

SPORTS

Panthers run Lakeview ragged, 72-56

■ Center Line's Henson brothers combine for 34 points, 23 rebounds.

By Patrick Walters
Macomb Daily Sports Writer

CENTER LINE — Macomb County, this is the Henson brothers. Henson brothers, meet Macomb County.

Center Line's 6-foot-6 twins Jay and Brandon Henson dominated the Panthers' 72-56 win over St. Clair Shores Lakeview on Friday, combining for 34 points and 23 rebounds. Brandon Henson's 15 rebounds was a game high, and Jay Henson added three steals.

"This is a kind of breakout game for the Hensons this year," said Center Line coach Jim Nelson. "They've been

High School Basketball

struggling offensively trying to get in that flow. This is one of the games that we really needed."

The win was the Panthers' (1-1, 2-4) first MAC Silver victory of the season after opening divisional play Tuesday with a loss at Warren Woods-Tower.

The Hensons had a strong supporting cast to work with them on Friday night, though. Junior forward Kevin Wells scored 16 points and grabbed six rebounds and had six assists and junior guard Brandon Paschall scored 12 points and added six assists of his own.

In all, the Panthers grabbed 32 defensive rebounds — 20 more than their

season average — and made 17 assists. "It was a huge improvement for us tonight," Nelson said.

The Panthers got off to a quick start offensively and never really throttled down their tempo, or relented feeding the Hensons and Wells in the low post. The Huskies (2-1, 4-2) were giving up size to Center Line's frontcourt, but Lakeview's seven first-quarter fouls allowed the Panthers to establish an interior pick-and-roll offense without any great challenge.

Center Line finished the first quarter on an 11-4 run.

"We try to take pride in our defense and we gave up 70 points," said Lakeview coach Dean Haratsaris. "They did whatever that wanted to on us, offensively."

The Huskies mounted a feverish

comeback in the third quarter, mostly behind the floor game of junior guard Brandon Herber. Herber scored eight of his team-high 13 points in the third quarter to pull Lakeview within seven at 47-40, but it was the closest Lakeview would come.

Down nine points with 1:44 remaining in the game, Lakeview senior guard Adam Czerwinski was called for a flagrant foul for grabbing Wells' jersey. Czerwinski's foul — done with intent to stop the clock and without malice — would have been Lakeview's seventh of the half, but the technical ruling gave Center Line two foul shots plus possession.

Wells split the pair, and Lakeview was forced to foul the rest of the game. Counting Wells' make on the flagrant foul ruling, the Panthers scored nine

points in the last two minutes of the game at the free throw line.

Haratsaris pinpointed the questionable call as the defining moment the Huskies comeback attempt fell flat.

"That was tough," he said. "It literally deflated us a little bit. We should never have been in that position anyway to do that."

Czerwinski finished with 10 points. Including Herber's 13 points, four Lakeview players posted double-digit point totals.

Center Line plays one game over the holiday break, a Dec. 27 tilt at Warren Fitzgerald. Lakeview doesn't play until they host Woods-Tower on Jan. 9.

Center Line 72, St. Clair Shores Lakeview 56				
Lakeview	14	11	17	14
Center Line	20	17	14	21

LAKEVIEW (21, 42): Nico Conti 4, Kevin Bradacs 10, Brandon Herber 13, Stirling Johns 2, Alex Rea 2, Brian Mizel 5, Phil Lovati 10, Adam Czerwinski

ROMEIO: CV undefeated no more

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got us in foul trouble, and going to the hoop I was trying to get them in foul trouble," Kosovich said. "But the pull-up jumper was there."

"I had to step up because our two main scorers were out," he said. "So somebody had to step up and carry the load until they could come back in."

The Big Reds stayed close in the first half due largely to their three-point and free throw shooting. They made as many triples (six) as they did twos and converted 9-of-10 free throws.

Junior guard Chris Lemm led the Chippewa Valley effort with 12 of his team-high 16 points in the first half, including a pair of triples and 4-of-4 on free throws.

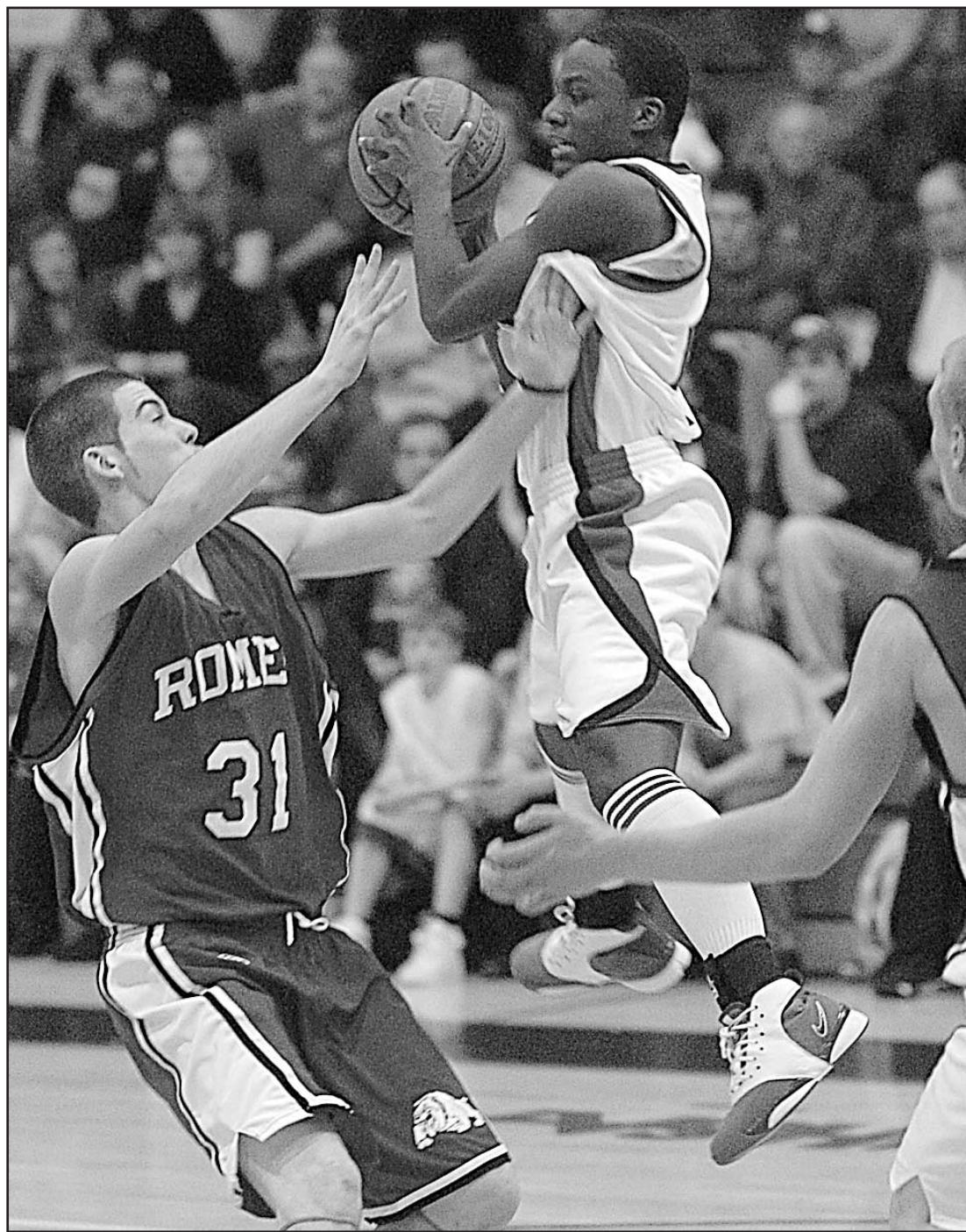
Tyler Alwardt scored 14 and Rob Martin added nine points on three triples for the Big Reds, who finished with 10 three-pointers.

"Yeah, that's exactly what we tried to take away, too," Kosovich said. "I don't even know — they were on fire, I guess."

The Big Reds tried to make it interesting in the third quarter, cutting the Romeo lead to 61-56 and forcing a Bulldogs turnover at 2:48. But Schirmer blocked a Big Reds shot, and that led to a three-point play by Sharples at the other end to push it back to nine points, 64-55.

The lead would stay nine entering the fourth, and Romeo would only pad it as Cushingberry and Sharples came up with easy baskets after the Romeo guards broke the Chippewa Valley pressure.

"All in all, that was our game plan, to get the ball in low and take care of their pressure," Teller said. "Because we knew they were going to come at us." Sharples scored 17 of his 20



Macomb Daily staff photo by Ray J. Skowronek

Chippewa Valley's DeAndre Davis tries to avoid contact with Romeo's Derrick Gaffke Friday night. Davis and the Big Reds would come down to earth in a 91-73 defeat.

points in second half, and Cushingberry scored nine of his game-high 24 points in the fourth quarter. Cushingberry, Sharples and Schirmer each had 10 rebounds apiece.

Matt Roots hit a three for Chippewa Valley — making him the fifth Big Red player to do so

— to cut it to 79-69 with 2:30 remaining, but a minute later Cushingberry threw the ball ahead to Sharples, whose break-away dunk accentuated the Bulldogs night-long success.

Romeo goes into their holiday break 6-0 overall and 3-0 in the MAC Red. Chippewa Valley

falls to 4-1, 1-1.

Romeo 91, Chippewa Valley 73				
Romeo	22	25	19	25
Chippewa Valley	15	24	18	16

ROMEIO (3-0 MAC Red, 6-0): Brent Newsom 7, Nick Kosovich 15, Steve Malburg 6, Doug Sharples 20, Blake Cushingberry 24, Jake Schirmer 16, Nathan Saiga 3. Totals: 34 (3) 20/27 91.

CHIPPEWA VALLEY (1-1, 4-1): DeAndre Davis 1, Tyler Alwardt 14, Mike Chinneck 12, Mark Hemberg 5, Rob Martin 9, Matt Roots 5, Jeff Tobolski 4, Chris Lemm 16, Jason Doran 7. Totals: 24 (10) 15/18 73.

OZZIE: Former starter watches Hasek glow

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the long-time starting netminder back to watching games from the bench.

Osgood, who has been sidelined for just over a month with a wrist injury, is scheduled to get his first start between the pipes in almost two months tonight against the Minnesota Wild.

"I think you get excited because you get sick of watching games," said Osgood, who got his last start in Chicago on Nov. 2. "You can only watch games for so long until you want to play again."

"I don't make a big deal out of it," Osgood continued. "I just want to play and get back in there after being injured for so long."

Osgood suffered his latest setback, a wrist injury, during practice. The injury sidelined him from Nov. 14 until Dec. 16.

Prior to the injury, Osgood, who suffered a groin injury during training camp, had started just four games. He was relieved in one of those starts, Oct. 21 at Edmonton, by Joey MacDonald.

He returned to action last Monday, relieving Hasek after one period in Columbus. He gave up one goal on 14 shots.

"I was happy to get back in against Columbus, but not under the circumstances," Osgood said. "But to play two periods and feel like I did there was real no concern on how I'm going to feel tomorrow."

"I really didn't feel any different than I did before because I had been skating for a long time,"

Osgood added. "I felt like I was in game shape because I had been doing so many goalie drills. I felt almost better than I did before in training camp. It'll be good to play again."

Despite being relegated to the backup role last season, Osgood flourished. He played in 32 games and had a record of 20-6-0 with a goals against average of 2.76 and a save percentage of .897.

"I had a really good year (last season) for (the amount of games) I was given," Osgood said. "I proved I can play a lot or not play a lot and still play well. I work hard and play when I'm supposed to. It's pretty cut and dry."

"I don't worry (about starting anymore)," Osgood added. "I play when coach tells me to play. Last year is last year."

Road woes

The Wild are the third worst road team in the league, entering Friday night's game in Detroit with a 4-11-1 mark. Only Los Angeles (4-10-0) and Phoenix (3-12-0) were worse.

"I don't know why we've been so bad," Minnesota coach Jacques Lemaire said. "We're playing the same way we do at home, but it's not been enough."

Luckily for Minnesota, the other teams in the Northwest Division are struggling on the road as well. Colorado is the best of the bunch at 8-8-1, followed by Edmonton (6-9-1), Vancouver (6-10-1) and Calgary (5-9-3).

Minnesota does have the second best record at home, 13-3-1. One of those losses was to Detroit.

Not a fan

Lemarie isn't too happy about having to play the Wings in three of the Wild's next four games, especially with how his team has been playing of late.

"You can prepare for it, but if you've got a better team it's fine because you can pick up points," said Lemaire, whose team plays Toronto after two straight against Detroit. "If your team is not as good, you're just going to pick up some losses. That's not good."

Six of Detroit's final seven games of the regular season before the new year will be against two teams. The Wings play Columbus and Minnesota three times each before taking on Los Angeles at home New Year's Eve. (Detroit is 1-1 in the first two meetings with the Blue Jackets.)

"For them, they play Columbus and then they've got us," Lemaire laughed. "That's a good couple weeks."

"It's a huge test because we're playing a great team," Lemaire added. "We only hope their goalie is only average instead of great. It's a huge challenge."

Wings coach Mike Babcock doesn't see a playoff like atmosphere taking place these next three games with Minnesota.

"As much as people want to say it's like the playoffs, it's not the playoffs so we can erase that right now," Babcock said. "What it is, they're going to know us pretty good and we're going to know them pretty good."

Send comments to chuck.pleiness@macombdaily.com

Bulldogs top Falcons, 7-3

■ Youthful Ford team, goaltenders improving on fly.

By Rebekka Costanzo
Special to The Macomb Daily

FRASER — Romeo defeated visiting Sterling Heights Henry Ford II 7-3 in a MAC White division game

Friday night at Great Lakes Sports City. Rob Hutchinson's goal at 7:54 of the first period ended up as the game-winning goal.

The Bulldogs improve to 3-0 in the MAC White (5-2 overall), and the Falcons fall to 1-4, 2-5.

Despite the loss, Ford is still building on last season's disappointing 0-22 record. The Falcons defeated Harrison Township L'Anse Creuse 3-2 on Dec. 8 for their first win of the year.

"It was funny because it was a packed house that night. Everyone was crowded around our locker room. It was like a playoff atmosphere," Ford coach Lee Jenkins said.

"The guys that have been with us since they were freshmen really appreciated the effort they had to put in to get that win."

The Falcons have been at a disadvantage, though, in terms of experience. There are only three seniors and 11 juniors on the team this year.

To make up for the experience and talent they are missing, Jenkins said the players work hard on improving their overall game.

"Our guys have to work really hard. We probably don't possess as much overall talent as other teams and we have to make up for that with hard work," he said.

Jenkins credits juniors Dan Leja and Anthony Tomczyk with enhancing the Falcon's leadership.

"Dan especially, has really provided team leadership in the locker room, on the ice, and on the bench," Jenkins said. "This year we've had the peer leadership that we've been missing in the past few years."

Like many teams, Ford is also adjusting to the new enforcement rules. That means the Falcons have to develop their power-play, penalty-kill, and goaltending skills, and, make sure they play disciplined hockey.

"With the new rules, and now that the stick is part of the body, you can't play the old style anymore," Jenkins said. "Having a good power play and penalty kill can make or break the game."

Freshman Matt Mueller and juniors Pete Ploshehanski and Mike Brazier make up Ford's goaltending corps. The three recently began working with a goaltending coach.

"We want to continue to improve our goaltending, which is improving on a weekly basis," Jenkins said. "I think our better part of the season is yet to come."

Romeo 7, Ford 3	
Ford	1 1 1 - 3
Romeo	4 3 0 - 7

1. 1:12 Romeo, Jeffrey Makowski (C. Taormina, B. Bidus); 4:26 Romeo, Nick Rossman (S. Hooper, T. Underhill); 5:41 Ford, Anthony Tomczyk (C. Beckwell, B. Fulton); 7:54 Romeo, Rob Hutchinson (A. Zimmerman, A. Hawkins); 11:07 Romeo, Makowski (P. Rogowski, Bidus)

2. 2:38 Ford, Jacob Quick (Beckwell, Tomczyk); 4:50 Romeo, Bidus (Rossman, Hutchinson); 12:57 Romeo, Alex Hawkins (Hutchinson, T. Heike); 14:33 Romeo, Hawkins (Hooper, J. Sirhan) 3. 12:09 Ford, Chris Hopfner (Tomczyk)

'It still keeps us in the west'

■ New proposal has NHL going to two divisions in each conference.

By Chuck Pleiness
Macomb Daily Sports Writer

DETROIT — It looks like, how the West was won will still be a question the Detroit Red Wings will need to figure out in the near future.

Six division representatives from the current six divisions in the National Hockey League met in New York earlier this week to layout a plan that would change what we now know as the NHL today.

Included in the discussions were reducing the divisions from three to two in each conference and also having each team play each other at least once every season.

"I'm just kind of looking at it now," Wings general manager Ken Holland said prior to Friday's game at Joe Louis Arena against the Minnesota Wild. "Obviously, it still keeps us in the west."

According to documents sent to each team, Detroit would be in a division along with Chicago, St. Louis, Nashville and Dallas. The seventh team would be the Atlanta Thrashers, who are now in the Eastern Conference.

"I'm open to what's been floated out there because obviously there would be (less divisional games)," Holland said. "You're guaranteed to play every team in the other conference at least once. I think there are some good things that are in this proposal."

The other division in the Western Conference would consist of Anaheim, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, San Jose, Los Angeles, Colorado and Phoenix.

According to a statement released on the tsn.ca website, Atlanta GM Don Waddell said the Thrashers have not been asked to move from the east to the west.

"We have not been approached by anyone associated with the league regarding switching divisions and conferences," Waddell said. "Therefore, we'll defer to the league and will not comment until the appropriate time. I will say that our organization is pleased with the current situation and our alignment in the Eastern Confer-

ence."

The Columbus Blue Jackets, who are currently in the Central Division, would move to the Eastern Conference to play in a division with Pittsburgh, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Boston and Buffalo.

The New York Rangers, New York Islanders, New Jersey, Washington, Carolina, Tampa Bay and Florida would comprise the other division.

According to Holland, Chicago senior vice president Bob Pulford was there on the behalf of the Central Division.

"Obviously, we'd love to be in the east," Holland said. "How that goes about happening, I'm not sure."

As far as the playoffs go, the top two teams in each division would be guaranteed the top four playoff seeds with the four wild card playoff berths going to the teams with the next highest point totals.

The proposal will be presented at the NHL All-Star Game in Dallas. If 20 of the 30 NHL clubs vote in favor, the changes could take effect next season.

"As far as us being in the east, I don't know how we get there," Holland said. "I'd like to be in the east."

Chuck Pleiness covers the Red Wings.