

SPORTS

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Broncos can't stay within MI-B's range

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

Facing another one of the state's top-rated teams in Class A turned into another loss Friday night for the International Falls girls basketball team.

The Broncos, who lost by only six points three days earlier against North Woods, fell behind by double digits early in the first half and ended up losing to Mountain Iron-Buhl, 81-38, in the Falls High School gym.

"We usually compete with other teams pretty well, but for one reason or another, we do not handle their pressure very well," said Broncos head coach Shawn Gilbert.

The Rangers applied a full-court pressure defense in an

effort to force the Falls into turnovers. The half ended with MI-B in front, 50-21.

"North Woods is more of a zone pressure, where MI-B is always a man-to-man pressure," Gilbert said. "We just have a hard time with man-to-man pressures on occasions, mainly against MI-B."

The Rangers, who continued to extend their lead as running time began midway in the second half, had three players end up in double figures led by senior forward Allie Knuti with a game-high 19 points. Two freshman guards – Mya Buffetta and Chelsea Mason – added 16 and 14 points, respectively.

No one on the Broncos scored in double figures with junior forward Maddie Filipiak scoring a team-high eight

points.

The loss dropped Falls' season record to 18-6 going into Tuesday night's home game against Ely. The Broncos play their regular-season finale Friday at home against Deer River.

MI-B 81, I. Falls 38
MI-B 50 31 – 81
I. Falls 21 17 – 38
MIB: Cora Peterson 2, Allie Knuti 19, Chelsea Mason 14, Kianna Martinson 3, Charity Aultman 7, Sarah Overbye 8, Tatum Primeau 4, Mya Buffetta 16, Lissy McCulloch 9. 3-pointers: Buffetta 3, McCulloch 3, Mason, Martinson, Overbye. Free throws: 8-17. Fouls: 19.
I. Falls: Maddie Filipiak 8, Madeline Dahle 2, Lexi Owen 5, Cassie Tomczak 5, Teagan Anderson 7, Janet Humbert 4, Emma Gilbert 7. 3-pointers: Owen, Tomczak, Anderson. Free throws: 17-24. Fouls: 15.



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From left, the Broncos' Lexi Owen (15) dribbles the ball while being guarded by Mountain Iron-Buhl's Mya Buffetta (25) in Friday night's game in the Falls High School gym.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Vikings chewed up by Grizzlies, 72-46

BY KEVIN BONESKE
Sports Editor

After staying close with North Woods for about the first half of the first half Monday night, the Littlefork-Big Falls girls basketball team couldn't keep up with the Grizzlies.

The Vikings trailed by 14 points at halftime and ended up losing to North Woods, 72-46, in the L-BF High School gym.

"They fast-break well," said Vikings head coach John Larson. "We missed a lot of easy shots down low – a lot of gimmes. That hurts when you sit there and take the points out of your pocket and let them fast-break."

L-BF took a 15-11 lead on a layup by Kaylee Kennedy, then the Grizzlies went on a 14-1 scoring run capped off by a 3-pointer by North Woods senior guard Darby Youngstrom as the Vikings never led again. The half ended with the Grizzlies in front, 41-27.

North Woods applied a full-court press on defense for much of the game.

"I didn't think we gave up too many easy buckets off of turnovers off of (the) press," Larson said. "But it just sped us up and that's what the press is there for – to speed you up – and we just weren't able to finish on the offensive end."

L-BF was without starting senior forward DyAna



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From left, the Vikings' Kaylee Kennedy (4) moves the ball down the court while being guarded by the Grizzlies Emily Fultz (22) in Monday night's game in the Littlefork-Big Falls High School gym.

Imhof, who has been absent this week, but expected by Larson to be back when the Vikings begin the Section 7A playoffs next week.

"We gave up a lot of offensive rebounds to them – she would have helped with that," Larson said. "But we play with who we have and just go from there."

Vikings senior center Abby Thompson led L-BF with 15 points, while Kennedy also scored in double figures with 12 points.

Youngstrom led North Woods with a game-high 30 points, followed by senior guard Destinie Villebrun with 22 points.

The loss dropped L-BF's season record to 13-6 going into Tuesday's home game against Northeast Range. The Vikings close out the regular season on Thursday at Fond du Lac Ojibwe.

NW 72, L-BF 46
NW 41 31 – 72
L-BF 27 19 – 46
NW: Tessa Mankus 5, Zoe Bystrom 2, Jessica Harmston 1, Brystin Vitense 2, Emily Fultz 2, Darby Youngstrom 30, Destinie Villebrun 22, Alicia Rutchasky 8. 3-pointers: Youngstrom 3, Villebrun 3, Rutchasky 2, Mankus. Free throws: 9-17. Fouls: 15.
L-BF: Kaylee Kennedy 12, Karly Swenson 4, Breann Larson 6, Abby Thompson 15, Brooke Millerbernd 9. 3-pointers: Kennedy 2. Free throws: 8-14. Fouls: 16.

BOYS BASKETBALL

FHS No. 2 seed in 7AA; L-BF No. 6 in 7A

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The International Falls boys basketball team has received a No. 2 seed and will open the Section 7AA playoffs with a home game at 7 p.m. today against No. 7-seeded Mesabi East.

The winner advances to the Section 7AA quarterfinals to play at 5:45 p.m. Saturday at the University of Minnesota Duluth against the opening-round winner between No. 3-seeded Proctor and No. 6-seeded Deer

River.

The quarterfinal winner advances to the semifinal game at 7:30 p.m. March 4 at UMD. The Section 7AA championship game is set for 7 p.m. March 6 at UMD.

In Section 7A, the Littlefork-Big Falls boys basketball team has received a No. 6 seed and will open the tournament at 5:45 p.m. Thursday at Greenway High School against No. 3-seeded Bigfork.

The winner advances to the Section 7A quarterfi-

nals at 1 p.m. Saturday at Hibbing Lincoln to play the winner between No. 2-seeded Chisholm and either No. 7-seeded Cherry or No. 10-seeded Mesabi Academy. Cherry hosted Mesabi Academy in a play-in game at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

The quarterfinal winner advances to the semifinal at 5:45 p.m. March 5 at Hibbing Memorial. The Section 7A championship game is set for 7 p.m. March 7 at Hibbing Memorial.

Division III National Tournament on March 13-15 in Rochester.

Rainy River 75, Fond du Lac 68
Fond du Lac 36 32 – 68
Rainy River 37 38 – 75
Fond du Lac: Shaelyn Halverson 11, Da'Rnay Sandlin 4, Shauna Goodman 3, Kami Diver 10, Claudia Turner 30, Haley Psyck 6. 3-pointers: Halverson 3, Diver 3, Turner. Free throws: 16-23. Fouls: 19. Fouled out: Turner.
Rainy River: Sarina Phratrep 20, Kurstyn Gordon 9, Roneisha Jordan 26, CaseyLynn Fulton 10, Alisha Brinker 10. 3-pointers: Phratrep 6, Gordon. Free throws: 10-20. Fouls: 19. Fouled out: Gordon.

BASKETBALL

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team would qualify for the fourth and final spot in next weekend's Region 13 North Tournament, Humbert said the Voyageurs were selected Sunday when RRCC's name was drawn "out of a hat" from among the three teams.

"I'm very excited (to advance to the region tournament)," Humbert said. "I think we're the most deserving team because we're playing the best bas-

ketball right now."

The Voyageurs, who closed out the regular season winning four of their last six games, open the four-team region tournament at 2 p.m. Saturday against the No. 1 seed, Northland, which is hosting the tournament on its home court in Thief River Falls. The winner advances to Sunday's region championship game against the winner between No. 2-seeded Mesabi Range and No. 3-seeded Vermilion.

The region champion advances to the NJCAA

HOOPS

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the Minnesota College Athletic Conference's North-

ern Division, last in the eight-team league, and 3-23 overall.

"Everybody else is bigger than us (in the MCAC North)," Cook said. "Our

post play hurt us a lot. We didn't have a true post player. (A lack of) hustle and (not) playing good defense (also hurt). We were a little lax on that all year."



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