

SPORTS



Who is...
Cole Tatsak, Bronco boys senior diver, is featured

B2

QUICK HITS

RRCC in national hockey tourney

After being ranked No. 2 in the final Western Division poll released this week, the Rainy River Community College women's hockey team has been invited to the American Collegiate Hockey Association Division 2 National Tournament set for March 4-8 in York, Pa.

The Voyageurs, who have a record of 14-3-3 in ACHA games, finished seven points behind the Western Division's top-rated team, North Dakota State University.

The Western Division's No. 3-ranked team, Michigan State University, and No. 4-ranked Northern Michigan University also received invitations.

The top-four-ranked ACHA D2 Eastern Division teams invited to the national tournament include the California University of Pennsylvania, University of Delaware, West Chester University and University of Buffalo.

FHS boys hockey team's season ends

The International Falls boys hockey team's season came to an end Tuesday night when the No. 9-seeded Broncos lost their opening-round Section 7A playoff game on the road against No. 8-seeded Virginia/Mountain Iron-Buhl, 5-1.

The Blue Devils scored first 5:29 into the first period on a goal from Jay Peterson assisted by Colton Croft.

The Falls scored its only goal with 29 seconds left in the first period when Brady Wright tied the game at 1-1 assisted by Clay Bergstrom.

Virginia/MI-B scored the game-winner before the 5-minute mark of the second period when Peterson tallied his second goal of the game.

Shots on goals favored the Blue Devils, 34-21, with Lucas Murray recording the win and Lane Skallman picking up the loss in net.

The Falls' season ended with an overall record of 4-22.

L-BF girls hoops team wins two on the road

The Littlefork-Big Falls girls basketball team is now on a two-game winning streak after a pair of road victories this week.

L-BF won Tuesday at Lake of the Woods, 51-37.

The Vikings, who led 19-12 at halftime, had only one player end up in double figures with Kaylee Kennedy scoring 26 points. Karly Swenson added nine points.

On Thursday, L-BF won at Northeast Range, 57-53.

Kennedy led the Vikings with 20 points. Swenson, Breann Larson and Alexis Doucette added 12 points apiece.

L-BF's season record now stands at 9-10 going into Monday's game at North Woods.

Viking boys hoops team falls to Cherry

The Littlefork-Big Falls boys basketball team extended its losing streak to eight games Tuesday night after falling at home to Cherry, 73-50.

L-BF, which trailed 35-20 at halftime, was led in scoring by Rylan Henrikson with 17 points. Peter Franz and Evan Wimmer each added nine points.

The Vikings' record dropped to 5-17 going into Friday's regular-season finale at home against Deer River.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Voyageurs clinch tournament berth

RRCC shoots down Hibbing

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

For the first time since the 2009-10 season, the Rainy River Community College men's basketball team has qualified for the region tournament.

The Voyageurs clinched a top-four finish in the Minnesota College Athletic Conference's Northern Division on Wednesday night when they won at home over Hibbing, 81-65.

"We're very excited about (being in the NJCAA Division III Region 13 Tournament)," said RRCC head coach Kristofer Babler. "That was one of our big goals at the beginning of the year."

RRCC, which pulled out to a 47-22 halftime lead, found multiple scoring opportunities outside and ended up with 14 3-point baskets.

"We really emphasized, actually, going inside all week," Babler said. "We found that we score a lot more efficiently when we go inside. Coincidentally, it results in open 3-point shots."

The Voyageurs outshot the Cardinals from the field overall, 32-74 (43.2 percent) to 24-73 (32.9 percent), and behind the arc, 14-29 (48.3 percent) to 7-20



From left, the Voyageurs' Sam Stirgus (22) dribbles along the baseline while being guarded by Hibbing's Dillon Bruns (30) in Wednesday night's game in the RRCC gym.

(35 percent).

Sam Stirgus led RRCC with 22 points, including five 3-pointers. Antoine Tobias added 15 points. Teekay Biti scored 13 with a trio of 3-point baskets. Jammere Carlisle recorded a double-double with 12 points and 11 rebounds.

Hibbing had two players score in double figures led by Anthony Fisher with a game-high 24 points. Beau Howard added 17 points.

The win improved the Voyageurs' season record

to 7-6 in the MCAC North and 15-10 overall going into today's regular-season finale at home against Fond du Lac.

"We're just getting healthy, and it's getting (guard Sheldon O'Neal and forward Jimson Clerveus) coming back from injury ready to go for playoffs," Babler said. "When we're full strength, I think we can beat anybody."

O'Neal returned to the lineup Wednesday after having missed games be-

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Shorthanded Voyageurs shoot down Hibbing Cardinals, 77-70

RRCC now 2-11 in MCAC North

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Despite having only four players on the court for about half of the second half Wednesday night, the Rainy River Community College women's basketball team won at home over Hibbing, 77-70.

"This is what we can do," RRCC head coach Adam Rotar said after winning in conference play for only the second time this season and defeating the second-place team that had nine victories in league play.

The Voyageurs, who pulled out to a 38-31 halftime lead with all five starters playing the entire first 20 minutes, led 61-52 with 9:33 left in the game when forward Shania Thompson fouled out and RRCC had only four players remaining.

The Cardinals, who then played with a five-on-four advantage until the final buzzer, could come no closer than four points before time expired.

"I just gave (the Voyageurs) very few, simple things to follow," Rotar said. "That's all I asked them to do, and then they executed."

RRCC was led by Dominique Hines with 29 points, which included five 3-pointers. Roneisha Jordan added a double-double with 15 points and 16 rebounds. Thompson put in 14 points with Sarina Phrathep scoring 12 more.

Hibbing also had four



From right, the Voyageurs' Sarina Phrathep (3) dribbles while being pursued by Hibbing's Christina Wickingson (1) in Wednesday's game in the RRCC gym.

players score in double figures led by Sarah Stolp with 19 points, followed by Melissa Weisbrick with 15, Megan Vidas with 13 and Amber Zapata with 10.

The win improved the Voyageurs' season record to 2-11 in the Minnesota College Athletic Conference's Northern Division and 6-18 overall going into today's regular-season finale at home against Fond du Lac.

"We're going to end this season on a good note, even though it doesn't show in the left-hand (win) col-

umn," Rotar said.

RRCC 77, Hibbing 70
Hibbing 31 39 - 70
RRCC 38 39 - 77

Hibbing: Christina Wickingson 9, Megan Vidas 13, Callie Knudson 2, Melissa Weisbrick 15, Sarah Stolp 19, Amber Zapata 10, Danni Bruns 2. 3-pointers: Vidas 4, Wickingson, Weisbrick, Zapata. Free throws: 9-16. Fouls: 16. Fouled out: Wickingson, Weisbrick.

RRCC: Sarina Phrathep 12, Shania Thompson 14, Renee Pantophlet 7, Roneisha Jordan 15, Dominique Hines 29. 3-pointers: Hines 5, Phrathep 2, Thompson 2. Free throws: 10-15. Fouls: 12. Fouled out: Thompson.



STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE

In front at right, the Voyageurs' Antoine Tobias slams down a dunk shot in Wednesday night's home game against Hibbing.

cause of a concussion. Babler said he expects Clerveus, who has been hobbled by an ankle injury, to be back in action when RRCC plays in the eight-team Region 13 Tournament that begins Feb. 27 at Anoka-Ramsey.

RRCC 81, Hibbing 65
Hibbing 22 43 - 65
RRCC 47 34 - 81
Hibbing: Beau Howard 17, Markis

Watkins 4, Antonio Carr 7, Kioshi Deming 3, Mohamoud Abdillahi 2, Denzel Jones 5, Dillon Bruns 3, Anthony Fisher 24. 3-pointers: Howard 3, Carr, Deming, Bruns, Fisher. Free throws: 10-15. Fouls: 9.

RRCC: Ahmad Poche 5, Sheldon O'Neal 5, Jammere Carlisle 12, Arfon Janetkhan 5, Antoine Tobias 15, Darius Johnson 4, Teekay Bit 13, Sam Stirgus 22. 3-pointers: Stirgus 5, Tobias 3, Biti 3, Poche, O'Neal, Janetkhan. Free throws: 3-5. Fouls: 13. Technical fouls: Biti.

BOYS AND GIRLS BASKETBALL

Broncos fight off the Grizzlies twice Tuesday

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

The International Falls boys and girls basketball teams both faced North Woods on Tuesday night with the Broncos taking the two varsity games.

Falls' boys team trailed 27-11 with 8:21 left in the first half, then cut the deficit to four points at halftime and ended up winning at home over North Woods, 71-62.

"After about the first 4-5 minutes, I thought we played a great defensive game and shut them down and played our usual game," said Bronco boys head coach Derek Dowty.

The Falls went on a 16-2 scoring run in less than 5 minutes and trailed 29-27 when Clay Tomczak made two free throws with 3:36 left in the first half. The Grizzlies led 36-32 at halftime, but then fell behind for good with less than 6 minutes to play.

"The second half we tried to keep the ball off the floor and the guards were there," Dowty said. "We worked the ball around. We worked it inside and got some easy (baskets)."

Ben Humbert led the Broncos with a game-high 31 points. Tomczak added 13 points.

The Grizzlies, who made nine 3-point baskets, had three players score in double figures led by Cole Martin with 22 points. Darnell Goggl-

eye added 11 points with Jaylen Strong scoring 10 more.

The win improved the Broncos' season record to 20-5 going in Friday's regular-season finale at home against Duluth Marshall.

IF GIRLS 53, NW 47

After holding a 14-point lead after halftime, Falls' girls team held on for a 53-47 road victory over North Woods.

The Broncos were led by Emma Gilbert with 14 points. Maddie Filipiak added 11 points with Teagan Anderson scoring 10 more.

The Grizzlies also had three players score in double figures led by Samantha Wardas with 17 points. Zoe Bystrom and Jessica Harmston added 11 points apiece.

The win improved Falls' season record to 19-5 going into Monday's game at Roseau.

Boys game
IF 71, NW 62

NW 36 26 - 62
IF 32 39 - 71

IF: Jack Bartkowski 6, Allen Johnson 9, Wyatt Helgeson 5, Max Vergeldt 7, Clay Tomczak 13, Ben Humbert 31. 3-pointers: Johnson, Helgeson, Tomczak, Humbert. Free throws: 19-32. Fouls: 11

Girls game
IF 53, NW 47

NW 32 21 - 53
IF 18 29 - 47

IF: Maddie Filipiak 11, Shelby Wolden 5, Cassie Tomczak 7, Teagan Anderson 10, Janet Humbert 6, Emma Gilbert 14. 3-pointers: Filipiak 2, Anderson 2. Free throws: 5-16. Fouls: 9.