

# Bitteringer takes his place in OU history

AS ANYONE ELOQUENT in double talk could know, eternity is a long time. And that's how long it will be before someone representing Oakland University mens basketball wears the No. 5 onto the court again.

A jersey bearing that numeral is now stuck high on the wall of the Lepley Sports Center gymnasium. True, it's not exactly Boston Garden, but having a number retired in your honor is still significant, wherever it may be.

Scott Bitteringer is the reason that jersey hangs on the wall at Lepley.

"I've known for almost two months now," said Bitteringer at the time he took his place in OU history. "But I was really surprised at first."

First, you've got to understand that this kind of stuff is generally appreciated more by people more familiar with the term retire. Bitteringer hardly qualifies; he fired his last jumper for OU just 10 months ago. Hey, he's only 22.

STILL, OU COACH Greg Kampe wanted this. He wanted people to remember what OU's basketball team was like before he arrived on campus almost five years ago, with Bitteringer — his first recruit — in tow.

The Pioneers had never had a winning record in the Great Lakes Conference before. After going 5-11 in Kampe's — and Bitteringer's — first two seasons, OU posted 10-6 and 11-5 GLIAC records. The Pioneers were 39-17 over the last two seasons.

It wasn't just because of Bitteringer. But he was a primary factor. It showed, more than ever, last year, when his scoring talents were really



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used for the first time.

Entering his senior season, Bitteringer was averaging 12.7 points a game — a modest total. He had been selected to the all-GLIAC team after scoring 184 a game as a junior. The two years prior to that, Bitteringer was on the all-GLIAC team — for defense.

HIS CAREER totals entering his senior campaign showed 830 career field-goal attempts, 316 scores (50.1 percent). As a senior, Bitteringer put up 522 shots and made 291 — 55.8 percent. He averaged 26.4 points and broke the GLIAC record for points in a season and was named the league's player of the year.

What caused the increase in output? Maturity? Development? Growth?

It was more basic than that. Kampe structured his offense to feature Bitteringer. When instructions for "Indiana" came from the bench, opponents could start looking for a few baseline picks for Bitteringer to sweep, pass, followed by a pass to him on the wing and a 15-foot jumper. Which usually got all net.

Kampe likes to highlight his seniors. John Henderson — scoring 22.8 points this season after averaging 16.0 in his first three — is finding that out. Bitteringer knew this, too.

"My first two years, I let the seniors do what they wanted," he said. "Now, looking back, I wish I had done more."

NO BITTERNESS intended. That wouldn't fit Bitteringer. Labeled too small (6-foot-2, 160-pounds) for NCAA Division I ball, he made a career decision as a senior at Toledo's St. Francis de Sales High School (which he and a host of others, including former Purdue star Todd Mitchell, led to the Ohio AAA state title).

"I knew Coach Kampe would play the type of basketball I wanted to play," he said. "And there was a good future in the job market in this area."

For most of his first three years, Bitteringer played point guard for Kampe and concentrated on distribution and defense, even though he would have rather played off-guard.

But Bitteringer adjusted and adapted, which might best serve as his legacy. He did whatever was necessary to make OU a better basketball team, and it worked.

His top accomplishment at OU? "Just doing as well as I did," he answered. "Coach Kampe said after my first year here, 'You're going to have a great career if you improve every season.' I did, so I'm happy."

As Bitteringer improved, so did the Pioneers, from perennial GLIAC cellar-dwellers to title challengers. Bitteringer's contribution to that transition will now be remembered whenever anyone glances up and sees his No. 5 hanging on Lepley's wall.

# Eagles drop 4th straight

After a promising three-game win streak, the bottom has fallen out for the men's basketball team at St. Mary's College of Orchard Lake.

The Eagles have lost four straight to fall to 13-14. Their most recent setback came at Saginaw Valley State, 103-92 Monday.

Two weeks ago, St. Mary's had hoped to move into second-place in the NAIA District 23 power-point rankings; now the Eagles are barely hanging on to fourth. The top six teams make the district playoffs, with the top two gaining first-round byes.

St. Mary's trailed SVSU — now 12-

ny Butcher notched eight points and five assists.

The Cardinals had four players reach double figures in scoring: Mike Essig (20), Dennis Fryzel (15), Bill Vill (14) and Rod Creech (12).

ON SATURDAY at Spring Arbor College, St. Mary's wasted a career-best 37 points by Washburn and lost 109-103. Jim Butcher recorded his second-straight seven-of-10 on three-pointers and finished with 23 points. Spring Arbor (just 4-21 on the season) got 35 points from Troy Love.

St. Mary's plays at Concordia College in Ann Arbor at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

## basketball

10 and ranked third in the district — 49-35 at the half and could not make up the difference. James Curtis had 26 points and seven rebounds for the Eagles.

Jeff Suspect got 11 points and three steals, Jerome Washburn finished with 10 points and 10 boards and James Lakes had 10 points and seven rebounds for St. Mary's. Ten-

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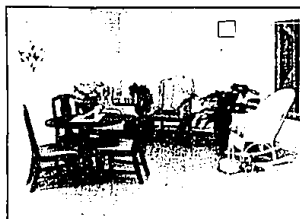
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