

C.J. Risak

## Johnson's departure a mystery to Pioneers

ERSONAL REASONS.

An odd choice of words, considering the implications of Johnny Johnson's decision. Considering, too, how many are affected by that feetilion.

decision.

If you haven't heard, Johnson, the sophomore starting guard for Oakland University's mens basketball team, quit. Just like that. He said after practice last Wednesday he wouldn't be back. On Thursday, he wand

he wasn't.

Johnson missed OU's game at
Northwood Institute Saturday, The
Pioneers lost by five points, Johnson,
the team's second-leading
scorer with a 12.5 per-game average, could have made a difference.
Particularly since OU is weefully
short of proven scorers and especially perimeter shooters.
The consequences of his section

The consequences of his action are colossal. And whatever his reasons, the result of his decision is anything but personal.

GREG KAMPE doesn't under-

GREG KAMPE doesn't understand. The OU coach doesn't believe the rather obscure reasons. Johnson's given for quitting, Johnson has said things weren't working out for him, that he was planning to transfer to an NCAA Division I school (OU is Division II). "Eve OU type does the coach," Kampe said, "would you quit when you're the team's second-leading scorer, when you had you have a chance to go to the (NCAA II) tournment!"

chance to go to the (NCAA II) tour-nament?"

The NCAA tournament. No one at OU would have believed it three — even two — months ago. Kamps had modest goals for his team entering the season: Inish better than 500 in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC). If that sounds overly modest, remember that the Pioneers have never been better than 8-8 in the GLIAC before.

Coing Into last Saturday's game.

never been Detter unan or un CIIAC before. Going into last Saturday's game, they had surpassed all expecta-tions. OU was 17-6 overall and 8-3 in the GLIAC, within striking dis-tance of front-runners Ferris State and Wayne State. With games against both coming up this week (Ferris tonight and WSU Saturday), the Ploneers had a legitimate shot via tittle.

at a title.

Those hopes were severely joited with the loss at Northwood. It was a game they could have won — the Northmen were just 4-8 in the GLI-AC and 13-11 overall entering the

⁼St. Mary's gets even

contest — and probably have, had Johnson played.

"IT KIND OF came at a bad time," understated Kampe. "Im not really sure why ho left. He gave me some excuses, but I don't believe them.

"Johnny and I were pretty tight. He was like a son to me. I don't think he wants to play basketball right in were the service of the service when the service was the service

think he, wants to play basketball right now."

Kampe went further. "I'll bet he doesn't play another minute of college basketball."

One place be won't play at is OU. Kampe was clear on the possibility of Johnson's returning. "He will never play at Galkiand again as long as I am coach," he said.

The real reasons for his departure may never be fully known. Was it burnout? A woman? Or the reason popularly given for an abbitele's problems — drugs?

It wasn't academics. Kampe said Johnson wann't a speciacular student, but he was passing.

In December, Johnson missed four games and three weeks for personal troubles. Kampe still won't elaborate. "He had some problems at bome he had to take care of," the OU coach said.

APPARENTLY, THOSE proberns versor! solved, Now be's gone, leaving in the midst of OU's beet hasketball season ever.

Five games left. These should have been the most enjoyable games of Johnson's college career. Instead, he outcked them.

The reasons for his quitting may evaild. They may be immediate. But to simply label them as "personal" is unfair. It's unfair to the fans, and it's grossly unfair to he fans, and it's grossly unfair to he fans, and it's grossly unfair to his teammates.

There's a responsibility attached to team sports. That's something all players are taught from the time they first pick up a ball and start dribbling it. By the time a talented athlice reaches college-level competition, he knows individual accomplishment is secondary to the talented and the properties of the secondary to the care.

the team.

That's one reason why I get upset when players go academically ineligible. They're in school to learn that's a personal responsibility. But by falling to maintain at least the minimum in scholastics, they are not only wasting their own time but they are ruining their teammates chances for success.

Theo Pearson led St. Mary's with 23 points and 13 rebounds, Jon Bow added 20 points and six rebounds, and Jim Butcher came off the beach

to score 10 points, including two three-pointers down the stretch that kept the Eagles in control.

## Pioneers coming unglued

Just when things were going as your and University's mens basketball team. In the midst of a school history-making season, he wheels came of the Ploneer wagen last week. First the team's second-leading scorer, sophonore guard Johnny Johnson, qull for personner guard Johnny Johnson, qull for personner guard Johnny Johnson dull for personner guard Johnny Johnson and Johnson Johnson and Joh

The loss dropped the Pioneers to 17-7 overall and to 8-4 in the Great Lakes intercollegate Athletic Conference (GLIAC). Northwood is 14-11 own of the Conference from the Conference from the conference from the many of the Conference from the many of the Conference from the Conference f

NORTHWOOD BEAT OU by making seven-of-eight free throws in the final minute. The Ploneers, who trailed 34-32 at the half and were

behind 62-57 with 5-65 to play, put together a 12-6 run to go ahead 69-68 with 1:18 to go. Secta Bittinger's jumper gave OU its last lead.

Bittinger flinshed with 25 points, among them the 1,000th of his OU career. The jumior guard is closer the eighth Pioneer to reach that plateau. Stacy Davis added 16 points and 12 rebounds, but that was It for double-fligure accorers for the Pioneers, who missed Johnson's outside abooting.

"We were ready to go without him," said OU coach Greg Kampe. "Northwood played a great game. We were up 11-2 at the start."

No reason was given for Johnson's departure. He missed three games in December due to personal problems.

"I said at the beginning of the season that youth and lack of perimeter shooting depth were our singest weaknesses," Kampes said, Johnson's loss har added to those woes.

Northwood was paced by James Simmons with with R

has added to those wees.

Northwood was paced by James Simmons with
18 points. Mike Urbanus had 17 and Kevin Brown
15. The Northmen hit 54 percent of their floor
shots (27-01-50), including 61 percent in the second
half (14-0-23). OU was 13-0-29 in the second half
(45 percent) and 28-01-59 for the game (44 per-

coni).

OU'S WOMEN used a stalwart defense to roll to a 33-31 halftime lead, and Northwood were git closer than six to the second half as OU won 78-67 shirted by at Northwood.

The Lady Pioneers limited their opponents to nine-of-22 shooting and forced 17 tumovers in this first half. For the game, the Northwomen committed 32 tumovers to 31 for OU.

Leab Fenwick came off the bench to score 18 points, get eight rebounds and five setals. Sarah Knuth added 16 points and 19 notes piece—Sartor siso had 10 rebounds — and 5 onja Pearson got eight points and four steals. Point guard Mart garet Boyle added eight ansists to her league-leading total.

Northwood's Sharom Berry scored 24 points with Rotal Lloyd scoring 11 and Joan Frysinger (from Livonia Stevenson) nine before fouling out with 6:20 left. Or the win boosted OU to 17-7 overall and 7-5 in the league. Northwood slipped to 13-12 overall

The win boosted OU to 17-7 overall and 7-5 in the league. Northwood slipped to 13-12 overall and 4-9 in the league.

## Lady Ocelots catch OCC

Time was ticking away on School-craft College's womens baskethall team. The Lady Occlois were into the second half of their Eastern Conference showdown with Gakiand CC and they trailed by nine points.

SC needed a win to the the Lady Raiders for the title. Scannar Millers 13 second-half points and four late free throws by Tammy Atkins that clinched it.

Both teams are 10-3 in the conference. SC is 18-6 overall; OCC is 16-5 overall.

Miller finished with 19 points, including five-straight SC baskets at one point. Tracy: Ladouceur also sparkled, scoring 18 points on eightfor-eight floor shooting. Lord Abbas and Lisa Kline added 19 apiece. SC led 27-25 at the intermission before falling behind in the second half.

OCC got 17 points and 12 rebounds from Kelly Geiger, 14 points from Michelle Taubee and 10 points from Michelle Taubee and 10 points from both Joanne Gregory and Stacle Gills.

OCC'S MENS TEAM got out of the blocks quickly at SC Saturday, rac-ing to a 49-36 halftime lead and nev-

It was an important victory for the Raiders. Combined with losses by Alpena Cr and Highland Park CC, it caused a logiam at the top of the Eastern Conference standings. Four teams are within a game of first with one game remaining. HPCC and Delta CC are 12-3, while OCC and Alpena CC are 12-4, while OCC and Alpena CC are 12-4, while OCC and Alpena CC are 12-4.

Gary Holt kept the Raiders on track at SC with 29 points. Carson Butler added 22 and Sam Smith contributed 18.

For the Occlust, the loss was their fourth straight, dropping them to 6-9 in the conference and to 9-16 overall. Still, after saffering logistic deleast in East two previous games against the CC and Bob Wetzel Macromb CC, coach Bob Wetzel Macromb CC, coach Bob Committee of the Committee of the CC and Bob CC and Bob Committee of the CC and Bob CC a

Wetzel thought it was a better per-formance.

"We haven't been playing real well, and we didn't play exceptionally if well against (OCC). "Wetzel said. "We did play better against Dakland, "We did play better against Dakland, but we're capable of much better."

Derrick Kearney's 24 points and To rebounds paced SC. Jeff Vakratsis and Zollie Stevens added 16 apiece, with Stevens secring all of his points in the second half.

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er allowing the Occiots to get closer than nine the rest of the way in a 97-85 triumph. It was an important victory for the Raiders. Combined with losses JC NOTES: The pairings for the upcoming Michigan Junior College Athletic Association (MJCAA) tournament are far from cemented as teams head into the final weekend of

of the byes, together with Delth, Highland Park and Alpena. In the first-round games played Monday, the third-place team will host the sixth-place finisher, and the fourth-place squad will host the fifth-place team.

The vinners of the first-rout tests will play the conference or Conference will draw a first round bye. OCC still has a abot at one Wednesday.



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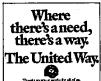
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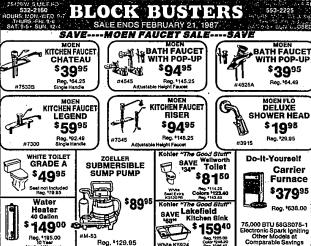


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