Former SC star Harris arrested on drug charges

by Derek Taylor
Daily Mail sports writer

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Former South Charleston High School football standout Tyler Harris was arrested early morning.

A freshman at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, Harris was arrested for possession with the intent to distribute a controlled substance, a felony charge, and was released from Eastern Regional Jail in Martinsburg after posting $5,000 bond, an official there said Friday afternoon.

Jail officials could not elaborate on the nature of the substance, and a court date has not been announced.

Harris was listed as a freshman quarterback at Shepherd on the school's 2011 season information page at NCAAlive.com and is seen in the 2012 team photo, wearing No. 18 on the school's athletic website. However, he is not listed on the team's roster at the school website. Harris joined the highly successful Rams program along with fellow South Charleston alumnus Mo Makhene, who is listed as a freshman wide receiver on the roster.

Shepherd University Office of University Communications Executive Director Valerie Owens wrote in an e-mail Saturday afternoon that Harris was dropped from the Shepherd football program on Dec. 27. Shepherd head Coach Mo and the entire Rams coaching staff are out of town on recruiting visits, and were not available for comment.

The 2009 Kennedy Award winner as the state's top high school football player, Harris helped lead South Charleston to consecutive Class AAA state championships in 2008 and 2009. He finished as runner-up in Kennedy Award voting as a senior after being one of several South Charleston stars to be involved in a game-ending brawl with Hurricane teams' playoff quarterfinal game won by the Black Eagles.

Magnolia quarterback Justin Fox edged out Harris in Kennedy balloting just weeks later.

The arrest creates a trend for major award winners from the 2009-10 school year. Logan High School graduate Justin Cottrill was arrested after a traffic stop in Logan on misdemeanor charges of possession of a controlled substance and petit larceny.

Cottrill won the 2010 Evans Award as the state's top high school boys basketball player.
Former Kennedy Winner Arrested

Former South Charleston High School football star and Kennedy Award winner Tyler Harris has been arrested on drug charges.

Harris, 20, was arrested in Jefferson County Thursday night by Shepherdstown City Police and charged with possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance.

Police tell MetroNews Harris was pulled over in a routine traffic stop and a canine unit detected the presence of drugs. A search of the vehicle yielded an unspecified amount of the prescription painkillers Vicodin and Percocet.

The second individual in the car is identified as Christopher Law, 18, of Martinsburg. He too faces a charge of possession with intent to deliver. Police wouldn't say if the pills belonged to one or both men.

Harris was a standout quarterback at South Charleston, leading the Black Eagles to Class AAA football titles in 2008 and 2009. He earned the Kennedy Award for being the most outstanding high school player in the state following his junior season in 2009.

Harris enrolled at Shepherd University to play football last fall. Harris is free on $5,000 bail.
Postgraduate polish: MMA moving up in ranks, drawing more talent to program

By Jeff Nations - jnations@nvdaily.com

WOODSTOCK – It took just one look for Terry Brutus to fully realize what a starkly different environment Massanutten Military Academy could offer a soon-to-be-transplanted New Yorker.

"It's just real different," Brutus said. "The land, it's more suburban out here. I'd never seen, like, cows on the side of the road."

A powerfully built 6-foot-6 forward, Brutus was checking out MMA last August as a potential next step in his basketball career – a familiar path for top-level recruits that often starts in public high school (Spring Valley, N.Y.) then on to private school for two years at Long Island (N.Y.) Lutheran and finally a year of postgraduate basketball to polish up his game and maybe improve his offers.

That's where MMA came in – with a postgraduate program run by an energetic and well-connected new coach in Chad Myers, the Colonels seemed to offer just what Brutus was looking for as he prepared for college. It offered a few things he wasn't looking for, too, like that bovine close-up. Or his first wake-up call for formation, a mandatory 6:30 a.m. outdoor review in full uniform – military, not basketball – which starts the day for all MMA cadets. Formation takes place three times daily at MMA – before breakfast, lunch and dinner – highlighted by saluting and raising the flag, then a march to the cafeteria.

Even more than the odd cow sighting, that idea – military school – gave Brutus pause before deciding to go ahead and take the plunge at MMA. It's a common feeling, said Myers, himself a military school alum after having spent two years at Hargrave Military Academy before going on to his own collegiate career at Shepherd University. But once his players got over that "initial shock," Myers has watched them thrive in MMA's regimented lifestyle.

"There's no distractions here, whether for basketball or school," Myers said. "I think it helps them in the classroom because we have small class sizes. I think it helps them clear out other distractions and they spend more time in the gym working on their game."

To a man, improving their game – and stock as potential college recruits – is a primary reason for Myers' players spending a year or more at MMA. On his 12-player roster, Myers has a blend of athletes working to improve their grades and become academic qualifiers, postgraduates aiming to sharpen their basketball skills one more year in hopes of gaining a college scholarship or moving up a level, and a sprinkling of undergraduates who simply seek the challenge of playing against stiffer competition.
"I want to develop my game a little bit better," Brutus said. "I wasn't really satisfied with the offers that I had because I knew I could have gotten better ones. I've gotten better ones since I came here."

Senior point guard Corban Collins falls into that last category. The High Point, N.C., native took the same path as Brutus — shifting from a public high school, to a private school, then on to a postgraduate program. But Collins doesn't need the extra year like Brutus — a late qualifier who's already compiled a list of offers from NCAA Division I schools including Arkansas, Tennessee, George Washington and Charlotte. Collins, already academically eligible to play in college next year, has offers in hand from Virginia Tech and Miami. Still, he's considering coming back to MMA for a postgraduate year.

"Every day I'm getting pushed," Collins said. "At my other school, it was just like kids that were there played just to play. Here, everyone was the best on their team. So we're all good and we get pushed every day in practice.

"As far as competition-wise, every game if you don't bring your best you can lose. We're playing the best of the best, all the best schools, all the best competition — most of the time, the schools we play have five or six Division I players signed already. You have to bring your 'A' game."

Collins has company on a talented Colonels squad that features no less than six players with Division I offers so far, with perhaps more coming. The basketball website RecruitDirt.com ranked MMA as the No. 9 prep school in the nation earlier this month. Meyers' squad is 17-4 playing a schedule composed rival prep schools, junior-college teams and junior varsity Division I squads. Among those rare defeats was a loss to No. 3 Brewster Academy, and an 86-83 setback against No. 2 Hargrave Academy last Saturday in Roanoke. It was an encouraging sign for Meyers, who aims to build MMA's postgraduate program into a consistent rival to Hargrave. Meyers saw firsthand how to make that happen, first as a player and then for three years as an assistant coach at the school.

"I think for me the model was always kind of Hargrave because that's what I knew," Meyers said. "Basketball-wise, I think Hargrave has been the power in the state for the last 15 years as far as prep schools. They produce numerous high-level to NBA guys, and that's what we want to build this into. We feel like this is the best team we've ever had here."

Meyers, who spent three years as the director of basketball operations at Radford University before taking the job at MMA, has been a tireless recruiter as he tries to make that vision a reality. Through his contacts among the collegiate coaching ranks and on the AAU circuit, Meyers is bringing high-level recruits to Woodstock — among them senior Cameron Jones (offers from College of Charleston, Appalachian State), senior Zac Grossenbacher (committed to Wofford), junior D.J. Foreman (being recruited by multiple Division I schools, including Old Dominion and Delaware) and postgraduate Brian Harris (Duquesne, Hofstra).

"Coach Myers really knows what he's doing," said Grossenbacher, a 6-7 forward from Parkersburg, W.Va. "He has unlimited contacts as a head coach. It's just an all-around great situation. I wouldn't change my decision for anything."

Like his teammates, Grossenbacher admits the military-school experience has opened his eyes a bit and broadened his horizons a lot — benefits he feels certain will help make the transition to college easier next year.

"I really didn't know much about the military or the military aspects of [MMA], but now I'm learning more about it and now I understand more why people go into the military," Grossenbacher said. "I have more respect for military people."
The cost of attending a private school like MMA can be a deterrent, but Myers has some scholarship flexibility and can offer varying amounts to players hoping to attend. No matter the financial arrangement, each of Myers’ players gets the same treatment with daily individual workouts and two hours of practice.

The goal is to help as many players as possible move on to collegiate careers, but for his program Myers is shooting for something a bit more immediate — a spot as one of the top 10 teams in the country competing in the season-ending national prep school showcase at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, Conn. The winner takes home the title as unofficial prep school national champions.

"First of all, just the recognition for the school," Myers said of the benefits to MMA of fielding a postgraduate program. "If we go out and we're playing all across the country and we've got guys — like our point guard has been offered by Virginia Tech — if he commits somewhere in the ACC, then every time you open a program or turn on the television and it says Massanutten Military Academy, it's a free source of advertisement.

"I think the school looks for our guys to lead by example because they are a little older. A lot of times the kids will kind of fall in behind them if they'll do the right thing, as well."

At home games, that goal can sometimes feel far away for Myers and his players as the often play before sparse crowds unless the MMA corps is able to file in to help fill up the stands. The Colonels have just one homestand left when they host the Norfolk Southern Invitational on Feb. 4-5, and Myers is hoping to see some new faces in the crowd.

"This place is built on helping kids," Myers said. "Everybody has different reasons for being here; we're just kind of another example of the school helping a kid reach their dream.

"... Probably none of these guys five years ago thought they'd be wearing military uniforms, but it helps you get to the next place you want to be."

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Rams picked second

PRINCETON - The Shepherd University softball team has been picked to finish second in the 2012 West Virginia Conference Coaches’ Preseason Poll. With seven first-place votes, defending conference champion West Virginia Wesleyan has been selected to win the league title.

The Bobcats, with 184 total points, edged Shepherd, which racked up 180 points and two first-place nods. Despite the graduation from Kashlia Young, the region Player of the Year, WVWC returns standouts Hillary Perez-Ashley (24-2) in the circle.
Clarksburg senior looks ‘good in Terps’ red’ by Kent Zakour, James Peters and Jennifer Beekman
Staff Writers

Clarksburg High School senior Stefan Houston made his college decision more than four months ago. But on Wednesday, otherwise known as National Signing Day, the first date prospective student-athletes can officially sign with colleges and universities, the 6-foot-2, 200-pound University of Maryland football signee was extremely nervous and quiet. As Houston, who verbally committed Sept. 23, signed his National Letter of Intent and slipped a red and white Maryland hat on, he cracked a wide grin in front of a crowd of about 100 family members, coaches, teachers and friends in the school’s gymnasium.

“I’ve been so anxious about this for awhile,” said the two-time first team All-Gazette selection, who plans to major in criminal justice. “I knew where I was going, but I just wanted to get the whole recruiting process over with. I am just relieved and so happy right now. I think I look pretty good in Terps’ red.”

Houston, who was recruited to play the program’s “Star” linebacker position, said he picked the Terrapins since College Park is close to home and offers a strong support system academically and athletically. He also said former Clarksburg, Class of 2009) star and current Maryland player Avery Graham and the school’s new Under Armour uniforms were contributing factors.

“Maryland just felt right and there a lot of friends there like [Graham] and [2011 Quince Orchard alumnus and linebacker] Alex Twine,” said Houston, who also held offers from West Virginia, East Carolina and Rutgers. “I watched Kenny Tate play the position they want me to play when I get there and I was impressed. Hopefully, some day I can be like him. It is going to take a lot of work and its big shoes to fill.”

Houston, who has a 4.39 seconds time in the 40-yard dash, played several positions for the Coyotes last fall. He caught 10 touchdowns and recorded 688 yards as a receiver.

“The physical development in Stefan is quite obvious,” Clarksburg coach Larry Hurd said. “But I am more proud of his development into a young man. He is a tremendous worker. ... I am just glad he is staying close to home so I can go down the road and watch him.”

Houston is the 27th Coyote player to play collegiate football since Clarksburg opened in 2006.

Jones to Furman

Bullis senior Kevin Jones, the Gazette Player of the Year this past fall, has decided to continue his football career at Furman University, S.C.) and officially signed today.

“They showed the most interest and I had a meeting with the admission office and they really impressed me,” Jones said. “I really like it. It’s pretty exciting. I’m just ready to get started and get into the system and Division I football. It’s the best of the best at the college level. I look forward to the competition and challenges.”

Jones, a running back by trade, rushed his way to 2,089 yards and produced 34 total touchdowns this past fall while leading Bullis, 9-1) to its first Interstate Athletic Conference title since 1979.

“I think it’s great for him and it’s great for Furman,” Bullis coach Pat Cilento said. “It’s just like our school, a small private school. He’ll be able to excel down there.”

Furman compiled a 6-5 mark this past fall, finishing the season with a 54-32 loss to Southeastern Conference powerhouse Florida. The Paladins compiled a 5-3 mark in the Southern Conference, finishing behind Georgia Southern, Wofford, S.C.) and Appalachian State, N.C.).

“I’ll likely be redshirted,” Jones said. “I just want to get bigger and faster and they’ll get another year out of me.”

Smith to Shepherd University

All-Gazette lineman Will Smith plans to continue his football-playing days next fall at Division II Shepherd University, W.Va.) after a stellar career at Paint Branch, including leading the Panthers to their first division crown since 1975 in 2011.

“They have a great winning tradition there and they told me I have a chance to play right away, anywhere from guard to center and maybe tackle; wherever they need me,” Smith said. “That’s another reason I’m excited about going there.

“My team at Paint Branch went to a camp over the summer at the school. I liked it a lot and I like the coaches.”

Smith chose Shepherd, 9-2 in 2011), a member of the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, over offers from Seton Hill University, Pa.) and West Virginia Wesleyan.
Check out the list of Dallas-area high school signees on national signing day 2012

VOLLEYBALL

Allen

Tori Bates, Stephen F. Austin
Ashley Hooper, Tulsa

Arlington Martin

Ivy Baresh, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi
Haley Matocha, Cisco JC
Katalin Minnery, Georgia Southern

Denton Calvary Academy

Erin Hennesy, Union

Garland

Keri Scanlon, Northern Oklahoma
Shandice Sluch, South Carolina State

Mesquite Horn

Hayley Hampton, Panola JC

North Mesquite

Paige Draughn, Eastfield JC

Richardson Berkner

Stephanie Mitchell, Shepherd University *
WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Shepherd 71, West Liberty 60

WEST LIBERTY - Junior forward Emily Daniel scored 18 points and grabbed seven rebounds to lead Shepherd University to a West Virginia Conference win over West Liberty.

Daniel was 7 of 11 from the floor with a 4-of-5 effort from the foul line.

Freshman center Gabby Flinchum added 14 points and seven boards, while senior guard Jenn Prine and junior guard Alex Tamez each tossed in 10.

Hillary Southworth had 29 points and Kayla Ayers added 17 to lead the Hilltoppers.

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
West Liberty 100, Shepherd 63

WEST LIBERTY - Keene Cockburn scored 18 points to lead seven players in double figures as No. 2 West Liberty handed Shepherd a setback in the WVC.

Sophomore guard Brantley Osborne led the Rams with 18 points.

- Staff reports

Junior forward Chad Moore had 16 points and a game-high 11 rebounds to post his ninth double-double of the season.

Chris Morrow, Tim Hausfield, and Cedric Harris each added 14 points for the Hilltoppers.

Shepherd took a 32-26 lead into the break behind 13 first half points from McCray.

West Liberty never trailed in the contest and had a 55-26 lead at the half.

Shepherd hit on 37.3 percent (25-67) of its shots from the floor with a 27.8 percent (5-18) effort from 3-point range. The Rams hit 8-of-11 foul shots (72.7 percent).

West Liberty shot a red-hot 62.5 percent (40-64) from the floor with a 48 percent (12-25) performance from beyond the arc. The Hilltoppers connected on 8-of-11 foul shots (72.7 percent).

The Rams had a 38-33 rebounding edge.

Shepherd fell to 9-10, 7-8 in WVC action, while West Liberty improves to 20-1, 15-0. The Rams return to action on Saturday when they host Concord for a 4 p.m. contest.
Football: Wise, Mellott make college commitments

By BRETT NIEVES

Staff Correspondent

11:41 PM EST, February 1, 2012

The region had a busy National Signing Day as a throng of high school players officially disclosed where they were going to play college football by signing their Letter of Intent.

Shepherd University swiped two players from Maryland on signing day. Williamsport athlete Tyler Wise will play for the Rams as either a wide receiver or a defensive back. Wise led the area with nine interceptions in 2011.

Urbana quarterback Michael Spahr also signed to play for Shepherd.

Clear Spring quarterback Adam Mellott, the first high school player in Washington County history to pass for over 2,000 yards in a season, will play at first-year program Alderson-Broaddus College in Phillipi, W.Va.

Two Martinsburg players will play their college ball against Shepherd in the West Virginia Conference. Quarterback Brandon Ashenfelter committed to Fairmont State, while defensive lineman Logan Jenkins will attend Concord University.

From the wider region, nine players — including Spahr — from Frederick County made their commitments official.

Urbana defensive end Colton Kmetz committed to Kent State University.

Thomas Johnson wide receiver Nate Hairston committed to play at Temple University, while defensive end Mike Ivasu will attend William & Mary.

Linganore running back Joe Riddle, a two-star running back according to Rivals and ESPN, will stay home to play at the University of Maryland. Teammate Tyler Thompson will play at Monmouth (N.J.) University.

Middletown wide receiver Ben Lewis committed to Syracuse University.
Brunswick quarterback Ian Fisher will attend James Madison University.

Tuscarora offensive lineman Brady Stup will stay in state, attending Towson University.

Four student athletes from Allegany County who may be familiar to Washington County football fans also signed.

Jarrod Harper from Mountain Ridge will play defensive back West Virginia University. He is rated a two-star prospect by Rivals and ESPN.

Fort Hill running back Garrett Clay and his twin brother Dylan — listed as an athlete — will play at Marist University. Lance Fullwood, who played fullback and linebacker for the Sentinels, will be a teammate of Ashenfelter at Fairmont State.
All’s well that ends well for Shepherd

February 1, 2012 | 0 Comments

BOB MADISON Spirit Staff

SHEPHERDSTOWN — Neither Shepherd nor West Virginia State could manage anything positive in the last two minutes. The West Virginia Conference game was even after the Rams’ Chad Moore had found Brantley Osborne ahead of the field for a game-tying layup. The Yellow Jackets’ Delrico Lane had a turnover. Shepherd’s Kirk Hairston committed a turnover. Qua’Darius Fewell literally slammed an eight-footer harmlessly off the backboard. Osborne misfired from long range. David Ford was called for traveling.

It was Shepherd in possession. Again. With the generous crowd of about 600 waiting to explode, Osborne hurriedly fired off a three-point try. When it fell through with about three seconds remaining, the Butcher Center was as full of noise as the last two minutes had been full of mistakes.

After a timeout, the Yellow Jackets were able to get off an uncontested 25-footer that circled around the rim and flew off into the distance. Shepherd had saved a 56-53 win for its season record, which advanced to 9-9 overall and 7-7 in the WVIAC.

Nothing had come easy or without strenuous effort for the Rams. Little could be accomplished inside the stingy 1-2-2 halfcourt zone West Virginia State preferred. Nothing close could be found by Shepherd’s usual scoring leader, Chad Moore.

In the first half, the Yellow Jackets had eight straight fallow possessions. No points came to the Yellow Jackets for four minutes. Meanwhile, the Rams went on a 14-1 scoring spree that left it with a 32-26 halftime lead.

The early minutes of the next half saw the Rams move steadily ahead and show a 42-32 lead. It was West Virginia State’s turn to streak. It outscored the stuck-at-42 points Rams by a 9-0 count. And it became anybody’s game. Rebounding played a limelighted role in the quick comeback.

Nearly five minutes remained. And neither side could find any points from any player. Finally, Ford’s three-pointer brought the Yellow Jackets a 51-49 lead. The mistakes and squandered opportunities began to easily outnumber any positives.

Moore’s long pass to Osborne for the guard’s layup evened the count. And then the mistakes and change of possessions owned the action. Osborne’s noise-evoking three-pointer finally decided it for Shepherd.

Shepherd’s 56 points had been shared almost exclusively by Sidney McCray (13 first-half points and 19 in all), Marcus Pilgrim (10 first-half points and 13 in all), Osborne (11 points), and Moore (10 points and 12 rebounds of Shepherd’s 37 rebounds).

Corey Bethea had given the Yellow Jackets 21 points and the sometimes-troubled Ford was 7-for-19 from the field for 15 points.

Shepherd’s continuous 2-3, halfcourt zone defense was a game-long puzzle with unsolved solutions as the Yellow Jackets went 19-for-57 in missing two-thirds of their floor attempts.

Osborne’s three-pointer had given the evening an “All’s well that ends well” texture from Shepherd’s persepective.
Weakland joins Daniel, Prine in leading Shepherd past 'Jackets

SHEPHERDSTOWN — The confident and effective performance Shepherd received from freshman Alex Weakland belied the fact that she had been used so sparingly this season, almost to the point that few could remember that she actually started the first game of the women’s campaign. Weakland bounced off the Shepherd bench to play a prominent second-half role as the Lady Rams eventually rode away from West Virginia State — winning 87-69 after near-perfect first halves from both Emily Daniel and Jenn Prine.

Weakland had not only never been back to the starting lineup, but she had only played in 12 of Shepherd’s previous 19 games. There was no rust to her game on Saturday as the Lady Rams (11-9 overall and 8-6 in the league) played in front of the season’s largest home crowd.

After Daniel had been a scoring dervish and floor leader in the first half with her 18 points and four rebounds . . . and Prine had added to her usual defensive responsibilities with nine points, four rebounds, three assists, and three steals, it was Weakland that helped ruin any comeback plans the Yellow Jackets may have harbored in the second half.

Weakland entered during a break in second-half play just as Shepherd was treading water and tentatively holding to its 13-point halftime lead. Her polished ball handling, shot blocking, and scoring were necessary as both Daniel and Prine had fewer chances to dominate the way they had done in the opening half.

In 11 second-half minutes, Weakland had much more influence than her six points would normally attest. The ball seemed to be in her hands for many of her floor minutes. She was especially helpful against the West Virginia State pressure defense. Weakland was instrumental in Shepherd’s being able to wade through the backcourt pressure the Yellow Jackets exerted in the second half.

The Lady Rams had taken a free-scoring 46-33 lead at the half. Daniel was 8-for-12 from the field and made her one free throw for 18 points. She led Shepherd’s 22-18 edge on the boards with four rebounds . . . Prine had made her free throws, scored well, led in assists, and led in steals. Those two were the choreographers of Shepherd’s 27-12 lead that definitively set the tempo for the rest of the first half and the mostly-even second half.

In the Shepherd second half, Weakland, Daniel, and Prine were joined by point guard Hannah Safren who scored 10 points, making all four of her shot-attempts, while contributing two assists, and finishing with only one turnover.

Shepherd had those four leading-light players . . . and it had players with “best supporting” roles like Gabby Flinchum (10 points in just 12 foul-plagued minutes) and Jimyse Brown (four points, four rebounds, in just 11 minutes).

But most of the afternoon belonged to Daniel (who had another five points and six rebounds in the second half), Prine (another six points and five rebounds in the second half), and Weakland — the fundamentally sound, rust-free freshman whose contributions were more than complimentary . . . and kept West Virginia State (8-11 overall, 5-10 in the conference) from ruining the afternoon for the line-the-seats crowd.
Rough edges and all, Shepherd will take it; edging Charleston

February 1, 2012 0 Comments

SHEPHERDSTOWN — After a first half replete with rim-rattling shots that caromed away to rebounders and more and more turnovers, deflected passes, and botched dribbles, Shepherd and Charleston had combined for only 43 points.
The second half had to have fewer snarls, splintered edges, and turnovers. But it didn’t.
There were nearly as many missed shots . . . and just as many muffed passes, fumbled dribbles, and turnovers to justify the low-scoring, 52-50, win the Lady Rams claimed in the last five minutes.
It was Shepherd that finally found enough points to frustrate the Golden Eagles. When trailing, 49-42 with just 4:32 to play, Shepherd managed to score 10 of the game’s last 11 points to steal off into the dank night with a West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference win.
Alex Tamez (3-for-8 from the field, five turnovers, and wavering defense — all in eight minutes of playing time) made a layup and Jenn Prine was true on two free throws as Shepherd crept quietly to within 49-46.
Reminiscent of the few-shots-would-fall first half, neither team could score for over a minute. It had been two minutes since Charleston had scored. Lauren Davis gave Charleston a free throw and a miss making it a four-point game.
Gabby Flinchum was accurate on a short jumper, and Shepherd was within two points of the jello-like Charleston lead. Katie Biggs made the first of two free throws . . . and when Flinchum rebounded Biggs’ miss and her own off-line attempt she scored and was fouled. Flinchum’s free throw had Shepherd in front, 52-50, with 1:15 remaining.
Those last 75 seconds were no different that all the other mostly fruitless minutes. After Lauren Davis misfired for Charleston, Flinchum blocked an attempt and in the blink of an eye Charleston’s Chrissy Keir had a turnover.
The crowd of about 275 watched a blur of misfortune on both sides in the final 38 seconds.
Shepherd’s Tamaz committed her fifth turnover. Charleston signaled for its last timeout with 14 seconds showing.
Keir missed another short but contested jumper. Tiffany Scott rebounded for the desperate Golden Eagles.
Marilene Lapierre failed on her inside shot and the loose ball sailed out of bounds with four-tenths of a second left.
The uncooperative basketball was still in Charleston’s possession. A pass went near the rim. But Shepherd’s Flinchum made another interception to end the trouble-filled game.
Shepherd (10-9 overall and 7-6 in the league) had won with its 24 turnovers (as opposed to Charleston’s 25 turnovers), its 32.2 shooting percentage from the floor and 27.8 field goal percentage from three-point distance. Charleston (9-9 overall and 8-6 in the conference) had lost with its 36.5 shooting percentage, its three-rebound deficit, and its paltry seven assists.
Rough edges and splinters were the symbols of Shepherd’s win that nudged it over the break-even mark.
Minnich leads revamped Rams into 2012

February 1, 2012  0 Comments

BOB MADISON Spirit Staff

Shepherd baseball coach Wayne Riser is a ways into his third decade of coaching the Rams. Last year was a miserable time for the coach of more than a few WVIAC championship teams. Shepherd lost more than it won. In fact, the Rams finished in last place in the conference’s Northern Division.

But Riser could have suffered an even larger loss had first baseman/designated hitter Nathan Minnich joined professional baseball’s ranks. Minnich was not only an all-conference player, he was the WVIAC’s Player of the Year.

Minnich drew the attention of not only the West Virginia Conference but also the region and the nation. After hitting .433 with 14 homers and 38 RBIs, he was recognized as the Regional Player of the Year and was one of eight NCAA Division II players in line for National Player of the Year honors.

Minnich was not accorded National Player of the Year recognition, but was an All-America selection for his winter/spring work at Shepherd.

When the June of 2011 Major League draft was held, Minnich was eligible for that event because he had completed his junior year at Shepherd. He was not drafted. When those few days in early June had passed, Riser could count it as one of the few baseball-at-Shepherd things that could make him smile.

Minnich joined the Winchester Royals of the Valley Baseball League. He could have been signed to a professional baseball contract at any time. But he wasn’t.

And now he is back at friendly Fairfax Field for his senior season. You might call him Riser’s “best recruit” for 2012 since he could have been swallowed by professional baseball and gone from Shepherd baseball the same as 2011 starters Brian Collins, Val Arduini, and Derek Gunsell.

Shepherd’s 15-22 season was basically a desert without pitching. A desert receives less than five inches of rain in calendar year... and Riser received almost as little from his collective pitching staff last year. The ERA of the 13 pitchers Riser summoned was 6.97. And no fewer than six of those pitchers had earned run averages of over 7.00.

Once Collins broke his leg in early April and Trevor Appleby had an arm injury that forced him to the sidelines for the rest of the season, Shepherd’s pitching staff was headed by then-freshman lefthander Paul Hvozdovic, who finished the year with an 8.06 ERA.

The pitching staff was credited with only three saves in the 15 games that were won.

When the pitching was troubled by ineffective performances, the Shepherd defense was not helping at all. There were 92 errors made in 37 games. And almost all the games were seven-inning affairs. Opponents successfully stole 45 bases in the 52 attempts they made. Shepherd stole only 11 bases in the 19 attempts it tried.

Some of those pitchers were underclassmen. But Jonathan Painter (9.00 ERA), Tristan Beyer (5.64 ERA, 42 hits allowed in 22.1 innings), and Trevor McClain (1-3 record with a 4.37 ERA and 20 runs allowed in 22.2 innings) have not returned.

Other 2011 team members not returning are infielder Aaron Lee, infielder Morgan Lautz, outfielder Dillon Berger, and redshirts Jesse Leszczynski and Jake Williams.

There are several “everyday players” back. Can any of them be productive enough to bat behind Minnich and give him any protection while keeping sensible opponents from giving the 6-foot-3, 250-pound infielder a steady diet of out-of-the-strike-zone pitcher? Or will Minnich be pitched around most of the time and be dealt intentional walks any time his bat could decide a game?
Outfielder Nash Hutter is a senior who batted .323 in 2011 and then played in the Valley Baseball League with Front Royal. Outfielder Michael Lott was visited by early-season injuries in both 2010 and 2011. Lott had a foot injury and then rammed into the outfield fence at Fairfax Field in the 2011 season’s first game and broke his arm. Lott was a starter even as a freshman in 2010. Outfielder Aaron Scoville batted .357 last year as a freshman. Scoville committed 20 errors and fielded only .860 while being used mostly at third base and shortstop.

Appleby could be the most reliable pitcher if he doesn’t return to the injury list again. He had an arm operation. Looking at a pitcher with a 5.84 ERA who yielded 18 hits in his 12.1 innings last year as the possible best a team has says volumes about the 2012 pitching staff.

Infielder Jake Cook was placed at second base for the most part. Cook batted .289 with no homers and had 114 official at-bats. He fielded .907 and had seven errors.

Returning to the wide-open pitching staff will be Andrew Gallant (who started the season opener but pitched to an 8.72 ERA), Justin Byrd (7.13 ERA, 3-4 won-loss record), Sam Beatty (6.75 ERA), and Billy Kelly (5.06 ERA). None of them pitched more than 35.1 innings in 2011.

Derek Buckley is a catcher/pitcher returning with a .250 batting average and a 8.00 ERA. Brandon Coffey is a catcher/pitcher returning with a .231 batting average and 5.06 ERA. Outfielder Dillon Regalia hit .229 and outfielder Nick Impellizzeri finished the 2011 season with four hits in a doubleheader at Fairmont to elevate his average to .269.

Third baseman Travis Sluger proved to be a reliable fielder at third base, but could hit only .200 with his 20 official at-bats.

Riser has never experienced two consecutive seasons of travail. At least he has Minnich to give his batting order some high-average doings and home run punch. But Minnich is not a pitcher ... and Riser still has holes in his pitching staff that must navigate through weekend doubleheaders once conference play begins in March.
Osborne throws in a winner

February 2, 2012
By Eric Jones - Journal Sports Writer (ejones@journal-news.net)

SHEPHERDSTOWN - To say that the Shepherd men’s basketball team needed a win is an understatement.

The Rams had lost four in a row, all coming in West Virginia Conference play, and ahead was a game with national powerhouse West Liberty on the road.

So with a home game left before Shepherd’s road trip Wednesday to the Northern Panhandle, there was no better time to snap the streak than in front of the home crowd.

Enter Brantley Osborne.

The 6-foot-2 sophomore guard, actually one of the smaller players on a tall Ram squad, produced what was probably the biggest shot of his season.

His 3-pointer with time running down lifted Shepherd past West Virginia State, 56-53, and snapped Shepherd’s four-game losing streak.

The game-winning shot ended a week in which Osborne averaged a modest 13 points per game, just below his season average of 14.2, but it was enough to earn him the title of The Journal/Gold’s Gym Athlete of the Week (Jan. 22-Jan. 28).

In the Rams’ two games last week, against Charleston and West Virginia State, Osborne found a way to hit big shots when Shepherd needed them.

None was bigger than his 3-pointer with just three seconds left that allowed the Rams to defeat the Yellow Jackets and even their overall record at 9-9 and conference record at 7-7.

With the game tied at 53-all, Marcus Pilgrim dribbled across midcourt, then found Osborne in the right corner for the game-winning 3 over a West Virginia State defender with just seconds left.

He finished the game with 11 points, four assists and a rebound. He also had three 3-pointers.

In Shepherd’s first game of the week, a 77-72 loss to Charleston, Osborne again made a big shot down the stretch.

Osborne hit a 3-pointer late in the game to bring the Rams to within three points and keep them in the game. Shepherd eventually lost, but Osborne had a solid game with 15 points, three assists and two rebounds.
Minnich gains baseball honors

February 3, 2012
Shepherdstown Chronicle

Senior first baseman Nathan Minnich (Waynesboro, PA/Waynesboro Area) of the Shepherd University baseball team has been named to the 2012 NCBWA Division II Preseason All-America Team. Minnich was a first team selection.

Minnich, who finished eighth in the 2011 Tino Martinez DII Player of the Year Award balloting, batted .433 for the Rams with 52 hits in 120 at-bats last year. He ranked among the national leaders in several categories. He was second in on-base percentage (.553), third in slugging percentage (.858), and fourth in home runs per game (0.38). His .433 batting average ranked him eighth.

The Rams open the 2012 campaign on February 10 when they face Pfeiffer in Asheboro, N.C.
SU to host alumni game

February 3, 2012
Shepherdstown Chronicle

The Shepherd University women’s basketball team will host a pair of special events in early February. On Saturday, Feb. 4, the Rams will host their annual Alumni Game at 11 a.m. prior to doubleheader action against Concord. On Monday, Feb. 6, the faculty at Shepherd will be honored on Faculty Night during the doubleheader against Seton Hill.

All alumni are invited to play in the 11 a.m. contest. They are also invited to watch the women’s game at 2 p.m. and join the team to watch the men’s game at 4 p.m. A social gathering will follow. For more information contact head coach Melanie Ford at mford@shepherd.edu or call 304-876-5029.

The Shepherd faculty will be recognized at halftime at both the men’s and women’s games.