

SPORTS

BOYS BASKETBALL



STAFF PHOTOS BY KEVIN BONESKE
The Broncos' Ben Humbert (44) shoots a layup in Tuesday night's home game against Bemidji. Humbert scored a game-high 35 points in International Falls' 74-67 victory over the Lumberjacks.

Broncos come back, cut down Lumberjacks

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After falling behind 16-2 to start Tuesday night's game, the International Falls boys basketball team waged a comeback and ended up winning at home over Bemidji, 74-67.

"It's a great win for us," Falls head coach Derek Dowty said about defeating the Lumberjacks, a Class AAAA team, for the first time since the 1986-87 season. "We had a tough (game in the loss Nov. 25 against Cloquet.) Kind of the same type of game (against Bemidji, but a) bigger school. (This Tuesday night) we found a way to win, and that's what we needed."

The proverbial turnover bug bit the Broncos to start the game before the Falls erased the early 14-point deficit by outscoring Bemidji, 21-4, capped off by a 3-point basket and a pair of free throws from Clay Tomczak to lead 23-20 with 6:07 left in the first half.

However, the Lumberjacks battled back to retake the lead and closed out the first half in front, 39-33.

The Broncos regained the lead at 50-49 with 12:22 left in the half when Jack Bartkowski completed a 3-point play from the charity stripe.

The Lumberjacks then went back in front, before the Falls racked up four consecutive layups that gave the Broncos a 59-54 lead midway through the second half, after which the Falls never trailed again.

Broncos senior forward Ben Humbert found multiple scoring opportunities inside and ended up with a game-high 35 points.

"My teammates did a good job passing in the corner, and I just posted up in the low block," Humbert said. "They got the ball to me, and I'd just turn around and shoot it."

Bartkowski also scored in double figures for the Falls with 15 points.

A.J. Anderson led three Lumberjack players scoring in double figures with 18 points, followed by James Hendricks with 14 and Josh Cervenka with 11.

The win improved the Broncos' season record to 2-1 going into Thursday



From left, Broncos guard Wyatt Helgeson (20) dribbles the ball while being guarded by Bemidji's Charlie Peterson (10) in Tuesday's game in the Falls High School gym.

night's home game against Hibbing.

I. Falls 74, Bemidji 67
Bemidji 39 28 - 67
I. Falls 33 41 - 74
Bemidji: James Hendricks 14, Lin-
aes Whiting 3, Dezmond Ramirez
5, Jens Huseby 7, Caleb Carlson 5,
Josh Cervenka 11, A.J. Anderson 18,
Nate Snell 4. 3-pointers: Hendricks,
Whiting, Ramirez, Cervenka. Free
throws: 17-26. Fouls: 22. Fouled
out: Hendricks.
I. Falls: Ben Everson 4, Jack Bart-
kowski 15, Allen Johnson 4, Wy-
att Helgeson 3, Max Vergeldt 8,
Clay Tomczak 5, Ben Humbert 35.
3-pointers: Bartkowski 2, Helge-
son, Tomczak. Free throws: 16-24.
Fouls: 21.

SIJHL HOCKEY

Mason Meyer scores twice in Lakers' win

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Lakers forward Mason Meyer of International Falls recorded two goals and an assist Tuesday night to help Fort Frances defeat the Dryden Ice Dogs, 6-3, in Superior International Junior Hockey League play at Ice for Kids Arena.

Both teams scored twice in the first period with Wyatt Cota and Lucas DeBenedet, a 2013 FHS graduate, getting goals for Fort Frances and Zach Kercz and Blake Berg scoring for Dryden.

The Lakers took a 3-2 lead midway through the second period when Miles Nolan scored on the power play at 9:05.

In the third period, Fort Frances scored three times within 5 minutes when Cota picked up his second goal of the night while Meyer scored his two goals to make it a 6-2 game.

The Ice Dogs added a late



power-play goal when Jonathan Philley scored in the final seconds.

Carter Chorney dished out three assists for the Lakers. DeBenedet added two assists of his own to go along with his goal.

Dryden held the edge in shots on goal, 37-27, with Devin Tappenden picking up the win for Fort Frances and Tate Sproxtton recording the loss for the Ice Dogs.

The Lakers are hosting the English River Miners this weekend for two games at Ice For Kids Arena with the final game set to start today at 7:30 p.m.

VIKINGS-JETS PREVIEW

Jets flying into Minnesota with coach, QB controversies

BY NICOLINO DIBENEDETTO
AP STATS Writer

Brash and bold, Rex Ryan became a media darling while leading the New York Jets to back-to-back AFC title games.

With four weeks left in a fourth straight season out of the playoffs, his tenure looks to be coming to an end with a whimper.

Ryan is again turning to Geno Smith at quarterback, but could employ another run-heavy scheme as the Jets face the Minnesota Vikings on Sunday.

Ryan won 20 regular-season games in his first two seasons at the helm of the Jets, becoming a larger-than-life figure known for his bold predictions and talk, combined with a jovial personality.

There's been nothing jovial about the Jets' 2-10 record, and a much more muted Ryan knows it.

"I'm embarrassed for myself, absolutely," Ryan said Tuesday. "It's an embarrassment. It's definitely embarrassing to me. I feel like I've

let my owner down. I've let our fan base down.

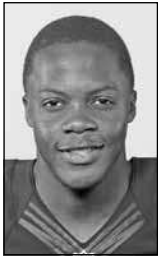
"The year hasn't gone anywhere close to what we were thinking. I'm going to focus on beating Minnesota. I'm not worried about anything else but that."

Ryan insists he's not thinking about his future, as he's almost expected to be fired at the end of the season.

"I don't think that way," Ryan said. "My job is not to worry about myself. My job is to get this team prepared to the best of my ability, and that's what I plan on doing."

Ryan isn't the only member of the Jets on the hot seat, as general manager John Idzik continues to draw the ire of fans, who have gone so far as to put up billboards calling for his ouster.

New York did little to quiet those detractors Monday,



Teddy Bridgewater

squandering a 10-point, first-half lead to fall 16-13 at home to Miami. Afterward, Ryan felt the need to quell speculation that limiting Smith to 13 passes had nothing to do with losing faith in the second-year signal caller.

Smith finished with seven completions for 65 passing yards and an interception on the final drive after losing his job for three games to Michael Vick. In lieu of a passing attack, the Jets had 49 rushes for 277 yards — their most since 2009 — with Chris Johnson and Chris Ivory totaling 33 carries for 167 yards.

"I understand the fact that we didn't win and the passing attempts weren't there," Ryan said. "But it had nothing to do with us not having confidence in Geno Smith. That's completely false."

Smith's season is doing little to back that up, compiling a 65.8 passer rating that ranks last in the NFL for qualifying quarterbacks. His 5.91 yards per attempt and 11 interceptions are also among the worst in

the league, while he's only completed seven touchdown passes — none in his past three games.

Ryan may limit Smith by design against the Vikings (5-7), who allow an average of 219.1 passing yards to rank sixth in the league. However, their rushing defense gives up 123.8 yards per game — 157.0 over the last three contests.

Unlike Smith, Teddy Bridgewater knows he's likely to be a starter next season, and the rookie QB has tossed four touchdown passes compared to one INT in the past two weeks.

He completed 15 of 21 passes for 138 yards and two scores with a season-high 120.7 rating in leading Minnesota to a 31-13 win over Carolina last week.

"I think I'm better at just making quicker decisions," Bridgewater said. "Earlier in the year, I talked about getting rid of the ball faster. That wasn't the issue. I think I just made quicker decisions, and if I'm able to make quicker decisions I'm able to get the ball out faster."

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