

January 18, 2008

Fighting Scots' hot shooting silences Rock women

By **Josh Rizzo**
Rocket Contributor

Heading into winter break, the Rock women's basketball team had high hopes that Santa would put a few wins under the Christmas tree.

Unfortunately for the Rock, Santa never showed.

And the Rock (6-10, 0-1) was left searching for answers as it dropped six straight, including a 74-70 loss to Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference East opponent Cheyney, a loss that was marked by the suspension of nine players, including three starters for violating team rules.

Things seemed to be getting worse for the Rock,

which had seen its record fall to 4-9. The suspensions, along with a number of close losses, could unravel a team, but the Rock weathered the storm and when Bloomsburg came into town last Saturday, the team released a fury of frustration on the Huskies.

"The whole suspension thing was a shock to us all," senior KellyAnn Staudinger said. "But they made a mistake, and that happens and you learn from it. We as a team sat down and talked about it and moved on. We wanted to get back to the game of basketball."

Led by PSAC-West Division Player of the Week Haley Gaidosh, who scored a career-high 23 points in the win, the Rock found itself

back in the win column.

"Actually, being named Player of the Week came as a shock to me," Gaidosh said. "But it's something that I think will really help boost my confidence as a player, which is something that I lack at times."

The Rock and Gaidosh would continue their success Sunday, as Mansfield rolled into Morrow Field House and was just as quickly rolled back out after SRU handed it a 72-50 spanking. Gaidosh tallied 12 points in the win while Staudinger led the team with a game-high 15 markers.

The victory was the 200th of Head Coach Laurel

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JOEY KENNEDY/THE ROCKET

Sophomore post player Haley Gaidosh muscled her way past an Edinboro defender during Wednesday night's 82-59 loss. Gaidosh, who was named PSAC-West Player of the Week on Monday, scored a team-high 16 points in the loss. Over the weekend Gaidosh averaged 17.5 points and six rebounds, helping the Rock snap a season-long six-game losing streak.

Heilman gets 200th career victory

By **Erin Fisher**
Rocket Contributor

One would think that the 200th win for a coach would be a milestone event, but Rock women's basketball Head Coach Laurel Heilman is not concerned with her own statistics.

"I really had no idea," Heilman said. "When Andy Major stopped me after the game to hand me the game ball and take a team picture, I didn't know what it was for."

The Rock's 81-51 win over Bloomsburg last Saturday at Morrow Field House gave Heilman her 200th career victory.

"I was very happy about the way that we played so it was icing on the cake, as they say, to get 200 wins," Heilman said. "It's really just a number to me and says that I've been doing this for a long time!"

The 2007-08 season marks the 16th season that Heilman has been the head coach of a college basketball team. She began her coaching career at the Rock, serving two seasons as the assistant women's basketball coach while completing her Master of Education degree.

"Coaching college-level basketball was the only thing that I ever wanted to do since about ninth grade or so," Heilman said. "I played just about every team sport there is growing up, but basketball just captured my heart."

Heilman is certainly no stranger to the court. She was team captain of the SRU women's basketball team for two years and earned first-team All-PSAC academic and athletic honors.

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Men's basketball drops ninth straight

By **Phil Swartzlander**
Rocket Assistant Sports Editor

The Slippery Rock men's basketball team followed a familiar trend all through winter break and right on into the new year: Start strong, finish behind.

The Rock continued this trend on Wednesday at Morrow Field House, falling to an impressive Edinboro University squad, 83-62. The loss marked the ninth in a row and eighth this season by double digits.

The Rock started out hot, taking an early 14-7 lead before the Fighting Scots started to nail shots from everywhere on the floor to tie the score at 22-22.

From that moment, the Rock lacked enthusiasm as Edinboro went on a 24-6 run, knocking down three 3-pointers to make the halftime score 46-28. Edinboro shot 9-for-18 for the game from 3-point range.

The Rock's opponents going on big runs has been a regular occurrence and a big problem for the Rock this year, freshman Cory Somerville said.

"We are working on handling the runs in practice, but we need to stop them," he said.

Head Coach Jamal Palmer said the team is prepared for the game, but not following through on the scouting reports.

"We have a game plan for every game and it works," Palmer said. "We started off good, then they start to make some shots and we put our heads down. We've got to have the same attitude either way."

The Rock shooters went cold in the last part of the first half, shooting 3-for-9 from the floor to finish with a 41.9 shooting percent for the first half.

"We have it on our board in the locker room to shoot the ball with



JOEY KENNEDY/THE ROCKET

Junior Joe Vines pulls up for a jumper late in the first half of the Rock's 83-68 loss to Edinboro Wednesday night. Vines scored eight points as the Rock dropped its ninth straight game to fall to 2-13 on the year.

confidence," Palmer said. "It's that just one player has had the hot hand, (and) we need everyone to shoot the ball with confidence and knock down shots."

Edinboro kept the pressure on the Rock, creating eight turnovers in the second half, several of them coming

from careless passes that gave the Fighting Scots several open lay-ups for easy points.

"We preach strong ball handling, it's down in the locker room on the

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Swimming starting to hit stride after weekend split

By **Brandon Fox**
Rocket Sports Editor

Heather Walbright has been leading the charge all season for the Rock swimmers, and now it seems the rest of the team is falling in line at exactly the right time.

The Rock (2-3), led by Walbright's first-place finish in the 500-yard freestyle (5:33.91), recorded a split last weekend against Penn State-Behrend and Edinboro. The Rock sunk Behrend's ship with a 102-19 victory before falling to Edinboro 73-47.

Walbright also led the Rock's 200-yard freestyle relay team to a first-place finish in the meet's final event. Walbright, along with teammates Lauren Hervatin, Sarah Sander and Raquel Woerner, recorded a time of 1:46.93. The Rock also enjoyed first-place efforts from Jessica Student in the 100 butterfly (1:04.52) and Betsy Wilson in the 200 individual medley (2:30.98).

Rock Head Coach Jim Yeamans was pleased with the effort and said he has seen a marked improvement in his squad.

"Our swimmers are always looking to improve each and every race," Yeamans said. "If you train hard and compete hard, you will see your times dropping, and we're at that point of the season where the athletes will be more rested and we should see some nice time drops in their events."

The Rock was also aided over the weekend by a solid contingent of second- and third-place finishes. Beth Choike finished second in the 200 backstroke (2:23.30) and third in the 100 backstroke with a time of 1:06.46. Student added a third-place in the 200 butterfly (2:31.05) to go along with her first-place finish in the 200 freestyle. Another member of the 200 freestyle team, Hervatin, took home second in the 500 freestyle with a time of 5:41.70, roughly eight seconds off Walbright's first-place time.

Walbright took second in both the 100 freestyle (56.24) and 200 freestyle (2:02.23) to bring her total of top-three finishes for the weekend to four.

Rounding out the solid efforts for the Rock were Caitlin Henney, who placed third in both the 100-yard breaststroke with a personal best time of 1:16.14 and the 200 breaststroke with a time of 2:48.18.

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