

OU women hit tourney trail

By C.J. Rissak
staff writer

It must've been a huge relief, as if a tremendous weight had been suddenly vanished, when Oakland University's women's basketball team knocked off St. Joseph's College to win the NCAA Division II Great Lakes Regional Saturday.

That victory alone for last year's humbling 80-59 defeat at the hands of the Lady Pumas. And, as OU coach Bob Taylor acknowledged, "Last year, we just wanted to get into the tournament. This year, we wanted to get back to the regional final and win."

So, now what?

The Lady Pioneers have accomplished that goal, and their season is still alive. At 7:30 p.m. (Central Time) Friday, they go up against a tournament-tested team from Central Missouri State in Warrensburg, Mo.

THE CHALLENGE now belongs to Taylor. Can he motivate his team further? As well as the Lady Pioneers played in dispatching both St. Joseph's and Indiana-Purdue at Fort Wayne, they're going to be pressed to do even better.

"We cannot be satisfied with what we've done," said Taylor, whose team is now 26-4. "All of our bricks are in one basket now. We have to put everything into beating Central Missouri State."

That won't be easy. The Jennies have been in the NCAA II tournament eight-straight seasons. Ranked eighth in the NCAA II, they are 29-2 this season, and Saturday they upset No. 3-ranked West Texas State 67-63 in the South Central Region final to advance to the quarterfinals.

CENTRAL MISSOURI IS 19-0 at home this season and has won 34-straight on its floor. In the last 13 years, the Jennies have only lost 19 home games.

Their strength is inside, which should make this an interesting matchup. With All-American center Debbie Delle, OU has often had the upper hand when the ball was around the basket. It could be different this time.

Wildcats in AAU play

Some of the area's top names in girls basketball will play for the Western Wayne Wildcats 18-and-under AAU team in the state tournament later this month.

The Wildcats are the defending champions who eventually finished fourth in the nation last year with a team featuring former stars Jill Estey of Plymouth Salem, Michelle Fortier of Plymouth Canton and Jennifer Shaky of Birmingham Marian.

Estey starts at point guard for Illinois. Fortier plays for Western Michigan and Shaky, the Miss Basketball of 1988, is a leading player at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

The Wildcats will be one of 20 teams competing in the 18-and-under AAU state tournament in Sandusky, Mich., the weekend of April 6-8.

Playing for the Wildcats this year will be Susan Ferko and Stacey Thompson of Canton, Maya Lewis, Wayne Memorial; Jenny Miller and Wendy Jamula, Taylor Center; Shawn Bannon of Livonia and Dearborn Divine Child, Christy Canavan, Divine Child; Stephanie Biefort, New Baltimore Anchor Bay; Michelle Rose, Montrose; Amy Kimball, Jackson Lumen Christi; Julie Angle, Flint Powers; and Sandy Williams, Oak Park.

THE WILDCATS 15- and 16-and-under teams must survive double-elimination regional tournaments to advance to the state level.

The 15-and-under tournament will be played this coming weekend at Northville High School. The 10-team affair runs from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and continues Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Teams from Oakland, Livingston and Macomb counties, Detroit, Grand Rapids and Benton Harbor will compete. Four teams will advance to the eight-team state tournament April 6-7-8 in Sandusky.

The Wildcats 16-and-under roster includes Carrie Walton of Farmington Hills Mercy, Sarah Ruete and Emily Giuliani of Salem, Carolyn Shanks of South Lyon, Julianne Slesiak of Livonia Franklin, Kim Hoppes of Trenton, Jenny Shanks of Garden City, Mary Barna of Canton and Stephanie Locke of Lutheran Westland.

The 15-and-under regional tournament begins at 6 p.m. Friday at Canton and Salem high schools. Competition continues on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The top four teams also advance to state tournament April 6-7-8 in Sandusky.

Area players on the Western Wayne 15-and-under team are Yolanda Jackson, Salem; Julie Nicastri, Canton; Karen Pump, Northville; Patty Shea, Franklin; Kelly Austin, Salem; Mary Bleniewicz, Mercy; Darci Miller, Salem; and Amy Westerhold, Canton.

Barb Sorensen, a 6-foot-2 senior, leads Central Missouri in scoring (16.8 points) and rebounding (7.2). Two others are in double-figures in scoring: Dawn Thomas, a 6-1 junior (14.9 points, 5.0 rebounds), and Robin Williams, a 5-10 senior (12.4 points, 7.1 rebounds).

The Jennies' weakness may be in the backcourt. Shelley Huber, a 5-8 junior, and Cathy Hagenbauer, a 5-7 senior, have started all 31 games this season but combine for just 13 points a game. In addition, they are not a good three-point shooting team, with only 45 treys in 137 tries (32.9 percent). OU is 152-of-428 from three-point land (35.5 percent).

BUT ASK any coach, and he'll insist offensive stats at this stage don't matter. Experience and defense are what counts. Central Missouri has limited its foes to less than 60 points a game (59.8) and under 40 percent shooting (38.9 percent).

OU's figures aren't too bad defensively, either. The Lady Pioneers held opponents to an average of 66.5 points on 39 percent shooting. Their offensive figures, on the other hand, are impressive: 82.5 points a game, 51.5 percent shooting.

Delie's 22.2 points and 9.3 boards should earn her All-American accolades again. Her 63.4 percent shooting from the floor and 77.2 percent from the free throw line have been superb.

But the player most responsible for OU's advancing in the tournament is guard Jennifer Golen. The sophomore from Rochester has provided OU with a missing ingredient.

"Last year, teams played defense on us around the basket with Debbie and around the three-point line," said Taylor. "We didn't have anyone who could take two or three dribbles, pull up and shoot."

THEY DO now. Golen averages 14.4 points a game, hitting 58.3 percent from the floor. In addition, she did a solid job defensively against St. Joseph's All-American guard Jeanette Yeoman. Yeoman rattled OU for 25 first-half points Saturday, but Taylor went to a box-and-one defense with Golen checking her in the second half, and Yeoman managed just four more.

"She adds a whole new dimension," said Taylor of Golen.

Another key performer has been senior guard Dawn Lichty (from Troy Zion Christian), who came back from preseason knee surgery to fill in for point guard Ann Serra, another knee injury victim. Lichty's weekend performance stunned her coach.

"She played 39 of the 40 minutes (in the two games), didn't miss a shot (in seven attempts, including four treys), had 25 or 26 assists (eight vs. IPFW, 17 vs. St. Joseph's) and spent time guarding Yeoman," said Taylor. "And all without an anterior cruciate (ligament)."

"That is amazing. We should name an award after her."

Golen and Lichty could be pivotal in OU's plans Friday. "The test is to take it one step further," said Taylor. "We're on the yellow-light road. You only get so many chances."



RANDY BORDST/staff photographer

Eric Carlson of North, hoping to avoid a foul, gives U-D's Gerald Cain room to maneuver in first-round regional play Tuesday at Ferndale.

Jesuit rallies to beat Raiders

Continued From Page 1

by Alan Afsari and Brian Dynda on the relay.

Hoefflein apparently had ample time to recover from swimming 55.27 and taking second in the consolation heat of the backstroke two events prior. He finished the same in the 200 freestyle with a 1:45.16.

"Mike really raced well today," McClune said. "Mike's best swim was Friday in the 100 freestyle (as part of the relay), and today he anchored the relay and went 47.6. That was a real key in the relay."

Shumate was fourth in the fourth in the 200 and 500 freestyles with 1:44.14 and 4:44.80 times. Ironically, they were slower than last year when he placed seventh in the same events with 1:43.71 and 4:40.95 efforts.

"I got sick two days ago, and it kinda hindered both of my races," he said. "At least I came through and held my place. I'm happy with that."

Shumate qualified fourth in both events during the prelims with times of 1:44.69 in the 200 and 4:42.58 in the 500. Those swims knocked more than two seconds off his seed time in the 200 and almost seven seconds in the 500.

"I WAS REAL pleased with how I placed, but I was looking to do a little better than I did last year," he said. "I was real happy with the way the team swam. We deserved it."

Livonia Stevenson's medley relay team of Aaron Rieder, Alex Goecke, Scott Dewolf and Taki Caranicoles was 10th at 1:41.85, and the sophomore Rieder placed 11th in the individual medley at 2:00.57.

Danny Knipper became the first North swimmer to score at the state meet since Mike Tunney in 1987. The senior took 11th place in the breast stroke with a 1:01.40 time. That was better than his 1:02.02 seed time but not as fast as his qualifying time of 1:01.05.

"He swam a little faster Friday, but he was really fired up and ready to swim hard — and he did," North coach Sue Gendron said. "He dropped almost two seconds from the conference meet. I think he was pleased and happy with his race."

Orris, who was nosed out in the 200 freestyle and IM last year, struck back as a senior, winning the IM and butterfly with state-record swims.

He broke former Ann Arbor Pioneer swimmer Dave Chernek's 9-year-old record of 1:51.90 in the IM with a 1:50.97 time, and his 49.79 effort eclipsed former North swimmer Brian Goins' mark of 50.79 in the butterfly.

ORRIS ALSO avenged his loss to David Klaviter of East Lansing in the butterfly. Klaviter went 49.99 in this year's finals.

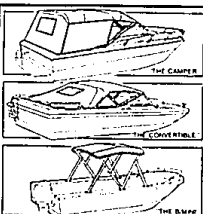
Orris and Tom Bailey of Ann Arbor Huron, who also set two records, were named co-swimmers of the meet, and Mike Lane of team champion Bloomfield Hills Andover was named coach of the year.

Bailey swam 1:38.15 in the 200 freestyle to upset defending champion Alce Mull of Lansing Eastern (1:38.66) and break his older brother's 1988 record of 1:38.83. He also won the 100 freestyle in 44.53, breaking the standard of 45.90 set by Tony Anderson of Pioneer in 1988.

In the Class B meet at Michigan State, Farmington Hills Harrison's Ryan Koonce was seventh in diving, and Jason Barringer scored in the consolation heat of the breast stroke. Bedford Thurston's Leo Moreria scored in two events, and Gordie Christian placed ninth in diving. Moreria was eighth in the 500 freestyle and ninth in the 200.

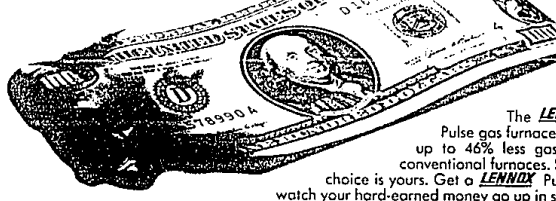
"It was an excellent meet for them," Thurston coach Shelley Morse-Helwig said. "We went up there and did what we wanted to do (which was to place)."

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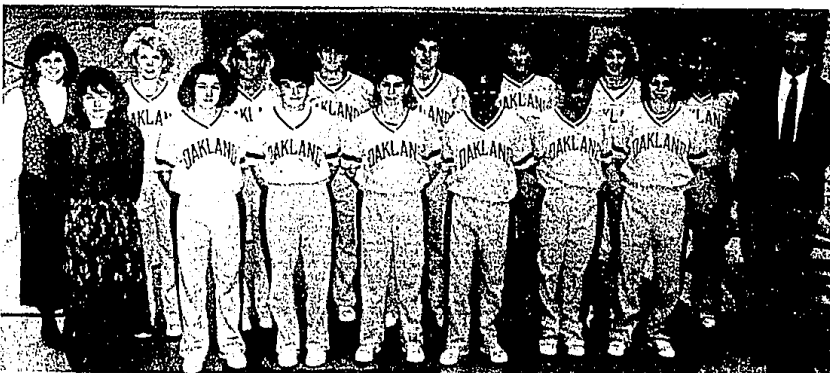
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Congratulations on winning the Great Lakes Regional Championship. Good luck Friday night in the national quarter-finals at Central Missouri State.



Oakland University Women's Basketball Team with Head Coach Bob Taylor, GLIAC Coach of the Year (on right) and Assistant Coaches, Shawn Clemens and Deb Anderson.