

St. Mary's takes advantage of home court

By C.J. Rieck
staff writer

For a team that had just lost six-of-seven games — all on the road — the NAIA District 23 men's basketball tournament offered little promise. St. Mary's was mired in that very situation.

"The Eagles lost to teams they had no business losing to — Madonna College, Northwood Institute, Spring Arbor and Grand Rapids Baptist. Of those four, only Grand Rapids Baptist even qualified for a tournament that includes six of the 10 district teams."

"To say we've had a good season would be wrong," admitted St. Mary coach Glen Donahue.

One might think the Eagles, who placed third in the district ratings and so get to host a first-round game (the other two finishers get an opening-round bye), would have an advantage. But because the court at Dombrowski Fieldhouse is too small, St.

Mary's home playoff games will be at Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes campus.

So much for the Dombrowski advantage. The Eagles were 8-3 at Dombrowski, 8-13 away.

NO, THERE didn't seem to be much to look forward to. Until last week, when the Eagles returned home and turned their season around — at a pivotal time — with a win over Wayne State Feb. 20 and then, those four, only Grand Rapids Baptist upset of Siena Heights, the district's top-rated team.

"Beating those teams should help our confidence," said Donahue, whose squad finished its regular-season campaign at 16-16. "Hopefully, we're on an upswing."

The Eagles will need it. On Saturday, they meet Aquinas College at 7:30 p.m. at OCC in their first district playoff game. A victory would advance them to the semifinals at Saginaw Valley State, the district's

college sports

No. 2 seed, at 7:30 p.m. Monday.

Throughout the season, St. Mary has had a nasty habit of finding ways to lose down the stretch. Against the Saints, the Eagles found a way to win.

It was a back-and-forth struggle right to the buzzer. A James Lakes' drive to the basket and subsequent foul shot put St. Mary up by a point with 40 left, but Bryan Dettling recaptured the lead for Siena with two free throws with :19 remaining.

THE EAGLES got the game-winner from Jim Butler, who drilled a three-pointer with :07 left, butcher finished with 19 points, making five-of-nine triples and seven-of-11 floor shots. Lakes, who was

named the district player of the week, collected 19 points and 12 rebounds.

Mike Moroney added 18 points, James Curtis got 17 and Jerome Washburn tallied 13 and 13 boards. Siena (26-6 overall) was led by William Clyburn with 27 points and nine rebounds. Mark Merriman added 24 points, Craig Tanis got 17 and Dettling 15.

"Siena Heights is a very good team," said Donahue. "Beating them shows we can play, and beat, anybody."

"It was a good win, considering all the one's we've lost."

The question is, can St. Mary's build on its triumph when it meets Aquinas Saturday? The game prun-

ises to be a shootout; the Saints have the district's leading scorer in junior guard Paul Lauer (27.4 points per game), while the Eagles are 11th in the NAIA in scoring (55.63 points).

"They score well, they're a good offensive team," said Donahue of Aquinas. "They've got some good shooters. We're going to have to contain them and put some numbers on the board ourselves."

LAUER AND backcourt teammate Bryan Jacobs, a 5-foot-10 senior point guard who averages 15.4 points, are the Saints' biggest threats, but not the only ones. They have a sizable frontcourt that includes sophomores Ed Yoo (6-4) and Troy Felak (6-5) and freshmen Pete Roehm (6-7), Chris Lesley (6-6) and Ron Haley (6-6).

The two teams have met once, the season's first game in a tournament at St. Mary. The Eagles prevailed, 95-93. Aquinas finished the regular season with a 13-19 mark.

St. Mary has its share of scorers, too. Donahue shuttles 10 to 12 players into the lineup every game, and four average in double figures in scoring: Curtis (15.4), Washburn (15.3), Lakes (14.4) and Butler (14.1). Washburn is leading the district in rebounding for the second straight season (10.74), and Lakes is in the top six (8.3).

Three others — Moroney, Jeff Suspek and Denny Butcher — are averaging around eight points a game.

When the two teams met in the season-opener, neither was in good physical shape. Lauer didn't play for Aquinas, but center Scott Kraus did. Now Kraus is out with a broken ankle, and Lauer is back.

St. Mary is better off. Washburn, Curtis and Terry Koerner all missed the opener. All are back, although Koerner — recovering from a knee injury — won't see much action, if any.

Lady Pioneers crown Hillsdale

By C.J. Rieck
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There are a lot of women's basketball coaches in the Great Lakes Conference who are probably happy the blitz is over.

Can't hardly call what happened to them a season, because that indicates there was some sort of competition. But the way Oakland University handled its GLIAC foes, that simply wasn't the case.

Monday's regular-season closer against Hillsdale College, played at Albion College (Hillsdale's gym under repair), was a case in point. The Lady Pioneers did it defensively (Hillsdale hit just 27.7 percent of its shots) and they did it offensively (converting a league and school record 13 three-pointers).

The result was a 98-42 embarrassment for the already-crowned GLIAC champs. OU clinched the title with Saturday's 90-48 trashing of Michigan Tech. The Lady Pioneers finished 16-0 in the conference and 25-3 overall. They now await word on where the NCAA Division II's Great Lakes Region will be played.

THAT ANNOUNCEMENT will be

made Sunday. OU has an excellent chance to host the four-team regional March 10-11. Those hopes were buoyed when St. Joseph's of Indiana, which had been ranked first in the region and fourth in the NCAA II, lost at Lewis University 94-78 Saturday. OU was ranked 12th in last week's NCAA II poll.

Shawnee Brow might have outscored the Lady Chargers herself if she had played all 40 minutes Monday. Brow made 10-of-15 triple tries, which bettered the NCAA II record of a year ago. She finished with 33 points and seven rebounds, and set GLIAC and team marks in triples in a game (breaking her own records).

How close was it? It never was. OU had a 35-14 lead with 3:19 left in the first half — and that's when Brow went to work, making six straight triples. The Lady Pioneers hit seven consecutive three-point efforts. They outscored Hillsdale 18-2 in the final 3:19 to lead 53-16 at the half.

Debbie Delle contributed 16 points, Amy Atkinson had 13 and Janice Kosman 12 (and four steals). Leah Fenwick had 11 rebounds, four points and three steals and Dawn

Lichty contributed nine points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Sandy Skalsgr's 12 points was best for Hillsdale, which ended 7-20 overall, 3-13 in the GLIAC.

AGAINST TECH, the Lady Pioneers showed no mercy once the second half started. Their 52-30 lead at the intermission just wasn't enough. Tech — which will finish tied for third in the GLIAC at 9-7, 16-11 overall — did not score a point for more than nine minutes of the second half.

By that time, OU had put 24 more on the board to lead 76-30 with 10:54 left. Again, all factors favored OU: shooting (44.3 percent to 34.5), rebounding (52-32), and, of course, the final score.

Delle played 22 minutes, totaling 28 points and 10 rebounds. Brow collected four triples in a 16-point performance. Lichty got 12 points. Atkinson added 11 and Kosman scored 19. Jessie Powell nabbed 13 rebounds in 19 minutes.

Julie Rumpfs topped Tech with nine points. OU's defense has allowed an average of just 48.8 points per game over the last four.

OU'S MENS TEAM guaranteed itself at least a tie for third place with Saturday's 87-67 triumph over Tech at Leley Sports Center. The win improved the Pioneers' record to 19-8 overall, 9-6 in the GLIAC. Tech is 8-19 overall, 2-14 in the league.

Tech, which finished last in the league, was ahead 7-2 with 17:55 left in the first half when the lights went out. OU outscored the Techsters 35-4 in the next 12½ minutes for a 38-11 lead. The gap was never less than 20 after that.

John Henderson, Andre Bond and Brian Gregory led the first-half surge. Henderson scored nine of his 16 points. Bond got eight of his game-high 19 and Gregory notched eight of his 11. Gregory also had nine assists in the game.

Eric Taylor added 13 points, seven rebounds and six assists. Dan Kosnik scored 10 points and Wallace Davis finished with nine rebounds and six points. Jason Willman and Willie Westley each had 14 points for Tech. OU owned the boards, outrebounding Tech 46-29, and had a big advantage in shooting (56.3 percent to 39.3).

and 22-5 overall, co-champs of the Eastern Conference with Schoolcraft College.

Regina Woodard, from Bloomfield Hills, got 17 points and 19 rebounds for OCC. Maria Long added 11 points and 11 assists and Bonnie Kittle had 10 points and eight rebounds. Monet Morris' 16 points paced three Lake Michigan CC double-figure scorers. Lake Michigan is ranked 13th and is 26-1.

In Friday's semifinal, OCC whipped Grand Rapids JC 73-58 behind Woodard's 29 points and 21 rebounds. Long added 12 points and 14 assists. Both were named to the all-tournament team, with Woodard making all-Region 12 and Long earning all-Eastern Conference honors. Colleen Jacobson was second team all-conference and Stephanie Niebauer was honorable mention all-conference.

Lady Raiders upset bid falls short

It couldn't have been much closer. Three times in the final 10 seconds, Oakland Community College's women's basketball team had a shot to win or at least tie its Midway Community College Athletic Association state final against Lake Michigan CC Saturday at Glen Oaks CC in Centerville.

Trailing 54-53, their first attempt, a 12-foot jumper, popped in and out. The Lady Raiders stole the rebound

and got off another shot, but it, too, rounded the rim and fell out. So OCC fouled, and Lake Michigan CC made two free throws to go ahead 56-53. The Lady Raiders had one more chance and got off a shot at the buzzer.

It bounced on the rim, then again fell out, taking with it OCC's upset bid. The Lady Raiders finished their season ranked 18th in the National Junior College Athletic Association

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