

Ocelots coast to Christmas tournament title

BY BRAD EMMONS
STAFF WRITER
bemon@oeehomecomm.net

It turned out everyone was playing for second place last weekend in the Schoolcraft College men's basketball Christmas tournament.

The host Ocelots, ranked No. 10 in National Junior College Athletic Association's Division I poll, cruised to the title Sunday with a 95-55 victory over Wilber Wright (Ill.) after crushing George Brown (Toronto, Ont.) in Saturday's semifinals, 116-59.

Schoolcraft is now 13-0 overall entering Eastern Conference play this Saturday at home against host Oakland CC. (Game time is 3 p.m.)

Second-year guard Javon Clark (Detroit Cass Tech), named tournament MVP, hit four 3-pointers in the opening half as Schoolcraft roared out to a 53-28 halftime lead against the

Chicago-area school.

Clark finished with a team-high 16 points after leading SC with 18 against George Brown. "Javon was able to knock down the three-ball," Schoolcraft coach Carlos Briggs said. "Once he gets his feet set, he's a good shooter. He hadn't been knocking them down lately, but he had a good tournament for us and hopefully this will give him a lot of confidence."

Yaku Moton-Spruill, a 6-foot-8 center from Westland John Glenn, shared game-high honors with Clark against Wilber Wright by scoring 16. Moton-Spruill also grabbed nine rebounds.

Emir Medunjanin, a 6-6 forward from North Farmington, also had a strong first-half offensive, scoring 10 of his 13 points.

Eleven different SC players scored with Delvar Barrett adding 13 off the bench and

BASKETBALL

starter Mike Williams contributing 10.

"We knew we had the size," Briggs said. "We just had to be patient and get the ball inside-out and not force shots. I thought we did a good job of getting the ball to our shooters."

Guards Randy Thomas and Marcus Jordan scored 17 and 18, respectively, for Wilber Wright. But the Illinois squad simply could not match up with Schoolcraft's superior size, shooting ability and bench strength.

"Schoolcraft is well-coached and they have a good group of individuals who know their roles well," Wilber-Wright coach Joe Wharton said. "We brought back (Wilber-Wright) after 10 years and our goal is Division I. That's what we're shooting for. You can see

the administration and staff (at Schoolcraft) gives them support they need."

"We'll be back here next year because if we want to be the best, we have to play the best."

Wilber-Wright (9-7) advanced to the final by surprising Kirtland CC, 83-77 on Saturday, as Thomas had 26 and Jordan 24. Hubert Jones and Isaiah Brooks each contributed 13.

Reuben Edwards had 22 to lead Kirtland.

"We thought we might meet Kirtland in the final," Briggs said. "Wilber Wright gave us a different look than we're used to. They have a lot of guys 6-2 to 6-5 who are very athletic and like to get to the basket."

"With that matchup I thought we adjusted well, and it will help us get ready for the league because a lot of those teams will present the same kind of look."

The only negative on the afternoon was a sprained ankle starting point-guard Rulon Harris suffered near the end of the opening half.

"The good thing is that we got a chance to play a lot of guys and be happy for the holidays," Briggs said.

He said. "We'll give Rulon a couple of days off and hopefully he'll be ready for Oakland."

Many thought it would be hard to duplicate last year's 32-4 season of a year ago when Schoolcraft made its first-ever trip to the NJCAA national tournament.

But the 2001-02 Ocelots also seem to be on a mission.

"This year I think we're a little bit tougher and better defensively," fifth-year Schoolcraft coach Carlos Briggs said. "But we're not as skilled offensively as we were last year when we had guys like Derrick Bird (now at Auburn) and Sam Hoskin (at DePaul)."

One trademark of this Schoolcraft squad is unselfish play.

"Mike Williams is averaging 25 points a game, but he understands he doesn't have to be just a scorer for us to win," Briggs said. "All of our guys do a good job with that. That's why we had a lot of layups."

Schoolcraft also got a boost from 6-7, 285-pound center Delvar Barrett, a Detroit Cooley graduate who was playing in only his third game after transferring in from the University of

Toledo.

He had 26 total points in the tournament and gives SC an inside presence along with Moton-Spruill.

"Delvar has good hands, good footwork and is skilled," Briggs said. "He had some things he had to do off the court to be eligible to play. We told him what he had to do, which is to make a commitment. He got a 2.8 grade-point taking 17 hours."

"If he gets his weight down to about 260, we hope he can be a real factor for us by state tournament time. He's been coming in on his own and riding a bike and I'm encouraged by his progress."

Kirtland, coached by former Schoolcraft coach Glen Donahue, bounced Sunday to win the consolation game against George Brown (11-9) of Toronto, Ont., 93-81, as Edwards had 29 and Monte Tucker added 24.

Dion Horsford and Michael Hayles scored 24 and 23, respectively, for George Brown. Omar Omar had 16 in the loss to Schoolcraft.

Against George Brown, SC's leading scorers included Clark (18), Williams (16), Barrett (13) and Harris (11).

Lewis from page D1

five — all in the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association — to finish 5-4. The fifth win was a 58-19 romp over Olivet.

"The past season was kinda disappointing as a team," Lewis said. "It was pretty frustrating because we lost the last three games of my career."

"It was a tough year. We had quite a few seniors, a lot of guys coming back. We had high expectations for ourselves. Our 5-4 could have been 7-2 or 8-1 if a few things go our way."

"Now that I can't look forward to next season, I can't look back with much regret. I can't come back next year and have an even better season."

Lewis has mixed emotions about the end of his football career.

"As much as I thought I'd hate it, I can feel good about one thing," he said. "I can start losing a little weight, so my body and joints don't hurt as much."

"But you miss it, just watching games on TV, the practices and camaraderie you have with other players is something else."

"None of the professional or indoor teams have been knocking down my door. I'm pretty sure I've hung up my cleats except every Friday after Thanksgiving for the Harrison

alumni game — the old turkey bowl."

Lewis helped the Harrison freshmen coaches last summer before reporting to Kalamazoo, but he's not planning a career in coaching.

"I was amazed how I remembered all the old Harrison plays right away," he said. "If I have a son playing Little League football, I'll help out there. Just being around football in any way is fun for me."

Another job Lewis doesn't plan to pursue anytime soon is President of the United States. Harrison coach John Harrington predicted at the 1997 team banquet Lewis would one day be president.

"I was just pretty good at talking the coaches into running the play I wanted or giving us less sprints after practice," Lewis said.

"Maybe that's why he thought I'd be a good politician. I could win the referee pretty good, too. That might be where he got that."

Lewis spent three months in Mexico last winter, fulfilling a foreign studies requirement.

"I was doing pretty well (with the language)," he said. "I lived with a host family, and they didn't know any English, so you

pick it up pretty fast."

"The people were really friendly down there. You get pretty comfortable with it. I had a lot of stares, because I was the biggest guy down there."

Harrison prepared him well for college football, Lewis added. He started four years for the Hornets, the first at defensive tackle, the second at offensive tackle and the last two at center.

"I was more prepared for weight lifting than anybody I came in with," Lewis said. "I think we prepare guys so much better than other high school programs."

"I hit the ground running, coming from Harrison. Other guys take time to adjust. It helped with playing right away."

Two other former Harrison players joined Lewis in the Kalamazoo starting lineup last season. Lewis and junior tight end Zach Burton were second-team, All-MIAA picks, and sophomore defensive lineman Brett Foster received an honorable mention.

"I wanted to go somewhere I could play," Lewis said. "Football for me is not really fun standing on the sideline. It's getting in there and contributing to the team. It was great to get four years of games instead of one or two."

Spartans have best effort in win

Redford Bishop Burgess boys basketball coach Lloyd Pradel said his team played its "best game so far this year" with a 53-44 win over Saginaw Buena Vista Saturday in the University of Detroit-Jesuit's Roundball Classic.

Darion Bynum led the Spartans (3-2) with 24 points and 12 rebounds.

"The guys were very much under control and did a great job

reducing the number of turnovers," said Pradel.

Burgess led all but three periods with senior forward A.J. Shakin-Fulford adding 12 points.

Buena Vista's only double figure scorer was Mekele Cooper with 16 points.

"We executed things well both offensively and defensively," Pradel said. "The game was close all the way through but we held our own."

"I feel good about the progress we've made so far, and we've had a lot of compliments from people who saw us play last year and this year. We've made a lot of improvements."

The Spartans maintained a consistent training schedule over the holidays, and Pradel said his team is ready and eager to start Catholic League play Friday at Pontiac Notre Dame Prep.

Whalers from page D1

With Whalers' goaltender Paul Drew off for the extra attacker, Plymouth scored on Stewart's goal with just under 27 seconds to go from Surma.

■ WHALERS 3, LONDON 2: Before 4:167 Friday at the Ice House, Plymouth beat the host Knights on goals by Stewart, Liffiton and Rob McBride (a short-handed breakaway goal).

The Knights' Charlie Stephens scored at 15:26 of the third to cut the deficit to 3-2, but London (13-14-4-6) couldn't score the equalizer.

The Knights, who went 1-for-9 on the power play, played without four key performers — left winger Rick Nash (Canada) and goaltender Jan Chovan (Slovakia) at the World Juniors in the Czech Republic; right winger Corey Perry and

center Dylan Hunter, both playing for Team Ontario at the World Under-17 Tournament in Manitoba.

The Whalers played without five — all at the World Juniors — Stephen Weiss (Canada), Libor Ustirnil (Czech Republic), Jason Bacashinua (U.S.), Kris Vernarsky (U.S.) and Chad LaRose (U.S.).

WOMEN'S OLYMPIC HOCKEY EXHIBITION HEATS UP THE ICE AT "THE JOE"



Team USA -vs- Team Canada

January 6 • 1 PM

Joe Louis Arena

Tickets are \$25, \$30, \$18, \$13, \$9 and are available at the Joe Louis Arena box office, all ~~ticketmaster~~ outlets, including Hockeytown Authentic in Troy (with no service charge), by logging on to www.collegiatehockeyatthejoe.com, or charge by phone.

248-645-6666

Great group rates are available by calling 313-396-7811

VISA CHEVROLET BUDLIGHT Nike Havoline UNITED AIRLINES

For tickets and information, call

313-965-2222 and ask for "Super Singles Party."

Enter to win Detroit Red Wings Tickets

Check Today's Classifieds Section to See How You Can Enter to Win!

Observer & Eccentric

By Brad Emmons

PISTONS

NEW YEAR ACTION AT THE PALACE

KOBE, SHAQ, VINCE CARTER AND KMART PHOTO

SATURDAYS HIGHLIGHT THESE EARLY JANUARY GAMES

<p>Saturday, January 5 • 7:30 PM</p> <p>VS. CLEVELAND CAVALIERS</p> <p>Kmart Photo Saturday: Have your photo taken with a Pistons player on the floor from 6:00 to 6:20.</p>	
<p>Tuesday, January 8 • 8:00 PM</p> <p>VS. L.A. LAKERS</p> <p>Shaq and Kobe rock The Palace. First 4000 fans receive a Jerry Stackhouse poster courtesy of RE/MAX.</p>	
<p>Saturday, January 12 • 7:30 PM</p> <p>VS. CHARLOTTE HORNETS</p> <p>Kmart Photo Saturday: Have your photo taken with a Pistons player on the floor from 6:00 to 6:20.</p>	
<p>Tuesday, January 15 • 7:30 PM</p> <p>VS. TORONTO RAPTORS</p> <p>Vince Carter, Mo'Nique and the Raptors visit The Palace. First 3000 fans receive a Pistons hat courtesy of Ticketmaster.com.</p>	

NEW YEAR, NEW PLAN

RED, WHITE & BLUE PLAN

ON 6, GET CARTER AND IVERSON FREE!

6 GAMES STARTING AT 6 PM

For more info, visit Pistons.com, The Palace Box Office or all **ticketmaster** locations.