



SPORTS

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Tanagers Open Season With Back-To-Back Wins

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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What started as a tie game going into the fourth quarter ended as a nine point victory for the Vermillion High School boys' basketball team in Tuesday night's home opener and the second straight win of the season.

The Tanagers defeated the defending region champions Lennox Orioles 59-50 and followed up with a 51-33 win over Colome Saturday afternoon at the Tea Classic. "It's a good start," said Tanagers head coach Jay Drake. "We found out some stuff about our team against Colome, but we knew we'd find out a lot more about our team (Tuesday) and it won't get any easier next week with Tri-Valley, but with a conference win, home opener, against a region opponent, hopefully we can build on this and keep moving forward."

At the season opener against Colome in Tea, the Tanagers rolled over the Cowboys 51-33 and ended each quarter with no less than an 11-point lead.

Jeremiah Johnson led the scoring with 20 points. Jacob Granger had nine points and Riley Peters had eight.

"We defended well and did a nice job on the boards," Drake said. "We didn't shoot the ball very well from the field, but hopefully that will improve as the season goes on. Just like any season, we needed a game to see where we are at and we know we have a lot of room for improvement, but it will be a process that we will work through during the season."

Tuesday's home opener in front of an almost packed house gave fans a little more excitement. The score was



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Cooper Williams drives to the net against Lennox in the Tanagers 59-50 home win Tuesday night. Williams led the team in scoring with 22 points, including 15 free throws.

decided in the final quarter after Vermillion held a 5-point lead at the end of the first, but found themselves behind by five points heading into the locker room at halftime.

"We thought we defended real well in the first quarter, but we gave up eighteen points in the second quarter," Drake said. "At times last year, once things got difficult we kind of shied away from the physical team. So, we just talked at half time that we have to dig in, get some stops and we did that."

The Tanagers defense held Lennox to just 10 points in the third quarter and scored 15 of their own to tie the game 37-37 to begin the fourth.

"The two times we played them last year were good basketball games," Drake

said. "They were two close ones, but we just knew they were going to be physical and we thought we handled it tonight and hung in there and made some plays down the stretch."

An already tough game became visibly more physical as time was winding down and the frustrated Orioles tried to keep up with Vermillion's defense.

"It was physical obviously," Drake said. "They are a good basketball team. They won our region last year and are probably our region favorites this year with four starters back."

The Orioles committed 28 fouls in the game and gave Vermillion's Cooper Williams 19 free throw attempts, 15 of which were good.

The Tanagers defense didn't give up the fight and

again held the Orioles to 10 points in the final quarter, until a final three-pointer was drained in the last minute for a total of 13 Lennox points to Vermillion's 22 for the final 59-50 margin.

"We held them at 10 in the third quarter and really we held them at 10 in the fourth until that final three at the buzzer there, so it was all done defensively basically," Drake said.

Williams led the Tanagers in scoring with 22 points. Jacob Manger had 15 points, including 5-for-8 at the free throw line. Paul Schwisinger scored eight and JaQuaylon Mays had six.

On Tuesday, Tri-Valley comes to Vermillion as the Tanagers look to continue the win streak. The game is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

Boys' Bowling Continues To Dominate

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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Vermillion High School boys' bowling picked up two wins in the last two matches against Sioux Falls O'Gorman and Sioux Falls Roosevelt to remain undefeated on the season. The girls' team fell to both O'Gorman and Roosevelt and move to 1-2.

"The last two matches have been very successful for the boys' team, they are still undefeated at this point," said head coach Mike Lovejoy. "We bowled Roosevelt last Friday night (Dec. 11) and the Friday before that (Dec. 4) we bowled O'Gorman, so we won against two huge Sioux Falls powerhouses and come through with good victories."

"The girls have run into a couple teams who had another girl or two get really hot and we just ended up on the short end of the stick there."

In the boys' varsity II match on Dec. 4 against O'Gorman, Avery Mollett bowled a 638 series to lead Vermillion to a 41-9 victory.

Brett Hanson bowled Vermillion's highest game of the night with 234 and had a 614 series. Kodie Lovejoy scored a 601 series and had a 221 game.

"They are just going to have to keep doing what they're doing," coach Lovejoy said. "The success in any level of bowling is picking up your spares and that's been the key point for us this year. Our guys are getting enough experience that they are picking up the second shot so that is what's carrying us."

Last Friday in a match with Sioux Falls Roosevelt, Vermillion went on to win it's third straight match of the year 33-17.

"We won by quite a bit for the first match and then the second one was a little closer. Varsity two helped out a lot and varsity one struggled," said senior Kodie Lovejoy.

But he far from struggled individually as Kodie went on to break the 700 mark for a 705 series. He rolled a 215, 246 and 244 in the games.

"On any level of bowling, but especially at the high school level once you break the 600 barrier and get up into the 700 you have to figure that was a good night," coach Lovejoy said.

Hanson was the next Vermillion bowler with a 640 series. Eighth grader Josh Bern rounded out the varsity I match with a 426 series.

"We executed on our spares very well and we hit our marks and ended up beating some of the best competition out there," Bern said. "I hit most of my spares, but I need to work on my 10 pins and picking up spares."

Avery Mollett scored a 539 series, Ryan Brunick had 512 and Logan Gregg had a 463.

For the girls, after winning the first match of the season back on Nov. 13 Vermillion has gone on to drop the last two matches.

"Our first match we did really well. We played Brandon Valley and we won that one pretty easily and then our next one we played O'Gorman and Roosevelt and those two weren't as great for us," said senior Kayla Stammer.

On Dec. 4, the girls' scored 4.5 points to O'Gorman's 45.5.

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Barnett A Natural Leader As Captain

Tanager Of The Week

BY ELYSE BRIGHTMAN

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As a team captain and three year varsity player, senior Autumn Barnett is proving to be a main factor in the Vermillion High School girls' basketball team's offenses as one of the top scorers on the team.

Two games in two days can be difficult to keep up with, but Vermillion girls' basketball senior captain Autumn Barnett made it look easy.

Barnett had 10 points during the Tanagers 66-31 win over Bon Homme Friday night and continued scoring for 12 points during Saturday's 45-20 win over Aberdeen-Roncalli.

"We definitely had a shorter amount of time to recover for our Saturday game," Barnett said. "We were on our feet a lot and didn't get much rest, but I think we definitely pushed through it."

It's not only her ability to score from the outside, but Barnett leadership in the role of team captain has named her this week's Tanager of the Week.

"Autumn really turned

into a leader for us this past summer," said head basketball coach Jon Brooks. "She was committed to all our team camps and open gyms. She was one of our hardest workers in the weight room, as well, and that really gained the respect from her teammates."

Barnett has played basketball since joining a club team in elementary school and earned a spot on the varsity squad at the high school her sophomore year. Now, as a senior, she has the versatility to play at any position coach Brooks needs.

"Coach Brooks puts me in guard, point guard, post. I play all around," Barnett said. "(I like) guard so I can shoot outside. I don't really like going against the big players inside."

Brooks says Barnett's hard work during offseason and in season practices have greatly improved her play over the past few years.

"As one of our most aggressive kids on the floor, (Barnett's) basketball skills have really improved over the past two years," Brooks said. "She has turned into one of our top scoring threats and we can always rely on her to give full effort. I believe with how hard she plays it rubs off on the other girls."

Barnett is on track to be one of the leading scorers for the Tanagers this season, but is also a key player in passing around the outside.

"Some games I'll have (an off game) with shooting and I'll have better passing game," she said. "But I guess it just depends on the day. If I'm on then I'm good at shooting, but also I'm better at passing some days."

Barnett is a first year captain for the basketball team, but is no stranger to the role. She served as captain for the girls' soccer team at VHS for the past three years and though

it's a different game, the responsibilities are similar.

"I was captain for soccer for three years, so I know how it is. Basketball, it's a different sport and you have different responsibilities to go with it," she said. "(You want) to be a role model and to show the younger ones what to expect when they are older."

Brooks notices how Barnett is comfortable in the role of captain no matter which sport.

"I think she has become used to being a leader and really comes natural to her," he said. "She truly is a leader vocally and through her actions."

Though she has developed into a standout on the basketball court, Barnett says she is pursuing to further her soccer career at the collegiate level. She has a number of offers from schools, but has not made any final decisions.



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