

# Basketball team to improve, Smitley says

By Jerry Trently

Capitol Campus' basketball team will be a conference contender, according to Capitol's Director of Recreation and Athletics, Bud Smitley.

Smitley predicts the Lions will win the keystone Athletic Conference title, despite their recent seven-game losing streak.

Coach Charlie Bowen stressed the team's average of 35 turnovers a game over the first nine games as the reason for the team's losses.

"We just can't expect to stay in our games if we give up the ball as many times as we have,"

Bowen said after a December 8 loss to conference rival, Alvernia College.

Bowen said the team works with each member individually to

alleviate personal weaknesses each player may have.

"We're not playing that badly aside from the turnovers. I guess we just have to keep working at it," said team co-captain Brian Gauger.

The team has showed improvement in eliminating turnovers, averaging 25 against Haverford College last Saturday, and 16 against Juniata College on Monday.

The Lions' 56-54 victory over Juniata marked their first win after losing the seven straight.

But the team has shown respectable shooting capability, averaging 69 percent from the foul line, and 43 percent from the field.

In a somewhat physical contest against Alvernia, Gauger and fellow co-captain Juan Roach both fouled out of the game.

"I know there were some mistakes I made out there tonight, but I guess we'll just have to watch ourselves if we're going to stay close," Gauger said.

Capitol has to be especially careful, because of its lack of bench strength.

"After the semester break we'll have two more players and will be in every ball game," Smitley said, "I'm not saying we'll win every one, but we'll be close."

Smitley said the conference favorites are Alvernia, Misericordia, Capitol, and Beaver, expected to finish the season in that order.

The Lions won their first two games before the losing streak, and have an overall record of 3-7. They are 0-1 in conference play.

Capitol's last game of the season is at home on February 14 against Misericordia, and constitutes what Smitley believes can be the deciding game of the year.

"Just let me go on record as saying we'll win the conference," he said.

The Keystone Athletic League Conference Championships will be held February 17 and 18.

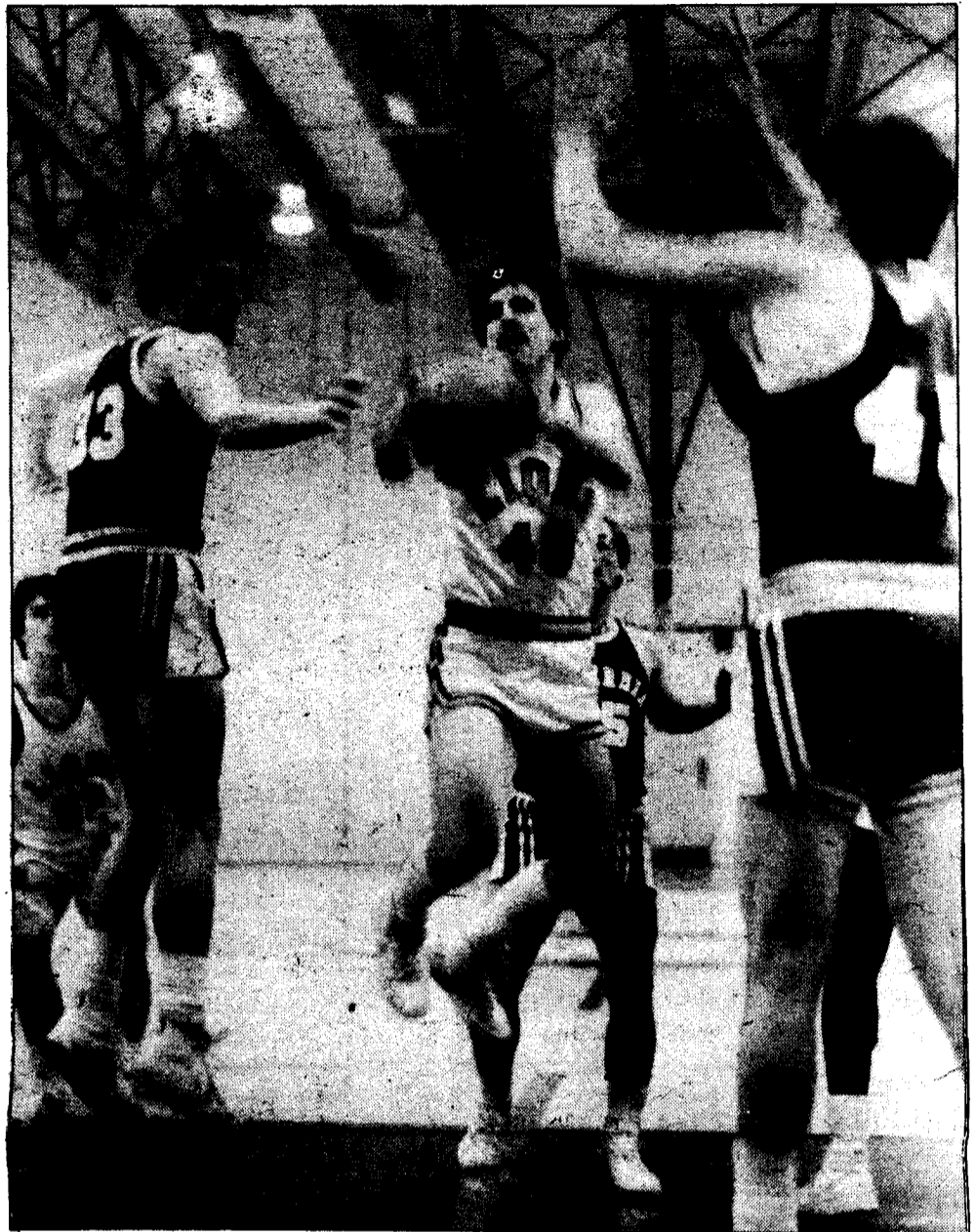


Photo by Jerry Trently

Capitol's Barry Richards (40) weaves between Alvernia players in Dec. 8 game at Capitol Campus.

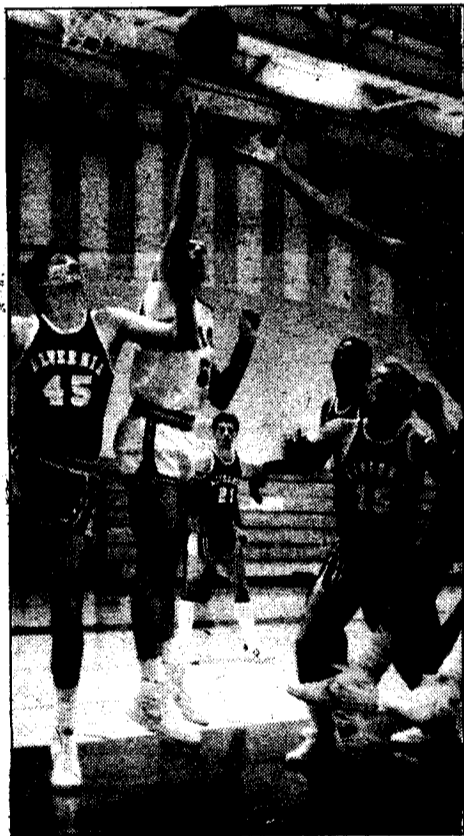


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Lion's Greg Dreisbach reaches for rebound against Alvernia. The Lions lost the contest.

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