

SPORTS

Two who keep their teams in the game

Chris Ziomek holds Lehman together

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Correspondent

At 5-10, 165 pounds, Lake-Lehman's Chris Ziomek hasn't intimidated anyone just by stepping onto the basketball court.

But after facing his unrelenting defense and clutch shooting for 32 minutes, opponents soon realize that bigger is not always better.

If you're the type of basketball fan who scans the boxscores with your morning cup of coffee, then you've probably never heard of Ziomek.

But if you're a true basketball fan, someone who understands the X's and O's, then you know that Ziomek's contribution to the Black Knight basketball program could never be measured by a boxscore.

Perhaps nobody knows that better than Lake-Lehman head coach Roger Bearde.

"Chris is a very solid player," said Bearde, who has seen Ziomek climb the ladder in the Black Knight program. "He's willing to sacrifice himself for the good of the team. He has a lot of desire, always diving after loose balls or taking a charge. He's very unselfish."

With many of the guards in the conference over six feet tall, Ziomek knows he can't rely on his size to be the difference.

"I have to play smarter against a guy who's bigger than me," said Ziomek, a 3.0 student in the college preparatory program. "I have to use

my quickness. I've always liked (Detroit Piston) Isiah Thomas. I like the way he takes control of the game. I feel more comfortable when I take control. I think I play better that way."

Some players measure their success by the number of points they score. Others measure it by rebounds or blocked shots. But for Ziomek, son of George and Bernadine Ziomek, success can only be measured when the final buzzer sounds.

"I want to help my team win," said Ziomek, who has averaged nearly six points per game this season. "I want to play solid defense. If I shut down their best offensive player, it feels great. But I'll do anything it takes for the team to win."

While defense is his specialty, Ziomek can also score when he has to. Just ask the Dallas Mountaineers.

In the finals of the Crossin Tournament two weeks ago, the Mountaineers challenged Ziomek to beat them from the outside. He responded with 12 points, including three clutch three-pointers, as Lake-Lehman defeated Dallas, 60-54.

Despite having three players, in Rich Davis, Jessie Martin and Dave Clancy, who can score 20 or more points on any given night, Bearde



CHRIS ZIOMEK

knows his team wouldn't be the same without Ziomek.

"We start everything from the defense," Bearde said. "Chris isn't flashy. You can go to a game and not even notice him. But he's a 'glue-type' player. He holds everything together. He doesn't turn the ball over and he's the kind of player who won't lose the game for you. Our team wouldn't be the same without him."

Wagner plays big in Mounts' success

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Correspondent

No one confused Dallas High School senior Mike Wagner with Jerry Tarkanian, former head coach of University of Nevada-Las Vegas, when—awaiting his chance to get in the game—Wagner sat on the edge of the bench clenching a towel in both fists and biting on it.

Perhaps it's better that way. Wagner knows he would be lost in the neon city in the desert. A place where only the headliners survive.

On this night, the Wyoming Seminary gymnasium is a long way from the Strip, and Wagner will prove that you don't have to be a headliner to give an encore performance.

Seven and one-half minutes into the game Dallas head coach Paul Brown pulls on Wagner's slender shoulders.

It's showtime.

"It's a rush," Wagner says of his feelings when the buzzer sounds and he enters the court. "I know my playing time is limited. I try to make the best of it."

In technical basketball terms he is known as the "sixth man", the first player a coach will go to off the bench.

But Brown isn't about to pin that label on Wagner.

"I really don't think of Mike as a sixth man," Brown said. "I think we have six players who we can put on the court at any time. We can only start five players. But when he comes off the bench, we don't lose anything."

On this night, Wagner enters the game with his team trailing by five points. It's a situation he's been in before. Two weeks ago, Brown called on Wagner in the second quarter with the Mountaineers trailing by 10 points against Lake-Lehman. Dallas ended the half with a two-point lead.

Although Wagner, who has averaged five points per contest in Dallas' first three conference games, has the ability to score, it's his defensive prowess and hustle that draw the most praise.

"Mike is a very good defensive player," Brown added. "He can make things happen on defense. He's in the top two or three players on the team when it comes to hustle. On offense, he's a good penetrator and he's always looking for the open man."

Although Wagner plays solid defense, his Mounts trail, 37-31, at the half.

With 3:58 remaining in the third quarter, senior guard Dave Fisher commits his fourth personal foul. With his team facing a four-point deficit and their first conference loss, Brown once again summons the 6-0, 170-pound guard.

And it doesn't take long for Wagner to give an instant tuneup to a sputtering engine.

His two free throws 12 seconds after he enters the game tie the contest at 46-46. But he isn't done just yet. Less than one minute following his free throws he splits a pair of defenders and his layup gives the Mounts a 55-49 lead. A lead they will never relinquish.

In the span of three minutes and 10 seconds Mike Wagner had given his team four points, created two turnovers and held his man to just one field goal.

It's no wonder that as he trotted off the court with 4:22 remaining in the game and the Mountaineers holding a commanding 11-point lead, he did so amid a huge ovation from an appreciative Dallas crowd.

But things weren't always as rosy for Wagner this season.

At one point, facing his lack of playing time, Wagner toyed with



MIKE WAGNER

the notion of leaving the team. But his love for the game and a chance to be part of a possible championship team convinced him to stay.

"I love playing basketball," said Wagner, son of Lee and Cheryl Wagner. "I really wanted to be part of this team. I think we could have something very special here. I want to be part of it."

Brown says he understood Wagner's dilemma and is glad he decided to remain with the team.

"Mike is a fierce competitor," explained Brown. "He plays with a lot of pride. He wants to be on the court. I don't know if he felt as though he was a part of the team at the time."

"But I think he's beginning to realize that he's a big part of this team," Brown added. "He's played very well the last three or four games. I think Mike is beginning to realize how important he is to this basketball team."

Sports roundup

KNIGHTS BLOW OUT WEST SIDE TECH

Lake-Lehman placed four players in double figures en route to a 76-25 thrashing of West Side Tech on the loser's court on January 5. Rich Davis led the Black Knights with 18 points while Wil Woronko added 15. Dave Clancy and Jesse Martin each tossed in 14 points.

MOUNTS LEAD ALL THE WAY AGAINST HAFEY

Dallas jumped out to a 31-18 halftime lead and never looked back as they downed visiting Bishop Hafey, 60-46, on January 5. Todd Paczewski led the Mountaineers with 16 points while Dave Puz and Dave Fisher tallied 15 and 10 points, respectively.

MOUNTAINEER GIRLS LOSE TO HAFEY

Kelly Janosky led Dallas but it wasn't enough as the Lady Mountaineers lost a 57-42 decision to host Bishop Hafey on January 5. Robin Suda added seven points for the Mounts. Dallas won the junior varsity game, 33-28.

LADY KNIGHTS OVERWHELM TECH

The Lake-Lehman Lady Black Knights held visiting West Side Tech to just three points in the first half as they pounded the Titans, 66-20, on January 5. Heather Gray led Lehman with 27 points while Johanna Miller tossed in 13.

DALLAS WRESTLERS BEAT HONESDALE

The Dallas wrestling team won eight of 12 matches en route to a 32-20 win over host Honesdale on January 6. Harry Phillips (119) and Sean Pietraccini each posted pins for the Mountaineers. Rick Hodle, Mike Heffron, Chris Snyder,

Mike Vavrek, Aaron Gingo and Jamie Oley all registered decisions.

LADY MOUNTS SCORE FIRST WIN OF YEAR

The Dallas girl's basketball team won their first game of the season, a 67-38 thumping of Wyoming Seminary on January 7. Daveski led the Mounts with 14 points while Kelly Janosky added 13. Killeen tossed in nine points for Dallas, as all 10 players scored.

MOUNT GRAPPLERS WIN 1ST LEAGUE MEET

Harry Phillips (119), Cody Friedel (135), Glenn Ellsworth (140) and Mike Vavrek (145) each posted pins to lead Dallas to a 35-27 wrestling win over Wyoming Area in the league opener for both teams on January 9. With the scored tied 12-12, the Mounts utilized three straight pins to take a 30-12 lead and never looked back.

O'REILLY BLASTS BLACK KNIGHT GIRLS

Bishop O'Reilly remained undefeated with an 84-38 pasting of visiting Lake-Lehman on January 7. Johanna Miller led the Black Knights with 13 points while teammate Cherub Honeywell added 12 in a losing effort.

MOUNTS COME BACK TO TOP SEMINARY

Todd Paczewski hit 13 of 14 free throws and scored 25 points to lead Dallas to a 79-68 come-from-behind win over Wyoming Seminary on January 8. Dave Puz added 18 and Dave Fisher 13 for the Mounts, who remained unbeaten in league play.

DAVIS, MARTIN LEAD LEHMAN TO WIN

Rich Davis and Jesse Martin combined for 46 points to lead Lehman to a 79-59 win over visiting Bishop O'Reilly on January 8. Davis poured in 26 and Martin added 20 as the Black Knights kept their perfect league record intact. Wil Woronko added 16 points for the winners.

Free throw contest Saturday

Knights of Columbus, Father O'Leary Council 8224, Dallas will be holding its annual free throw contest on Saturday, Jan. 16, in the Gate of Heaven gym, Dallas, from 12 til 2 p.m.

All boys and girls between the ages of 10 to 14 as of January 1 are welcome to participate.

Registration will be the day of the free throw contest.

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