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Brad Emons

Briggs awakes sleeping Bears

CARLOS BRIGGS is deep in the heart of Texas — Waco to be exact. He admits things "are a lot different" playing basketball at Baylor University than it was last year when he led the nation in scoring at Schoolcraft Community College in Livonia.

The black kid with red freckles has been forced to make numerous adjustments in his new environment.

"Life here is different than in the Midwest," he said, "but the more I stayed out here, the more I adapted. I met more people and had more going for me."

Briggs is outgoing, personable and downright charming. It's almost like a favorite son around campus.

The 6-foot-1 guard arrived to help save Baylor's floundering program. The Bears, never a power in the Southwest Conference went 5-23 last season.



Carlos Briggs

IN DECEMBER, Baylor roared off to a 7-1 start thanks to Briggs, one of two junior college transfers, along with four freshmen, including Erle Johnson, the brother of the Pistons' Vinnie Johnson. The record, however, was deceiving. Six of Baylor's first eight opponents were small college teams.

But Briggs led Baylor to an impressive win over Missouri and then scored 35 points in an 84-81 loss to Vanderbilt.

Shortly after Christmas, Briggs was named to the all-tournament team at the Wyoming Classic. But the Bears lost two close games and proceeded to lose nine straight.

During the skid, Briggs was banished to the bench by coach Jim Haller in encounters with SMU and TCU, scoring just 2 and 5 points, respectively.

Even though most of Waco was surprised about his sudden non-starting status, Briggs refused to bellyache to the press.

"I took it as a decision on the coaching staff," he said, "and I had to respect Haller's decision. There wasn't much I could say or do."

The losing streak ended Jan. 26 when Briggs tallied 23 points in a 65-54 win over Rice.

"IN THE EARLY part of the season we overpowered teams with quickness," Briggs said. "But the conference teams were a lot stronger. We've got a lot of young guys and the inexperience showed."

Learning from the bad experience, Briggs and his teammates began to adjust. They lost in overtime to Arkansas and then pulled off one of the season's biggest upsets, knocking off ninth-ranked SMU, 94-90 (Feb. 12). The junior notched 20 points (15 in the first half) on 9 of 15 shooting (many from long-range jump shots).

"It was the biggest win of my career," said the Benedictine High School product. "Going from JC (junior college) to playing the No. 4 team in the country is something. Nobody thought we'd come close."

After the upset, Briggs and his teammates were paid a heavy compliment from 7-foot SMU center Jon Koneak, the Olympic gold medalist.

"You guys really played a good ballgame," said the giant outside the Heart O' Texas Coliseum in Waco. "You deserved it. You gave us a good ol' Waco whuppie."

ON THE HEELS of the Bears' biggest victory of the year came news of turmoil.

University President Dr. Herbert Reynolds announced an in-house investigation of school's basketball program, its leadership and its players. The evaluation was believed to be directed at Haller, who in seven seasons as coach, is dangling below .500.

Rumors were flying that Haller would be fired by mid-week, but a decision on his status may not come now until after the season.

Haller, who believes some disgruntled players are out to get him, stressed that "We have a sound program."

News of the probe, picked up by USA Today and every major daily newspaper in Texas, obviously had an effect on the Baylor team, which lost two nights later to TCU, 81-70.

Briggs, however, has managed to avoid the controversy.

HE SCORED 26 points on 11 for 22 shooting in the loss to TCU, and then came back Saturday to net 25 on 11 for 19 shooting in a 75-72 loss to Texas.

"To get better I have to play more fundamentally and under control," Briggs said. "There's a time when you have to be patient when the time calls for it. And there's a time to forget the fancy things and the playground stuff."

Although Briggs realizes he needs more work defensively, he's a sure bet to be named Southwest Conference Newcomer of the Year.

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Spartans take S'craft again

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

In volleyball parlance, it is known as the one-set. To those teams that faced Livonia Stevenson Saturday at the annual Schoolcraft Invitational Volleyball Tournament — namely Redford Bishop Borgess and Garden City — it is known as devastating.

The one-set is a short pass from the setter to the spiker. When done to perfection, the play catches the opposition off-guard because most sets are looped on a high arch.

Stevenson's Joan Frysinger and Lisa Bokovoy worked the play to perfection, over and over again, and swept through the 30-team field to win the prestigious Schoolcraft crown for the second year in a row.

Except for some tense moments against a gritty Garden City team in the championship, Stevenson overwhelmed its opposition — and that was a source of concern for coach Lee Cagle.

"I REALLY worry about a pool that's too easy," said Cagle. "The girls tend to get too relaxed, and when that happens you can get caught by surprise."

But the Spartans hardly grew complacent sweeping through its 5-team pool with an 8-0 record. Despite their 48-2 record and their lofty No. 3 ranking in the state coaches' poll, the Spartans were a hungry group.

"We've played in five tournaments this year now and have won three," Cagle said. "But, this one is always special. We won it last year and the girls really wanted to defend their title. They believe

they are a better team than last year and they wanted to prove it."

Also, the tourney featured five of the state's top 10 teams — Stevenson, North Farmington, Garden City, Dearborn and Redford Bishop Borgess — and the Spartans wanted to prove they were the cream of that crop.

After breezing through their pool, the Spartans coasted past Dearborn 15-7, 15-6 in the quarterfinals.

In the semifinals, the Spartans faced a stiff challenge in Bishop Borgess. Borgess had advanced by knocking off last year's finalist North Farmington in two intense 15-11 games.

THE BORGESS-Stevenson match featured a fierce battle of spikers: Stevenson's Bokovoy vs. Debbie McDonald of Borgess. Stevenson won both the team battle (15-3, 15-10) and the individual battle — credit the one-set on both accounts.

McDonald, only a sophomore, was outstanding, nevertheless. She controlled the match against North and had two spectacular blocks on Bokovoy. She was named to the all-tournament team for her efforts.

But the Borgess defense was at a loss to stop Stevenson's one-set net game. Bokovoy and Pam Griffin took turns ramming Frysinger's accurate sets to the floor.

Garden City, on the other side of the bracket, was letting the high school volleyball community in on what had previously been a secret — the relatively underdog band of Cougars are a solid team worthy of statewide respect.

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GC steals NSL title from North

North Farmington will not repeat as the Northwest Suburban League volleyball champs.

Garden City saw to that Monday by knocking off the Raiders in a scintillating three-game match, 17-15, 14-16, 15-7.

With two matches remaining in the NSL season, Garden City (8-0) has a two game lead over North (6-2). Livonia Franklin is currently in third place (5-3).

"The kids were really ready to play after being somewhat embarrassed by Garden City Wednesday," said North coach Sandy Lubienicki. "Both teams really played their hearts out. The first two games, especially, were just fantastic."

North had to tackle the talented Cougars without the services of senior Donna Konjarevich who was forced to the sidelines by a neck injury. Konjarevich is one of North's most consistent players.

Brooks Landback and Stephanie Hockema picked up the slack for Konjarevich at the net and sophomore Terry Spengler filled in admirably in the back row.

Landback nailed 27 of 29 spike attempts with 8 aces, while Hockema was 10 of 12 with 4 aces. Spengler made 7 digs.

Patti Kozicki, who wowed tournament officials with her superb setting during Saturday's Schoolcraft Invitational, was on the money again. She tapped 59 good sets and was 10 of 12 on her spikes.

Julie Pistole contributed 12 blocks at the net and Nancy Cothran hit all 21 of her serves scoring 13 points.

But in the end, the scrapping Cougars, led by Sue Cyrus and Karissa Wallace, held off the Raiders.

"We take our hats off to them," said Lubienicki of the Cougars. "We congratulated them on being league champs. They are very deserving of it. And we held our heads high, too. We feel like we are back on top of our game. We feel like we can make a strong run in the districts."

North is now 2-4 on the season and Garden City is 36-7.

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DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Patti Kozicki's expression tells the tale of North Farmington's frustrations during Saturday's Schoolcraft Invitational Volleyball Tournament.

Restless Enright sparks Harrison

Vince Enright sat along court-side Sunday at Catholic Hall watching the Catholic League playoffs.

"I can't wait to play Tuesday," said the multi-talented Farmington Harrison senior.

You didn't blame him for being antsy. He saw frustratingly little playing time in Harrison's game Friday night because of early foul trouble.

Enright took his frustrations out on Plymouth Canton Tuesday night, scoring 18 points and grabbing 9 rebounds in the Hawks' 56-45 victory.

John Miller was impressive in his own right. He scored 17 points, grabbed 9 rebounds, made 6 assists and dished out 5 assists.

Wait, there's more.

KEN GEORGE scored 10 points and, as coach Mike Teachman said, "went through Canton's press like a knife through butter." And 6-foot-7 center Mike Dempsey contributed 11 rebounds and 4 blocked shots.

Stevenson upended

Livonia Stevenson, the Observer-land's No. 2 ranked basketball team, was stunned by Walled Lake Central Tuesday, when the Vikings capped a furious comeback with a 53-52 Western Lakes league win.

With the Spartans leading 51-42 and only 3 minutes to play in the game, Walled Lake (9-4 in the league and 11-6 overall) scrapped its way back into contention. Stevenson missed key 1-and-1 free throw opportunities down the stretch, finishing 2 for 5 in the fourth quarter.

"We came close to putting them away early," Stevenson coach George Van Wagoner said. "You've got to give them (Walled Lake) credit. They never gave up."

Even though there were some definite low points for the Spartans — Matt Burdiss sprained an ankle early in the

"Both teams played very well," said Teachman. "I enjoy playing against Canton. They are good kids, and they are very well coached."

Canton (5-8 in the Western Lakes, 7-10 overall) got 14 points from Kevin Hawkins and 10 from Joel Miles. The Chiefs will host the Western Lakes playoffs at Walled Lake Central, who upset Livonia Stevenson Tuesday.

Harrison (10-3, 12-5), the champions of the Western Division, will travel to Farmington Friday night.

"We have a tough game Friday with Farmington," Teachman said. "They're an excellent team. It would be foolish to look ahead to Stevenson (tournament favorites). We have to keep awake. We just want to get to the final game, it doesn't matter who we play."

In other first-round games, Stevenson will host Northville Thursday, Salem will host Livonia Churchill Friday, and in the consolation game, Livonia Bentley will host Walled Lake Western Thursday.

third quarter and the loss snapped a school-record 14-game winning streak — the Stevenson coach said there's a silver lining in the dark cloud.

"This could be a blessing in disguise," Van Wagoner said. "We'll be ready to play in the (Western Lakes) playoffs now."

Stevenson led 29-27 at intermission and 46-38 heading into the final quarter before going the final 3 minutes without a basket.

Bob Slika and Burdiss paced the Lakes Division champs (12-1, 15-2) with 14 points apiece. Guard Ed Gilbert added 13.

Tom Cummings and Chris Owens did the job for the Vikings, combining for 13 of their team's 15 fourth-quarter points. Owens was the game's high scorer with 18 points and Cummings scored 17.

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