

Lancer Men Trump Tigers 80-70

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A significant edge at the charity stripe led to another quality home victory for the Mount Marty College men's basketball team.

The Lancers trailed by a total of one minute on the way to an 80-70 GPAC men's basketball showdown Wednesday night at Cimpr Arena.

Not only did the Lancers (5-7, 2-4) dictate the tempo all night, they dominated the free throw line — hitting 26-of-38 foul shots.

"The motion was really working for us," said Jose Pena-Benjamin, who led with 24 points on 12-of-13 at the foul line to go along with nine rebounds.

"I felt like they couldn't face guard us, and we really took control."

Although MMC has just one player averaging double figures this season, it put four players to that mark Wednesday. The result was the Lancers' best offensive output in conference play this season.

Austin Harms (15), Joe Hieb (13) and Saladin Smith (12) all reached double figures for the Lancers, who shot 51 percent for the game.

"We're getting better at understanding how to move the ball in our system and be aggressive when you get a chance," coach Jim Thorson said. "It's really coming around for us, which is good to see."

The Tigers — hampered by 3-of-10 at the free throw line — opened the game with just one field goal in the first nine minutes, while the Lancers started on a 13-4 surge.

Mount Marty then built a 26-17 cushion on back-to-back buckets by Hieb, and took a 30-24 lead

into halftime.

The second half wasn't much different, as the Lancers never really let the Tigers threaten. Dakota Wesleyan was within 52-47 with 5:53 to play, but never got closer.

Pena-Benjamin was especially potent after halftime, scoring 14 points. Like most of the Lancers, a lot of his production after fouls.

"We did a nice job spreading them out and taking advantage of some things," Thorson said of the foul shooting. "When you can get to the line, you have to put pressure on them, and we did that."

The Tigers (5-7, 2-4) got 25 points from Mike Lee, while Carde Pennington chipped in with 13 points. DWU didn't shoot all that poorly, at 45 percent, but hit just 1-of-11 three-pointers.

Mount Marty stays at home for a Saturday afternoon 2 p.m. home game with Nebraska Wesleyan.

"We haven't really had a chance to look at them, but it's a good team, for sure," Thorson said. "They beat Dordt and had a close win with Midland (Wednesday), so they're rolling right now."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

DAKOTA WESLEYAN (5-7)
Mike Lee 9-14 6-10 25, Danny Maman 0-5 0-0 0, Luke Bamberg 1-2 0-0 2, Aireus Stephenson 4-13 3-5 13, Jalen Voss 3-8 2-4 8, Carde Pennington 5-10 3-5 13, Kris Menning 1-1 0-0 2, Bo LaCroix 4-5 0-0 8, Jade Miller 0-2 3-3 3. TOTALS: 27-60 15-26 70.

MOUNT MARTY (5-6)
Saladin Smith 1-8 10-12 12, Scott Odekirik 4-5 1-3 9, Joe Hieb 5-9 2-2 13, Austin Harms 7-7 0-5 15, Jose Pena-Benjamin 6-8 12-12 24, Scott Sellers 1-1 0-0 2, Chris Richardson 1-4 0-0 2, Tyler Payer 0-1 1-2 1, T.J. Johnson 0-1 0-0 0, Jeff Larsen 0-3 0-0 0, Chevy Fischer 1-4 0-2 2. TOTALS: 26-51 26-38 80.

At the half: MMC 30, DWU 24. Three-Pointers: MMC 2-8 (Harms 1-1, Hieb 1-5, Richardson 0-1, Fischer 0-1), DWU 1-12 (Lee 1-4, Pennington 0-1, Miller 0-1, Maman 0-2, Stephenson 0-4). Rebounds: MMC 37 (Pena-Benjamin 9), DWU 34 (Voss 11). Personal Fouls: DWU 31, MMC 17. Fouled Out: Voss, Menning, LaCroix. Technical Fouls: DWU Team. Assists: MMC 15 (Harms 4), DWU 5. Turnovers: MMC 16, DWU 13. Blocked Shots: MMC 6 (Odekirik 2), DWU 6 (Voss 5). Steals: MMC 9 (Harms 3), DWU 9 (Maman 2, Voss 2). Attendance: 691



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Mount Marty's Jose Pena-Benjamin, right, goes in for a layup against the defense of Dakota Wesleyan's Aireus Stephenson during their Great Plains Athletic Conference men's basketball game on Wednesday at Laddie E. Cimpr Arena.

Carl Johnson To Be First Full-Time Official

NEW YORK (AP) — NFL officiating chief Carl Johnson will head back to the field next year as the league's first full-time game official.

Johnson, who has been the league's vice president of officiating since 2010, was a line judge for nine seasons before heading into the NFL offices.

Under the collective bargaining agreement with the NFL Referees Association reached in September, the league is allowed to hire some officials on a full-time basis.

"Carl Johnson's experience on the field and in New York made him uniquely qualified to help implement the new program of a limited number of full-time game officials," NFL executive vice presi-

dent of football operations Ray Anderson said Wednesday. "We are confident Carl will do an outstanding job."

Johnson has worked eight postseason games, including the 2008 Super Bowl between the Giants and Patriots.

In his new role, in addition to being an on-field official, Johnson and other full-time officials will focus on training and development, scouting potential new officials, facilitating communication with game officials, and assisting the competition committee.

A search for the next head of the officiating department will begin in the near future, with Johnson participating in the transition to his replacement, the NFL said.

Newcomers Morningside, Marian In NAIA Title Game

ROME, Ga. (AP) — There's a new look to the NAIA championship.

Morningside (Iowa) and Marian (Ind.) will both be playing in the title game for the first time when they meet Thursday night in north Georgia.

Marian founded its football program just six years ago and has reached the NAIA playoffs three times. Now, the Knights are just one victory away from winning it all. "Our guys have played with a sense of urgency since we started the program, and this year it came together," coach Ted Karras Jr. said.

Morningside (13-0) knocked off defending national champion Saint Xavier (Ill.) 47-19 in the semifinals.

Perennial power Carroll (Mont.) had appeared in eight of the last 10 championship games — winning six times — but failed to make the playoffs this season.

Morningside is led by senior quarterback Joel Nixon, who moved to the position this season and became one of the top passers in the nation. He ranks second in the nation, throwing for 3,612 yards, and leads the team in rushing with 770 yards.

When asked what it would take to knock off the Mustangs, Karras was quick with a response.

"Not letting Nixon make all the plays that he's made in the last 13 games," the coach said.

In the victory over Saint Xavier, Nixon shredded the defending champs for 367 yards in total offense and played a role in five of Morningside's seven touchdowns.

He said it will take a similar performance to win the title game.

"We've got to come out and play our best football game of the season," Nixon said. "There's no doubt about that. If we don't come out and play our best football, we're going to find ourselves in a real big dogfight."

Marian knocked off unbeaten Missouri Valley College 20-17 in the semifinals.

Michael Josifovski kicked a 51-yard field goal with no time remaining, making up for a 32-yard miss.

The winning kick was set up by Nathan Toon's second interception of the game with less than 3 minutes remaining. Tevin Lake broke off a 27-yard run to get the Knights in position for the victory.

DWU Women Escape Mount Marty 70-66



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Mount Marty's Allison De Kam attacks around the Dakota Wesleyan defense during their Great Plains Athletic Conference women's basketball game on Wednesday at Laddie E. Cimpr Arena. DWU, receiving votes in the NAIA Division II Poll, overcame an early 11-0 deficit to claim a 70-66 victory.

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE
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The Dakota Wesleyan University Tigers used a strong three-point shooting night to pick up a solid road victory on Wednesday.

Making 10 out of 18 three-pointers, the Tigers defeated Mount Marty 70-66 in Great Plains Athletic Conference women's basketball action at the Laddie E. Cimpr Arena.

After the Lancers jumped ahead 11-0 in the first half, the Tigers caught up 16-17 behind MMC. DWU took the lead 25-24 over the Lancers, but by the end of the half MMC had regained their lead by two points, 32-30.

At the half, MMC's Brittany Little had nine points and two rebounds, Allison De Kam had eight points and four rebounds and April Winne had five points and two rebounds. DWU's Elizabeth Lamb and Celeste Beck each scored eight points, Lamb with one rebound and Taylor Piper put up four points and six rebounds.

The Lancers came out 36-30 after the half, but quickly fell to the Tigers 37-36 with 17 minutes remaining. DWU led the rest of the game, jumping ahead 60-49. With 1:34 left in the game MMC tightened the Tigers' lead 66-64, but DWU ended the game 70-66.

"We played really good stretches and there were stretches where we didn't play very good," Mount Marty head coach Tom Schlimgen said. "We took a lot of bad shots. The first part of the first half we were really good, and the last ten minutes of the game were really good. It was the stretches in between that cost us the game."

DWU shot 43.6 percent compared to MMC's 44 percent, but dominated with their three-point shots shooting 55.6 percent against MMC's 20 percent.

"We came out in the second half and we were not very good for the first seven minutes," Schlimgen said. "Then we got behind by 11 points and battled back. We had our chances, didn't make a few free throws, did some things where we could have still gotten ourselves the win, but we definitely didn't miss those free throws on purpose. It's just the way it goes."

Beck made 20 points for the Tigers on the night, followed by Katie Johnson and Kim Johnson with 11 points each. Katie Johnson had a total of five rebounds while Kim Johnson had eight rebounds, while Lamb added 10 points and two rebounds in the win.

MMC's Little scored a total of 19 points, a career-high. Winne recorded 14 points and six rebounds and De Kam had a total of 13 points and nine rebounds.

Dakota Wesleyan improved to 8-4 overall, 2-3 in the GPAC. The Tigers finish the pre-Christmas portion of the GPAC schedule at home against Doane on Saturday. Doane is winless in GPAC play (0-6) and is 5-8 overall.

The Lancers, 6-4 and 3-2, face Nebraska Wesleyan, the other remaining winless team in GPAC play (0-6, 1-9 overall) at home on Saturday. Schlimgen said his team will be ready.

You can follow Emily Niebrugge on Twitter at twitter.com/ENiebrugge

DAKOTA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY (8-4)
Elizabeth Lamb 4-10 0-0 10, Taylor Piper 3-8 3-4 9, Amanda Hart 1-7 0-0 3, Brittany Hills 1-3 4-7 6, Kim Johnson 4-12 0-0 11, Lexie Christensen 0-0 0-0 0, Celeste Beck 6-9 4-4 20, Katie Johnson 5-6 1-1 11. TOTALS 24-55 10-18 70.

MOUNT MARTY (6-4)
Alexa Berg 1-5 2-2 5, April Winne 3-9 7-12 14, Taylor Forsch 1-5 0-0 2, Allison De Kam 6-10 1-2 13, Brittany Little 7-8 5-7 19, Alyssa Whetham 1-5 2-2 4, Kelli Norrid 1-4 1-1 3, Holly Hegge 2-3 2-2 6, Raquel Sutura 0-1 0-0 0. TOTALS 22-50 2-10 66.

At the half: MMC 32, DWU 30. Three-Pointers: DWU 10-18 (Beck 4-4, Kim Johnson 3-5, Lamb 2-4, Hart 1-5), MMC 2-10 (Berg 1-4, Winne 1-4, Forsch 0-1, Whetham 0-1). Rebounds: DWU 34 (Piper 9), MMC 33 (DeKam 9). Personal Fouls: DWU 23, MMC 14. Fouled Out: Kim Johnson, Katie Johnson. Assists: MMC 14 (Winne 6), DWU 10 (Hills 3). Turnovers: MMC 15, DWU 12. Blocked Shots: DWU 3 (Kim Johnson 2), MMC 2 (Hegge 2). Steals: DWU 8 (Hills 4), MMC 6 (Winne 3). Attendance: 425

No. 7 Doane Holds Off Concordia

SEWARD, Neb. — Connor Beranek scored a game-high 32 points and grabbed nine rebounds to lead seventh-ranked Doane to a 77-67 victory over Concordia in Great Plains Athletic Conference men's basketball action on Wednesday.

Shavontae Samuels posted 13 points and six assists, and Nick Reed had 11 points and eight rebounds for Doane (13-1, 6-1 GPAC). Jens Scholl grabbed nine rebounds in the win.

Beau Smith led Concordia (5-6, 2-5 GPAC) with 17 points. Porter Birtell netted 10 points.

High School Boys

Ponca 65, LCC 46

PONCA, Neb. — The Ponca Indians outscored Laurel-Concord-Coleridge by 13 points in the final four minutes to pull away to a 65-46 victory over the Bears in boys' basketball action on Tuesday.

LCC trailed 41-29 after three quarters but hand narrowed the deficit to six points with four minutes to play.

Sam Burki scored a game-high 18 points, including 7-8 from the field, to lead Ponca.

Dillon Wolfgram posted 14 points and 10 rebounds to lead LCC. Mitchell Klooz finished with 13 points and eight rebounds. Kyle Kardell added 11 points.

Ponca, 3-1, hosts Emerson-Hubbard today (Thursday) in Lewis & Clark Conference action. LCC travels to Plainview in a Northeast Nebraska Activities Conference matchup tonight.

LAUREL-CONCORD-COLERIDGE (1-3) 11 17 29 46
PONCA (3-1) 9 22 41 65

Creighton 56, Osmond 27

CREIGHTON, Neb. — The Creighton Bulldogs jumped out to a 19-9 lead after one quarter and never looked back, claiming a 56-

Peterson Getting Plenty Of Good Blocks By Vikings

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Jerome Felton was on the free-agent market last March, a fullback who had been with three teams in two years and was looking for a good fit.

With Minnesota in the mix, figuring out the best place to go became a simpler decision for Felton. Who wouldn't want to block for Adrian Peterson, after all?

While playing with Detroit from 2008-2010, Felton would watch Peterson run from the opposing sideline and ponder the possibility.

"I was like, 'Man, if I could ever team up with him, I think it would be something special,'" Felton said. "That was a big thing, just to have the opportunity to come here and be able to block for him. He's obviously a future Hall of Famer."

Peterson's push for 2,000 yards rushing wouldn't happen without solid blocking in front of him, of course, and the offensive linemen, tight ends, fullbacks and wide receivers responsible for paving his paths are well aware of his standing. With an NFL-leading 1,600 yards, Peterson needs to average 134 yards over the last three games to become the seventh player to reach that mark in one season.

"I think it means a lot to the team. You kind of hear guys in the locker room talking about it. You hear the media talk about it a little bit. It's within reach, and I feel like it's something that he's capable of doing and I think he wants it so we want it for him," Felton said.

Felton might be the most unheralded of an already-under-the-radar group. Left tackle Matt Kalil was the fourth overall draft pick, sure. Center John Sullivan has been around for five seasons. Tight end Kyle Rudolph is relatively well-known, as a pass-catcher and occasional touchdown-scorer. But without any official statistics for blocking, these guys are often only known when they're called for holding or a false start.

"They brought me in here to make life a little easier on him, and I like to say I'm doing that," said Felton, a fifth-round pick out of Furman who spent last year with Carolina and Indianapolis. "He gives me an opportunity to show what I can do to the league and hopefully, vice versa, I make life a little easier on him. Definitely a lot of pride in that."

Peterson has long preferred a one-back set to better see the space in front of him, but with Felton in the game the results have clearly been favorable this year.

"He can run in any system. He's going to be a great back regardless, but all I'm trying to do is make life a little bit easier on him," Felton said.

Without any sustained success from the passing game, defenses have naturally stacked a safety in the box around the line of scrimmage to try to stop Peterson. This makes clearing the first level more difficult but if he gets past the linebackers in time, there's a greater chance of breaking a long gain. Three of the 10 longest carries of his six-year career have come in the last six games.

"We've been prepared offensively, and we've still been able to run the ball," Peterson said.

He ran 31 times for 154 yards in last Sunday's win over Chicago. That started with a 51-yard scamper on the first play from scrimmage, a simple dive play the