Hillsdale downs OU in 'critical' basketball game

By MARTY BUDNER

Oakland basketball coach Lee Frederick labeled Monday evening's loss to Hillsdale College "critical."

The defeat snapped Oakland's seven-game homecourt winning streak, which started Dec. 8 against Northern Kentucky.

"I thought that Hillsdale was our most important game of the season," said Frederick, whose Pioneers lost to the Chargers (13-3 overall) by five points, 69-64.

"I'm disappointed. The Hillsdale game was critical because if we would have won, it would have given us a winning record in the league (Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference). Now we have to scratch and claw to get back into it."

The young Pioneers are 8-5 overall, but 1-2 in the GLIAC. Oakland beat Lake Superior State, and lost a close game to archrival Wayne State earlier this month.

Over the Christmas holidays, the Pioneers were busy expanding their basketball skills against a group of National players from Antigua in the West Indies. Oakland returned with a perfect 5-0 record.

However, Frederick had hoped the trip would have better prepared his team for GLIAC competition. Oakland must travel Saturday to Saginaw Valley State, and then face always tough Grand Valley at home Monday evening (7:30).

"Our trip to Antigua was fascinating. I was hoping we would have solved some of our problems down there, but we didn't do it," said Frederick. "It's just a case of us gaining confidence. That's why we had to beat Hillsdale — and we couldn't do it.

"But I'm an eternal optimist. I like the intensity our kids have been playing with all year. All of our games have been close, and I believe we're going to make people sweat in the rest of our games."

OAKLAND'S leading player this season has been junior forward Rich Brauer. A graduate of Lutheran West High School, Brauer has been averaging 24 points.

Other leading players have been Dan Rawlings, a 6-foot-9 junior center, and junior guard Les Thomas. K.C. Forward, Clyde Montgomery, Duane Glenn, Bill Peterson (Livonia Clarenceville) and Bjorn Rossow have also seen a lot of playing time.

"We were counting on Rich at the beginning of the season, and so far he's been playing very well for us," said Frederick. "He's been our offensive leader.

"Rossow — although he did not play a lot against Hillsdale — and Rawlings have been switching off at the center position, and I'm pleased with the way they've been playing. And Peterson started his first game against Hillsdale, and he'll be getting a chance to play a lot more."

The Chargers, playing a deliberate offensive game with many stalls, stunned the Pioneers at the free-throw line. Hillsdale converted 25 of 34 free throws for an excellent 81 percent average. Oakland countered with 10-13.

Two of those free shots came on a second-half bench technical called against Frederick for roaming too far from the Oakland bench. Hillsdale's Willie Scott made one of the two shots, and the Chargers went on to score 12 of the game's next 18 points.

"There's no question that the technical hurt us, and I was at fault for that," said Frederick.

"I knew their style of play would be a problem for us, but I thought we adjusted well. We pressed the whole game, and I thought that helped us. It's just that we couldn't come up with the rebounds when we needed them."

OAKLAND, which scored five more baskets than Hillsdale (27-22), held the lead five times in a see-saw first half which ended in a 29-29 tie.

Hillsdale took a quick lead in the second half on baskets by Bloomfield Hills Lahser graduate Rob Fodor, Toledo's Ted Hauptman and Johnny Hill. Oakland rallied, but never caught up.

The Pioneers closed the margin to 60-56 with 1:46 remaining, and were forced to foul to get the ball back. However, Hillsdale made nine of 11 free throws in pressure situations to hike its league record to 2-1.

Both teams had balanced scoring.

Brauer led Oakland with 14 points, closely followed by Peterson and Glenn with 13 points each. Rawlings led Oakland, which was out-rebounded 35-31, with eight rebounds.

Allen, a freshman forward, led Hillsdale with 18 points and 11 rebounds. He made 12 of 16 free throws. Hauptman and Scott each added 15 points.

Fodor, who played the entire game at a guard position, scored eight points and added two assists. Forward had seven assists for Oakland.

FHS matmen 6th in tourney

By DAVE SCHWARTZ

Plymouth Salem's wrestling team is really having a year to remember.

The Rocks captured the 10th annual Schoolcraft Invitational last weekend in a breeze with 203½ points. That was well ahead of second-place Dearborn Heights Annapolis' 152. It was coach Ron Krueger's boys fifth tournament championship this season.

In all, 28 teams were vieing for the coveted championship of one of the biggest mat tourneys in the state.

Westland John Glenn had the area's next best effort, finishing fifth with 144 points. The Rockets were just eight points out of second, six points behind third place Mt. Clemens (150) and missed nipping fourth-place Belleville by just 1½ points (145½).

Farmington, last year's titlist, placed sixth last weekend. North Farmington finished ninth, West Bloomfield 13th and Farmington Harrison 14th.

Other area teams didn't fare as well. Redford Thurston's 15th place was the best of the rest. Other area finishes were: Plymouth Canton, 18th; Livonia Clarenceville, 19th; Livonia Stevenson, 20th; Garden City West, 21st; Livonia Churchill, 23rd; Redford Union, 25th; Livonia Bentley, 27th and Livonia Franklin, 28th.

Two Salem wrestlers won individual titles and a total of five made it to the finals to pace the Rock championship.

"We scored eight kids," said Salem coach Ron Krueger. "Five of our kids made the finals. When you get that kind of depth, you'll do well in a big tournament. The bigger the tournament, the better I feel we're gonna do."

JIM SCHULTZ was the champion at the 105-pound weight class for Salem. He beat Annapolis' Ron Sullivan in the finals on a 3-2 decision. Jerry Velchine took Salem's other title with a 7-2 decision over Fenton's Jeff Soper at 132 pounds.

Jeff Brown, Jeff Powers and Greg Gattoni took second-place honors for the Rocks.

Brown lost an 8-7 decision to Farmington's John Murphy in the final of the 119-pound weight class. Powers dropped a 6-2 decision to Farmington's Greg Lemanski at 185. Gattoni lasted just 58 seconds in his heavyweight match against Edsel Ford's Dean Ledford before getting pinned.

Other Rock points were provided by Jeff Dunson's fourth-place finish in the 112-pound class, Mark Ross' fourth in the 126 class and Scott Piper's fifth at 155 pounds.

It was easy for Krueger to explain the Rocks' secret of success. "We've got some good wrestlers," he stated. "We've got a lot of depth. We have nine seniors on the squad.

"We felt that we could win it. We had faced most of the other schools before."

Glenn sent two wrestlers, Pete Bologna and Gary Black, to the finals en route to its strong fifth-place team finish. Both were defeated in title matches.

Bologna lost a 4-2 decision to Annapolis' Al Prusac at 98 pounds and Black finished second by losing a 3-2 decision to Dearborn Edsel Ford's Pat Brackett at 198.

Glenn also received good efforts from Duane Gibbs, who placed third at 145 pounds; Jamie Cockrum, fourth at 138; and David German, fifth at 185.

"Have you seen the difference between second and fifth place?" asked Glenn coach Bob Lusk. (Glenn's 140 points were just eight points out of second.)

"One more pin could have made all the difference in the world," said Lusk. Second place wasn't decided until the next to last match of the meet. It was that close. I was super pleased with our performance overall."

BRIAN GALDES starred for Thurston. His pin of North Farmington's John Donovan in 39 seconds gave him the area's only other individual title. The pin was also the fastest of all the championship matches.

Harry Newton was fifth at 105, the same finish as teammate Kevin Ault at 132.

Stevenson's Wayde Hoppe was the bright spot for his school. His 6-5 consolation over West Bloomfield's Barry Bausano gave him third place.

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