

Sports

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OCC 'fortunate' in victory

By C.J. Rieak
Staff writer

The kind of game Oakland Community College's men's basketball team played Monday in the first round of the Michigan Community College Athletic Association playoffs was not what coach Lynn Reed had in mind.

The best word to describe the Raiders' 88-85 overtime triumph Monday at OCC was fortunate.

"We did some stupid things," said Reed, whose team finished third in the Eastern Conference. "We haven't been in sync, because of the injuries."

Are they getting there? "I wonder sometimes if we are," answered Reed.

FOR A GOOD part of this season, it seemed as if OCC was destined for great things, not just in the conference race and state playoffs, but in the National Junior College Athletic Association's Division II tournament. Things don't look so rosy now.

Coming into Monday's playoff against Highland Park CC -- the

sixth-place conference finisher -- OCC had lost four of its previous six games. Hardly the way to prepare for the post-season.

It took a 6-1 scoring finish in the last 3:12 (not many points for a high-powered offense like OCC's) for the Raiders to forge a 77-77 tie and force OT. OCC's Hashe Reviere hit one of two free throws with :51 left to knot it up.

Jerry Prieskorn took over for the Raiders in the overtime, putting them into position to win with a basket that tied the score at 83-all with 2:08 left, then -- following two free throws by the Panthers' Marcus Hall -- a three-point play on a base-line spin move with 1:24 to go.

PHRESKORN FOLLOWED by rebounding Jose Lewis' miss, and OCC was in control with a minute left. Not for long, however. Starlin Stevens was fouled with :48 remaining; but Stevens missed both free throws.

Highland Park was still dangerous. Very dangerous. When the Panthers got possession after missing a shot, there was no shot clock to deal with. They could take the final shot

But Stevens saw to it they never got that chance. swooping in from behind, he tapped the ball away from Lewis into teammate Ed Whitaker's hands, stealing any hopes Highland Park had for the upset.

What was Lewis planning? "Penetrating and dishing it to our big men -- Marco (Honey) or (Mike) Caston," replied Highland Park coach Dett Wilson. Both Honey (19 points) and Caston (12) hurt the Raiders with their inside game, but Wilson wouldn't single anyone out. "All my kids played very well," he said. "I'm very proud of them."

REED, ON the other hand, remained puzzled regarding his own squad. "We shored up our defense (late in the game)," he said. True, Highland Park CC led 76-71 with 4:05 left in regulation, but scored just one more point until overtime. Over the last 9:05, the Panthers were limited to nine points.

Reed also noted the fine -- if erratic -- play of both Prieskorn and Stevens. Both displayed their competitiveness by bouncing back from

adversity (Prieskorn, too, missed two free throws in OT) to make big plays.

"Late in the game, (Jerry) did a good job," said Reed. "He always comes through late in the game and he always has."

As for Stevens, "That was his best performance since coming back (from a January ankle injury), by far."

OCC was forced to play without two of its three guards, Reviere (also an ankle sprain) and Stevens, for a good portion of the season. Both are back now. Reed can only hope the team gets back in top form soon.

Prieskorn finished with 16 points and 13 rebounds, while Whitaker led 15 points, four assists, and three steals. Stevens totaled 14 points, seven assists and three steals. Reviere had 13 points, four assists and three steals, and Devin Bell collected 10 points and 14 boards.



Starlin Stevens had 14 points, seven assists and three steals in OCC's overtime victory.

Salem sidelines Hawks in WLAA semis

By Dan O'Meara
Staff writer

Plymouth Salem gets another shot at winning the Western Lakes Activities Association basketball championship, and Plymouth Canton gets another shot at Salem.

The state-ranked Rocks will be host to the Chiefs in the post-season tournament final at 7 p.m. Saturday. Salem, which escaped with a 65-62 victory at Canton on Jan. 29, is 17-2 and the Chiefs 12-7.

In semifinal games Tuesday, Salem advanced with a 77-64 victory over host Farmington Hills Harrison, and Canton eliminated defending champion Livonia Stevenson 54-42.

The Rocks will be playing in their fifth consecutive championship game, having won in 1987 and 1989, but Salem was upset by the Spartans last year. The Chiefs took their only title in 1984 and, in their only ap-

pearance since then, lost to Salem in 1987.

"It's the brass ring we didn't get last year," Salem coach Bob Brodie said. "We're glad to have another opportunity, and we're glad it's in our gym."

SENIOR FORWARD K.C. Kirkpatrick was largely responsible for the Rocks getting to the final again, scoring a game-high 28 points against Harrison, 13-5. The Hawks will play Stevenson in the consolation game at 5 p.m. Saturday in the Salem gym.

Jake Baker tossed in 16 points for the Rocks, Cliff Lev 10, Eric Stiemmer nine and John Hoffmeyer eight.

"When they play a triangle-and-two, he's going to light it up, because he's a great player," said Brodie of Kirkpatrick, adding he has Division I potential.

"He can do some of the things Jake can do, and he can do some things better. Jake is more powerful, and K.C. uses more finesse." Kirkpatrick scored 11 of his 13 first-half

basketball

points in the first quarter and helped Salem take a 20-11 lead. The Hawks made a critical mistake in attempting to defense Kirkpatrick, according to Harrison coach Mike Teachman.

"I told the players before the game he was left-handed," he said. "He gets the ball in the post and makes that little circle move to his left, and our guys were jumping out to his right and getting the foul from behind. That was basically our big faux pas."

SOPHOMORE GUARD Jeremy Teachman, who started in place of Rex Granger, who was ill, had 12 points to lead the Hawks, making all nine free throws in the second half.

Blaze Sarceovich tossed in 12 points, but Harrison's big scorers, forward Andy Smith and center Paul Gilyebis, were in foul trouble and held to 11 and 10, respectively.

Gilyebis provided a counter weight to Kirkpatrick's scoring in the first quarter when he had eight points, and the Hawks closed to 21-17 at the end. But he had only two free throws the rest of the game, and Smith, who also had three first-half fouls, had just three points in the first half.

Harrison still managed to keep it close at halftime, trailing 35-31, with help from Dante Anderson (six points), Sarceovich and point guard Dan Hight, who scored all eight of his points in the first half.

Once the Rocks, who dominated at the start, got the nine-point lead, Brodie began substituting his players. "We wanted to give some guys a rest and stay out of foul trouble," he said. "(Chris) Tihen was in foul trouble, Hoffmeyer was

on the border line and Jake had to come out for a rest.

"I DON'T KNOW if it was the inability of our players (that enabled the Hawks to close the gaps) or they were just putting it in the hole."

Salem outscored the Hawks 22-15 in the third quarter and all but decided the contest, leading 57-46 going in the finale.

After Jeremy Teachman got Harrison within a point, 35-31, with a three-point play at the start of the third, the Rocks outscored the Hawks 17-4 to build a 14-point lead with three minutes left in the quarter.

Coach Teachman was upset with the manner of officiating, which he said allowed the game to become physical, which in turn favored the Rocks and their style of play.

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Volleyball tourney

Karen Miller keeps the ball alive for North Farmington with a bump in the Western Lakes Activities Association tournament

Saturday, Livonia Churchill repeated as league champion. See story on Page 4D.

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