

OU manages win despite poor start

The first five minutes were horrendous.

Oakland University's men's basketball team had a basket to show for its efforts in the first half. Hillsdale College had 15 points. Such a start, in the first Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference game of the season, and in a game on the road, usually spells doom.

But the Pioneers recovered, thanks again to the sharp shooting of sophomore guard Eric Taylor. They outscored Hillsdale 33-13 the rest of the half, with Taylor getting 13 of those, and cruised home with a 78-65 victory Saturday.

Taylor, who has already been named GLIAC player of the week once, was a strong contender again after last week's Thursday he poured in a career-high 33 points, making 13 of 19 free shots and all three of his three-point efforts in an 87-83 loss at Northwood Institute.

Against Hillsdale, Taylor totaled 23 points and eight rebounds — both team highs. The key run in the game started with 5:22 to go in the first half and OU down 24-21. The Pioneers scored the next eight points, six by Taylor.

The closest the Chargers got in the second half was 70-62 with 3:39 remaining. A Brian Gregory baseline jumper restored OU to a 10-point advantage, and Hillsdale never again threatened.

ANDRE BOND contributed 18 points and six boards to OU's win. Gregory connected on eight consecutive free throws en route to scoring 12 points. He also had seven assists and five steals. Stacy Davis added eight points and six rebounds (five offensive) and Dave Hintz got eight points and five boards.

Jim Bauer's 18 points were best for the Chargers, who slipped to 6-6 overall and 0-1 in the GLIAC. Jerry Sharp had 14.

The win improved the Pioneers' record to 5-3 (1-0 in the conference). Wednesday's loss at Northwood came despite an OU rally that trimmed an 11-point Northern lead (51-40) with 16:26 to play to three (79-76), on two Davis' free throws with 1:27 left.

But in the 54 seconds following Davis' foul shots, NI outscored the Pioneers 5-2 to go up 84-78, a lead too large to overcome. Joining Taylor (who also dished out four assists) in double-figure scoring for

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S'craft women pound Alpena

One thing became very evident after a few minutes of Saturday's Alpena Community College-Schoolcraft College women's basketball game: Alpena just didn't have it.

If the game had been a horse race, SC's home court stallions would have made Alpena look like plow horses. The 69-51 final margin might have been more if the Lady Ocelots maintained their intensity for the entire 40 minutes.

"We played a full-court man-to-man defense in the first half," said SC coach Jack Grenan. "The kids just dug in. (Alpena) had trouble getting it past mid-court."

Guards Tracy Osborne, Ann Hardy and Teresa Farkas forced a bundle of Alpena turnovers. When on offense, SC proved just as effective — Alpena's ability to zone defense throughout the first half.

Osborne took advantage of that. She sank a pair of three-pointers and scored 11 points from the perimeter in the opening 20 minutes to spark SC to a 35-21 halftime lead. When Alpena was fast enough to cover Osborne on one wing, the Lady Ocelots rotated the ball to Denise Kokowicz on the opposite side.

KOKOWICZ RESPONDED by hit-

Pioneers

The backcourt did it again for Oakland University's men's basketball team, carrying the Pioneers past Northeastern Illinois 85-75 Tuesday at OU's Lepley Sports Center.

OU improved its record to 6-3 with the triumph. Northeastern is 2-6.

The backcourt did the offensive load for OU this season. Guards Eric Taylor and Brian Gregory and swingman Andre Bond are the team's top scorers.

Taylor was up to par against Northeastern, coming up with 20 points, two assists and five steals. The Pioneers led 42-36 at halftime and built their advantage to 62-47 with 12:08 to play.

The Golden Eagles sliced into that deficit, pulling to within 74-69 with 3:23 remaining. But Taylor ignited a

string of five-six outside shots, scoring 10 first-half points.

After a few minutes of the second half, SC's lead had grown to 20 and Alpena abandoned its zone for a man-to-man defense. The move worked for a while, as the Lady Ocelots lead was trimmed to 12. After baffling Alpena with its high-speed fast break in the first half, SC relaxed, and the tempo rebounded.

The Lady Ocelots rebounding also slackened, which perturbed Grenan. But he did adjust to Alpena's defensive change, regaining the lead inside to center Barker. King had just four points in the first half against the zone, but against the man-to-man, he found enough openings to score 12 second-half points.

Krug finished with 16 points and 11 rebounds. Osborne totaled 15 points, Kokowicz notched 14 and Farkas had 10 (eight in the second half). Lisa DePlanche collected eight points and 10 boards.

Joy Hyvarinen's 18 points led Alpena. Kris Thurson netted 15.

The win allowed SC to open its Eastern Conference season on a winning note. The Lady Ocelots are 5-2 overall, with four consecutive victories. Alpena is 0-3, 4-3 overall and 1-1 in the conference.

SC MEN'S BASKETBALL: The

optimistic view would be: How many times in the last two years were the Ocelots even in position to win in the final seconds?

The obvious answer is very seldom. But in Saturday's Eastern Conference opener against Alpena at SC, Ken Fuster was at the free-throw line with 14 seconds to play and his team trailing 70-68.

Unfortunately for the Ocelots, while the situation may have been new, the results were all-too-familiar. Fuster, an 85 percent shooter at the line, missed the first in his one.

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Taylor finished with 22 points and five assists. Bond had 21, including the 1,000 point of his OU career, making him the 10th Pioneer to surpass that mark. He now has 1,015. Gregory collected 18 points and led OU with eight assists and six rebounds.

Angela Mantle scored 23 to top Northeastern. Brent Fulk had 18 and Steve Serra 16.

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string of five-six outside shots, scoring 10 first-half points.

It made one-of-two foul shots with a few seconds remaining. Increasing Alpena's advantage to three. The Ocelots tried to get the ball into Ed Hudson's hands for a tying three-pointer, but Darren Morgan intercepted and scored at the buzzer, making the final 73-68 in favor of Alpena.

"It was a tough loss, but we played well," said SC coach Dave Bogataj. "It was one of those games we had a chance to win and we just didn't do it."

BLAMING FUSTER, a sophomore, for the loss would be grossly unfair. Several other experienced players suffered through sub-par performances. Ed Hudson, averaging better than 18 points a game, managed just nine and missed all seven of his three-point attempts. Al Hudson played less than 20 minutes because of foul trouble, totalling seven points and eight rebounds.

Bob Harmon was limited to nine points. All, like Fuster (who had six points), are sophomores.

The main reason SC was able to stay in the game was freshman Randy Watters, who riddled Alpena for 25 points and grabbed nine rebounds. Watters made five-of-seven three-point efforts.

Alpena 40-37 at the half. The game remained close the rest of the way, until Morgan (16 points), Scott Olsen (15) and Allen (13) carried Alpena to the win.

Bogataj admitted he is having trouble accepting losses, close or not. This defeat dropped SC to 5-7 overall and to 0-1 in the conference. Alpena is 7-3 overall, 1-1 in the conference.

"We play hard like this and I just got to believe the breaks will start going our way," he said.

The only question is, when?

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