

Basketball team closes out roller coaster year

Mike Givler
Capital Times Staff

The men's basketball team at Penn State Harrisburg has had its ups and downs this season, however Coach Brad Markey said the problem can be summed up in one word--inexperience.

"Inexperience is a problem," Markey said. "We have so many players who haven't played college basketball before."

The Lions are fielding a team with only three returning players and only eight players on the roster. The team is 7-13 overall and 5-8 in district play, and must finish .500 in the district to make the playoffs. The Lions' three remaining games are all district contests.

Markey credits the inexperience factor to the nature of the institution, a two-year college for juniors and seniors.

"Everybody we play has four years to teach a program," Markey said. "We have to start over every year with new kids."

Another problem Markey has found with the Lions is inconsistency. He added that this is the reason for the roller coaster season.

"I think we're decent, then I think we're awful, then I don't know what to think," Markey said. "We are inconsistent because of all of the new players."

Markey added that along with the inconsistency comes a lack of offense. The Lions have been averaging about eight points less a contest than their opponents.

"We don't have enough guys who can handle the ball and put the ball in the basket," Markey said.

One bright spot Markey pointed out about this season was the Lions' three-game winning streak they posted. The Lions beat Beaver, Wilmington, and Misericordia in late January, and Markey said the game at Wilmington, their only road victory to date, was a great win.

"Wilmington is a very talented team, and to beat them by 17 on their home court was really great," Markey said.

Another shining point in the season, Markey said, has been the play of senior Brian Gehris.

"Brian has surpassed everything we thought he could do," Markey said. "We've got a lot of production from him on the floor."

Markey added that the two other seniors, Mike Watts and James Truhe, have been the most consistent players on the team and have done a lot of things he expected them to do.

The Lions have also been lighting it

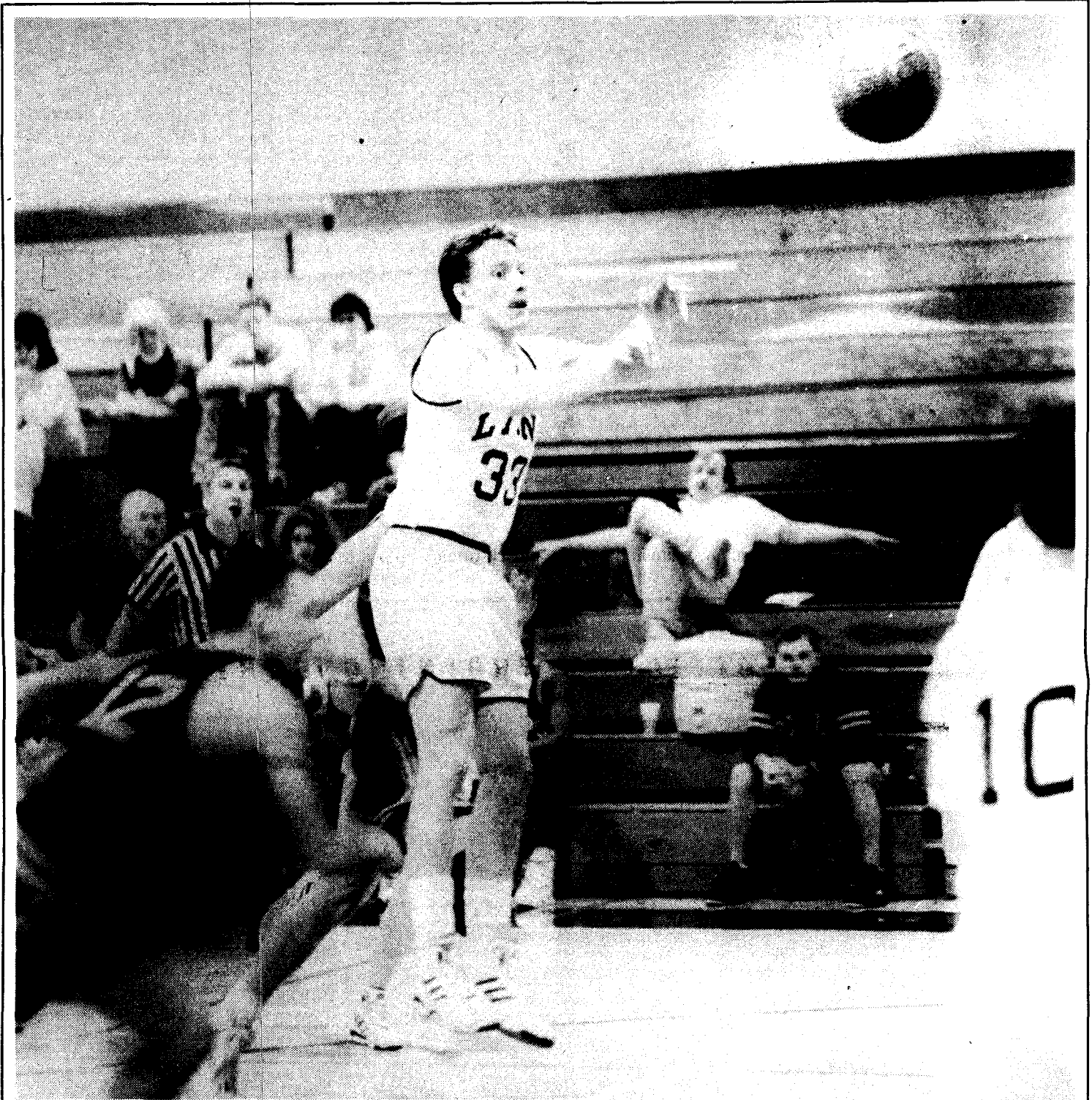
up from the free-throw line, shooting a very impressive 77 percent, which puts them fifth in the nation in that category. Watts has been the main contributor to this statistic, shooting 88.6 percent from the charity stripe, placing him second in

the district and seventh in the nation.

If the Lions do make the playoffs, they will have to deal with another problem--their less-than-impressive road record. This could be a big factor since the Lions would be low-seeded and have to play road

games in the playoffs. However, Markey said that anything can happen in the "second season."

"You can never count anyone out," Markey said. "We play a style of basketball that can keep us in any game."



Junior Tony Calo (33) fires a pass to a teammate during the Lion's game with Philadelphia Pharmacy. The Lions lost the District II contest 71-48.

Photo by Mike Starkey

PSH Lions snare new baseball coach

Mike Givler
Capital Times Staff

Penn State Harrisburg has selected Wayne Geist to be the college's baseball coach, replacing Gary Pritchard who retired last June due to personal reasons.

Athletic Director Duane Crider said five people were interviewed and Geist was the "best match for the campus and the team."

Geist has not officially accepted the position yet, but Crider said "everything is okay."

Crider said Geist was selected by the athletic organization and baseball players.

Crider added that he felt it was important to have the players in on the decision.

"It was critical that the players helped with the interviews and the decision, since it is their team," Crider said.

Lion pitcher Bob McDonald, one of the players who was involved in the decision, said this coach could be a great plus for the team.

"I think with the type of coach we've chosen, we can be very competitive in the district," McDonald said. "All we lack now is fan support."

Catcher Tim Gallagher, also in on the decision, agreed with McDonald that Geist

is what the team needs.

"He is a good aggressive coach," Gallagher said. "He plays aggressively and I think we need to play that way."

"Last year we sat back and watched things happen, and we got blown out," Gallagher added.

Geist has coached American Legion baseball teams in the Harrisburg area, as well as basketball, softball and women's field hockey. Geist was also the head groundskeeper for the Harrisburg Senators.

The baseball team is losing three players from last year's roster: outfielder John White, pitcher/infielder Derek

Slocum, and infielder Marshall Walters.

The team compiled a 9-13 record last year (3-4 in the district), and finished third in the double-elimination district playoff tournament in Wilmington, Del.

The fourth-seeded Lions lost to Alvernia in the first round of the tournament, but got by Misericordia in the losers' bracket before bowing out to Wilmington.

The Lions played games in Maryland and Washington D.C. last year, and also took a team trip to Cocoa Beach, Fla.

See Coach, page 16