

BLUE KNIGHT BASKETBALL

Dragons Slay Knights

by SAM POLIZZI

Once upon a time, some wise sage said, "there is no place like home." as far as the Geneseo State basketball team is concerned, truer words were never spoken. In their second road game in a row, Geneseo was beaten in Oneonta. To call this confrontation a game would be the poorest choice of words this writer could make. It was undoubtedly one of the worst games I've seen played in two years. The high scorers in this game were not important. The shooting percentage is not that important, even though it was not very good. The losing margin, fourteen points, is not that important either. Nor does the final score of 67-53 matter. What really matters is the obvious deterioration of the overall team play and its subsequent consequences.

The opening minutes of the game started with the hope that some of the previous faults were rectified. The outside shooting clicked for awhile as John Hassett and Pete Turner hit on long bombs. This lasted for only a fleeting moment until their hands again went cold. After this the shots became more frequent with less success. Oneonta's patient, almost stall like offense and zone defense bothered the Knights. The teams attempts to break this offense with a full court press proved fruitless. To complicate this situation were turnovers. Such intolerable mistakes as travelling and three seconds, and needless fouls and missed layups added to the chaos. When talking of turnovers here, mention must be made of the officiating. The officials were right in step with the comedy of errors. They were poor at best and made scores of bad calls for both sides. Nevertheless, the Blue Knights led at the half 28-27.

For the second half, I have no scores, scorers, or statistics. The caliber of play no longer needed a play by play comment, but an overall observation of its downfall which led to the benching of Tom Basher, then John Hassett, and finally Ed Robota.

First, there is no movement on offense. Each man waited to have the ball given to him instead of moving, cutting. This made the Oneonta zone that much more effective. Secondly, the cannot break a full court press. Lack of movement again hurts. Then when Hassett is out of the lineup, bringing the ball up court is risky. The game was topped in style as four Geneseo defensemen trapped an Oneonta player in his back court. This player then fell down and was dribbling a la Harlem Globetrotter style. He squirmed away from the quartet, brought the ball all the way up court and passed off for an easy bucket.

By no means am I giving up on this team. Their talent is obvious and it is just a matter of time before they put it back together.

TIP INS: The circumstances surrounding Tom Basher's suspension still remain nebulous. Coach Pope left me in the dark as to the reason behind it and as to its duration. He only said that it would be for the Buffalo State game. In Oneonta both Basher and Turner were guilty of not looking for the good shots. In writing this before the Buffalo State game I would say that sweeping changes would be made. Harry Ward may be the only starter left in the starting line. This team that played Brockport and Oneonta was not the same one that beat Fisher. With their second conference loss, the only hope that Geneseo has of winning the SUNYAC Championship is a mathematical one.

Bengals Skinned

by GARY STOLLER

A lesson had to be learned Tuesday night and the Knights hopefully learned it the hard way by squeaking past Buffalo State 80-79 in overtime. There is no way that any team can play a top-notch game while beset with internal problems.

Pete Turner's six-foot bank shot with a minute remaining in the OT session gave Geneseo an 80-79 lead and set the stage for a wild final 60 seconds of play.

The Bengals brought the ball upcourt and called time out with 40 seconds showing on the clock. After the visitors inbounded, the Knights displayed a stubborn defense which upset the Bengals. Pete Turner tied up a confused Dave Hoch causing a jump ball with 15 seconds to play.

The Bengals were called for a violation during the jump ball situation giving Geneseo possession of the ball and what appeared to be possession of the game.

Gary Witter inbounded to Ed Robota but the ball was deflected out of bounds by Buffalo State's Greg Miller. Witter once again attempted to inbound to Robota but threw the ball right into the hands of Miller.

State called time out with 11 seconds remaining. The Bengals quickly inbounded and threw up a shot which missed the mark. A wild scramble for the rebound resulted reminding observers of an all-out brawl. Bodies were thrown about, elbows flew, and scores of fouls could have been called.

During the melee, the Bengals managed to toss up three more shots with each shot giving the home crowd of 1,000 a separate heart attack. The third shot went in but only after time had expired.

The entire Buffalo State team went berserk claiming that the

shot was aloft before the buzzer sounded. The Bengal coaching staff had to be restrained from attacking the referees and an unidentified player smashed a window pane in one of the entrance doors.

The referee under the basket, as well as the timekeeper, asserted that time had expired before the ball left the shooter's hand. A Buffalo State assistant claimed that the GSTV tape of the final seconds proved that the shot was in the air before the buzzer sounded (reminiscent of the 1972 U.S. Olympic loss to the Soviet Union.) The Bengals tossed up their next-to-last shot as the clock was about to change from 0:02 to 0:01 and it appeared, at least to this writer, to be impossible for Buff State to get off another shot before time expired.

The hectic finish was a fitting climax for the hectic circumstances which hed up to the game.

The dissension that had been brewing in the team for over two weeks finally broke out after the Knights' miserable loss to Oneonta last Saturday night. Tom Basher was suspended from the team until at least after the Buff State game, after arguing with Coach Pope and walking out of a team meeting. Basher attempted to practice with the team on Monday but was evicted from practice.

Several players, including Ed Robota, John Hassett and Dave Silliman, broke the 12:30 curfew in Oneonta last Friday night and, as a result, were benched for the Buff State game.

The starting line-up consisted of Harry Ward, Pete Turner, Gary Witter, Ed Orman and Charley Pendleton. This makeshift starting five must be lauded for

playing even-up with the Bengals for the first ten and one-half minutes of the game. When Robota and Silliman entered the game with 9:42 to play in the first half, the Knights only trailed by one point, 17-16.

On the whole, Robota and Silliman were ineffective in their reserve roles. Neither player could hold on to the passes thrown in their direction and appeared lost on the court. However, their presence was needed to negate the Buff State front line.

Geneseo had three chances to win the game in the last 20 seconds of regulation time. Pete Turner forced a jumper that was no good. Pendleton grabbed the rebound and hoisted a shot that missed everything. The ball deflected to Robota in the lane about four feet out, but Robota didn't appreciate the gift and blew his bank shot. The score stood at 71-71 and set up the wild finish.

KNIGHT NOTES: Harry Ward and Gary Witter had fine shooting games. Ward hit for 27 points (12 of 24) and Witter hit 7 of 12, or 14. It was Witter's first start since the opening game versus Alma. Witter played his best game of his college career and contributed 8 assists and 5 rebounds. John Hassett saw very little action and Jeff Hilimire and Larry Johanson didn't play at all due to Coach Pope's shake-up. The Knights' record is 9-4 and 3-2 in the conference. The Knights play at Potsdam tonight and at Plattsburgh tomorrow. Potsdam, with super guard Mike Deane hasn't lost in the conference and should cause the Knights a great number of headaches. The varsity five returns home next Wednesday night, Feb. 13, against Hobart.....

Junior Knights Tame Bengals

by NORB MAYRHOFER

Playing what was perhaps their best game of the season thus far, Jim Fitzgerald's Junior Varsity Knights upset SUNYAC rival Buffalo State 72-65 here on Tuesday night. The win evened the squad's season record at 7-7.

The game was an even contest throughout with neither club able to open much of a lead. Buff State opened up their biggest lead of the game midway through the first half when they used the hot hand of Ken McClin to build up a seven point bulge. The baby Blues came right back however, and behind the fine offensive work of Bob Strauss underneath and Marc Dunn outside, built a three point lead, 39-36 at the half. Wayne Ginty, who has been showing more offensive prowess with every game, opened the game by hitting his first three shots but that was it for him for the half, as he ended it with six points.

The second half saw the Knights gradually open up leads

of 7, 7 and 8 points, only to have the Bengals chip into their lead with a few quick buckets. Marc Dunn then opened up an 11 point margin for GSU with a play that cost the visitors the game. With the score 45-40 Dunn drove the left lane for a bucket and a chance at a three point play. The Bengal coach then stormed at the nearest ref and was promptly hit with four technical fouls and ejected from the game. Dunn hit on his free throw and on three of the four T's for what amounted to a six point play and a comfortable Geneseo lead. The Bengals refused to fold however, and it took some clutch foul shooting by Paul Tubinis, Pat Burke and a jumper by the Ginty to put the game away.

The Bengals played the game without the services of both of their starting guards as they were called to fill vacancies left on the

Varsity. Bruce Carter came off the bench for the Bengals with less than six minutes to go and hit for 10 points on 5 for 6 shooting. McClin led all scorers with 24. Ginty led the Blue with 19, followed by Dunn and Strauss with 17 and 13, respectively.

Earlier in the week, the juniors split a pair with Brockport and Niagara C.C. On Tuesday the squad demolished Brockport 81-51 behind the double figure performances of Strauss, Ginty and Tubinis and on Saturday the club was dumped by Niagara 102-90 as "Trick" Lewis of Niagara handed out 17 assists. Ginty had his best game yet, scoring 28 points while missing only three shots all night.

COMMENTS: The steady play of Wayne Ginty has been a big plus to the club's future...the Ginty has raised his scoring average to better than 15 points per game while continuing to play a steady defensive game...Ginty's improvement has more than made up for the slack caused by the broken wrist Paul Tubinis is recovering from...



Mr. Riedel presents Dave Giordano with his ALL-SUNYAC conference plaque.

(Photo by Bill Cronin)