for win

By Ben Gibson
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Rams held the lead at half- time, 34-31, and stretched its lead to seven with just over 10 minutes remaining in the second half. The Rams slowly cut away at the Griffins’ lead before taking it from them with under eight minutes to play.

Though the Rams never trailed from that point, they found themselves tied with 2:03 left in the game.

Maucus Pilgrim helped Shepherd take the lead for good with a jumper and a pair of free throws, which gave the Rams a four-point lead with under a minute and helped ensure the victory.

The Rams had some trouble shooting in the first half, making 33.3 percent of their shots from the field, but better shot selection in the second half lifted their percentage to 55.6 percent and helped shepherd chip away at the Griffins.

“I’ve said before, when you play from behind, your mistakes get magnified, but tonight we were able to overcome them,” Namolik said.

Shepherd was fueled by Chad Moore’s double-double performance. He scored 22 points and brought down 16 rebounds. He also led the team with three assists. Brantley Osborne had 16 points and was the only other Ram in double digits.

Shepherd heads on the road Thursday to face Pitt-Johnstown, before finishing out the regular season with a three-game home stand.

Ram women fall to Griffins

By Ben Gibson
FOR THE JOURNAL

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The Shepherd University Rams women lost in heart-breaking fashion, missing a free throw with four seconds left that could have given them the lead and a Valentine’s Day victory Monday at the Beaver Center.

Instead, the game went into overtime where Shepherd struggled, falling 74-68 to the Seton Hill Griffins and losing ground in the West Virginia Conference standings.

“This is tournament seed, and our team felt these games matter as much as the tournament games do,” Shepherd coach Melissa Ford said.

Shepherd’s slow start may have been its biggest problem against Seton Hill, forcing the Rams to play from behind for most of the game.

“We need to make some shots in the first half next time,” Ford said. “We didn’t play against a zone defense like that in a while, but we rushed our shots and missed our free throws.”

Seton Hill’s defense had the Rams shooting only 25 percent in the first half, going 7 for 28 from the floor, and the Rams wouldn’t take advantage of their chances from the foul line, making only 5 of 10 free throws.

The seton Hill Griffins were able to exploit the Shepherd defense as Jordan Burke and Paula Ahlert both knocked down pairs of three-pointers, setting up a number of easy baskets as Seton Hill shot 48 percent from the floor.

Shepherd struggled to close the gap, trailing 15-21 at the half and behind one of its worst offensive 20 minutes of the season.

The Rams trailed by as much as 16 points early in the second half, but put together a 11-2 scoring run to cut the Seton Hill lead to two with just over 10 minutes remaining in the game.

“It was excellent energy in the second half, and they believed they could come back and win,” Ford said.

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“She only took the intensity and just taking it one step at a time.”

The Griffins stretched their lead to as many as eight with just under two minutes left, but Shepherd found a way to rally in the final minutes.

The Rams took the lead in the final minutes of regulation, with Jumy Brown and Jenn Prine knocking down critical free throws, followed by a Jerica Hewett jumper that put them over the top.

The Griffins bounced back with Burke knocking down two free throws for a one-point advantage.

A foul gave Shepherd a chance to win regulation, however, but Hewett was unable to convert both free throws and the game went into extra time.

Seton Hill took control of the contest in overtime, taking the lead quickly and never trailing.

The Griffins pushed their advantage to 16 points with 30 seconds in the overtime period, ending any hopes of a Shepherd comeback.

With a tough road game against Pitt-Johnstown on Thursday, Shepherd may look back at a missed opportunity to move up in the WVC standings.
MEN'S BASKETBALL

Shepherd 62, Ohio Valley 56

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Sophomore forward Chad Moore scored 20 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead Shepherd University over Ohio Valley in the West Virginia Conference.

Moore hit on 7 of 13 field goals and was 6 of 8 from the foul line. He added four steals, three assists and two blocks.

Senior forward Dave Karlson had 13 points and nine rebounds, while redshirt freshman guard Brantley Osborne scored 10 points for the Rams (12-14, 9-12).

Rodney Everage had 16 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Fighting Scots (6-17, 6-14). Donavin Vinson and Kendall Allison each added 11 points.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Ohio Valley 81, Shepherd 72

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — Shelby Way scored 26 points and Amber Avery added 24 to lead Ohio Valley (12-11, 8-11) over Shepherd University in the West Virginia Conference.

Senior guards Jerica Hewett — a Boonsboro graduate — and Carrie Saunders each had 16 points to lead the Rams (13-12, 11-10). Hewett added six rebounds and three steals. Junior guard Jenn Prine had 12 points.

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Mount Olive 4-2, Shepherd 0-5

MOUNT OLIVE, N.C. — Senior catcher Megan Holmes went 2-for-3 with a two-run homer and an RBI double to lead Shepherd University to a 5-2 win in the nightcap of a doubleheader at Mount Olive, which won the opener 4-0.

Junior third baseman Chelsie Oals had two hits and senior outfielder Amber Dudek added a two-run double in the nightcap for the Rams (1-1). Freshman Brooke Stambaugh worked six innings for the win.

Krista Ware tossed a two-hit shutout to lead the Trojans (4-6) in the opener.
New SteepleCats manager reaches goal

By Howard Herman, Berkshire Eagle Staff

Wednesday February 23, 2011

Clayton Kulick, an assistant coach at Division II Shepherd, has wanted to get to the NECBL for three years.

Kulick has spent several years in college baseball coaching and working in various summer wood bat leagues. It was all, he said, to get to the New England Collegiate Baseball League.

Now, North Adams SteepleCats general manager Sean McGrath is giving him the opportunity, hiring the Shepherd University assistant coach to be the SteepleCats’ manager this summer.

"It's been a goal of mine to get to that league for the last three years," he said. "I put myself in a position professionally, being a [managed] the last two seasons in order to get myself the opportunity to get into the NECBL. I'm looking forward to the challenge." McGrath said that while the SteepleCats didn't get their guy the first time, he and the board of directors are happy to have him now.

"We offered him the position last year. He was our No. 1 choice but he had a previous engagement and had to make the right decision to decline our offer," McGrath said. "As soon as the season ended, he was on my mind." Kulick is a 2005 graduate of Kutztown State University, and he has been an assistant there, at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington and at Georgia College and State University.

He is in his first year at Shepherd, a school picked to finish second in the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

During his summers, Kulick has coached in the NCT Collegiate Summer League based in the Midwest, and the Atlantic Collegiate Baseball League, based in the northeast.

"He's a young, up-and-coming coach. He's got several years of summer baseball experience in different leagues," McGrath said. "He's similar to Marc Pevoa, Lex Quintero and Brian Hamm, who's now at Amherst College, and Jeff Verplancke -- coaches who came through the SteepleCats and have advanced in their coaching careers."

Kulick also has three years of independent professional baseball, spending the 2005-07 seasons in the Can-Am League. His best year was 2006 when he hit .306 in 57 games for the New Jersey Jackals.

As to the kind of team Clayton Kulick will deploy this summer, the new SteepleCats manager said much will depend on the strengths of the players McGrath is getting to wear the gold and black.

"From an offensive standpoint, I like to put guys in motion and I like to be aggressive on the basepaths," he said. "That will open up opportunities for our hitters to be successful. It's nice if you've got a guy who can hit one over the fence, but our offense is probably going to revolve around being aggressive on the basepaths, [and hitting] the ball in the gaps."
Moore paces Shepherd win over Fighting Scots

Still in the running for a home game in the first round of the WVIAC tournament, Shepherd overcame an otherwise ordinary team performance with 20 points and 11 rebounds from Chad Moore to edge visiting Ohio Valley, 62-56, in its penultimate WVIAC game of the men’s basketball season.

At the end, Shepherd had a two-point lead when Dave Karlson made a steal that Moore turned into a pair of successful free throws with only 11 seconds remaining. The Rams closed out the scoring when Brandley Osborne added two more free throws with just five seconds left.

The Rams made only 37 percent (20-of-54) of their field goal tries, including a 23.7 percent (4-for-17) showing from long range. Even at the free throw line the Rams suffered through a 64 percent evening, making just 18-of-28 foul shots.

Ohio Valley was little better, going 21-for-52 (40 percent) from the field, including 1-for-11 (9 percent) on three-point tries. The Fighting Scots were just 13-for-22 (59 percent) from the foul line.

The rebounding was practically even with Ohio Valley getting 38 and Shepherd 36.

Shepherd’s Moore was 7-for-13 from the floor and 6-of-8 from the foul line. His 11 rebounds gave him his 11th double-double of the campaign.

Karlson tossed in 13 points and Osborne totaled 10 points.

Rodney Everage scored 16 points for Ohio Valley with Donivan Vinson and Kendall Alston both adding 11 points each. Shepherd had only 13 turnovers.

The Fighting Scots held a low-scoring, low-achieving 26-25 lead at the half.

Shepherd outpointed the visitors, 37-30, in the second half.

The Rams led, 50-45, with only 6:29 remaining. The closest Ohio Valley could climb after that was to 58-56 with just 1:06 to play.

Shepherd scored the game’s last four points to improve its overall record to 12-14 and its ninth-place standing in the WVIAC to 9-12. Ohio Valley was just 6-17 overall and 6-14 in the WVIAC.

Ohio Valley goes on two scoring runs to beat Lady Rams

Ohio Valley disregarded an eight-point halftime deficit in its women’s basketball road game at Shepherd by outscoring the Lady Rams 11-12 to begin the second half ... and then actually scoring the last nine points of the night to take an 81-72 WVIAC win on Saturday afternoon at the Busch Center.

The teams were tied at 72-72 with fully 2:23 remaining. Shepherd would never score again.

Ohio Valley, only 1-11 in conference games, soared nine points while blanking the Lady Rams to complete a form reversal that saw the Fighting Scots outscore Shepherd, 44-27, in the second half.

High-scoring Shelby Woy (23 points) and Amber Avery (24 points) paced the Fighting Foot offense. Cold-shooting Shepherd made only 21-of-66 (32 percent) field goal attempts to give up the lead. The Lady Rams shot 26 percent from the field in the second half and could only count seven field goals in those 10 minutes.

No Shepherd player that attempted five or more shots from the floor made half their shots. Shelby Payet was 1-for-9 and Jessica Hettum was 4-for-15 for the Lady Rams.

Shepherd stayed close with its accurate free throw shooting, recording a 24-for-28 (86 percent) showing.

The Lady Rams had only 17 turnovers, but could not capitalize on all the Ohio Valley floor mistakes and turnovers.

Carrie Saunders scored 16 points before fouling out. Howard did make 7-of-8 free throws to close the game 16 points. Jeni Prince added 12 points.

Shepherd slipped into eighth place in the conference and last WVIAC game scheduled tonight (Wednesday) against visiting Davis & Elkins. Shepherd was 11-10 in conference and 13-12 overall.

The Fighting Scots were 8-12 in the conference and 11-11 in all their games.
Pitt Johnstown defeats Lady Rams, 68-64

JOHNSTOWN. (Pa.) — The Pitt Johnstown women were able to make 54 percent (13-for-24) of their second-half field goal attempts and snapped a halftime tie in defeating Shepherd, 68-64, on Thursday night in a WVIAC game.

With the loss, Shepherd remained in seventh place in the conference with its 11-9 WVIAC mark and 96.5 power rating. Pitt Johnstown moved forward to 13-6 in the league.

The Lady Rams were 13-11 overall while the Mountain Cats were 15-8 in all their games.

After a low-scoring first half where Shepherd shot just 38.7 percent (12-of-31) from the field and Pitt Johnstown was 12-for-40 (40 percent), the Mountain Cats were ahead, 49-41, by 15:40 remaining.

Shepherd had moved back to within 58-56 on a Jerica Hewett jumper with just seven minutes to play.

Hannah Safren’s three-pointer sliced the Mountain Cat lead to 60-59 with 4:56 remaining.

A Shelby Fayak layup actually gave Shepherd the lead at 61-60. However, four points by Sheena Aden sent the Mountain Cats back in front at 64-61 with just 2:36 left.

Shepherd answered again.

A Jenn Prime three-point play after a steal paved the Mountain Cat lead to 65-64 with just a minute showing.

After the Mountain Cats’ Andrea Dalton missed a free throw, Shepherd called a timeout with 20 seconds left. But Hewett misfired from close and Katie Biggs fouled Sam Trimarco with six seconds to play.

Trimarco converted two free throws giving Pitt Johnstown a four-point lead. Carrie Saunders (2-for-12 from the field) missed a three-point attempt that would not have tied it for the Lady Rams.

The Lady Rams were just 25-for-65 (38.5 percent) from the field and had only nine free throws, making eight.

Pitt Johnstown was 25-for-54 (46 percent) from the field and made 10-of-13 free throws.

The Lady Rams were outrebounded, 38-34, but committed six fewer turnovers (having 19 to the Mountain Cats’ 25).

Hewett had 14 points and Fayak 13 points. Emily Daniel had seven rebounds and Sanders had five assists.

Aden and Andrea Dalton led Pitt Johnstown in scoring with their 19 points. Maria Monti had 11 points off the bench.

Dalton led all rebounders with 11 while Kelly Goode and Aden each had seven rebounds.

Shepherd closes out the regular season this weekend (Wednesday) at its Butcher Center with a conference game against Davis & Elkins.

Next week brings the WVIAC tournament. Should the Lady Rams finish in the top eight teams in the regular season standings they will host a first-round tournament game on Monday night at the Butcher Center.

After the opening night of the tournament, the eight quarterfinal round teams will move to Charleston to complete the last three rounds.

Shepherd signs 11 to football grants

Shepherd was able to sign athletes to football grants-in-aid on the first Wednesday in February the same as the NCAA Division I and I-A schools could.

On Thursday of last week, the Rams announced the signing of 11 players from various high schools in Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

The only quarterback that Shepherd revealed was Delonce Edwards from Ballou High in Washington, D.C. Edwards is 5-foot-11, 175 pounds. Two players from storied DeMatha Catholic High School in Hyattsville, Maryland were signed. Pete Collins, an offensive lineman, and Lake Kingston, also an offensive lineman, are the two players who played for the Stags this past season.

The other Maryland high school athletes to sign binding grants with the Rams are running back/outside linebacker Stephen Dardea from Potomac High, defensive tackle Daniel Yarborough from Calvert Hall in the Baltimore Catholic League, and defensive back Philip Rhoden from Long Reach High in Howard County.

Emmanuel Adetunji is a defensive end from Lake Braddock High, Daniel Newman a defensive tackle from Lake Braddock in Springfield, and Damian Caison, a tight end/fullback from Warren County High in Front Royal.

The two athletes from West Virginia both played for Martinsburg High during its 2010 state championship run.

Darren Arndt is an end who is listed at 6-foot-3, 243; and Nick Lopez is a wide receiver and defensive back listed at 5-foot-10 and 163 pounds.

The Rams are expected to announce other signees to grants later in the spring and into the early summer.

Shepherd reached the national semifinals last season, winning NCAA Division II playoff games against Shaw, Kutztown, and Mercyhurst before dropping a semifinal-game decision in Mississippi to Delta State.
Holmes helps power Shepherd to initial victory

By Eric Jones

SHEPHERDSTOWN - Megan Holmes is expected to make an impact for the Shepherd Rams softball team this season.

A few games into the 2011 season, the Shepherd senior is off to a great start.

The Rams got off to a pretty good start as well, splitting a pair of games in the season-opening doubleheader on the road against Mount Olive, N.C.

The former Musselman standout and Hagerstown Community College transfer finished with a big day at the plate, helping the Rams win Game 2 of the doubleheader and split the series.

For her offensive contributions in that game, Holmes was named Gold's Gym/Thermotex Athlete of the Week (Feb. 13-Feb. 19)

Shepherd started the doubleheader with a 4-0 win in Game 1 to the Trojans, but the Rams rebounded nicely with a 7-2 win in Game 2.

The Rams used a four-run outburst in the third inning to go ahead for good, and it was Holmes who sparked the lineup.

Holmes went to the plate in the third inning with Shepherd already up 2-0. With a runner on and two outs, Holmes belted a shot to left-center field for a two-run homer, bringing in Amanda Dudek and giving the Rams a commanding 4-0 lead.

Two innings later, in the top of the fifth, Holmes gave the Rams an insurance run with an RBI double down the right-field line that scored Courtney Williams, giving Shepherd a 5-1 lead at the time.

Holmes finished 2 for 3 at the plate with three RBIs as the Rams swept an 11-3 victory by scoring a combined nine runs in the final two innings. Shepherd finished with six hits as a team.

Led by Holmes' effort, it was a big day for players from the Eastern Panhandle. Besides Holmes, three other local players made contributions during the doubleheader for the Rams.

Holmes led everybody this past weekend, something Shepherd can look forward to the rest of the season.