

SPORTS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Sherwood, Thomas dominate Clemson

By Jarred Amato
HUSTLER SPORTS EDITOR

Playing a game in which basketball was secondary, the No. 14 Commodores nonetheless put on a good show for the predominantly pink crowd, defeating Clemson 82-63 Sunday at Memorial Gymnasium.

Vanderbilt not only assisted in the fight against breast cancer by sponsoring a "Pink Out," but improved to 8-0 on the season, while Clemson dropped to 3-5.

"I think we were all pretty anxious with the game being on (national) TV and all the hype around the 'Pink Out,' and it was just exciting to be there," said senior Caroline Williams, who had 12 points and career-high 11 rebounds. "With all the fans there, it's so much fun."

Junior center Liz Sherwood had much to celebrate on her 22nd birthday, scoring a very appropriate 22 points and grabbing 13 rebounds. It was the first time since Dec. 4, 2004, that two Commodores registered double-doubles in one game.

"I asked Liz to get 22 points on her birthday and that's what she did," said Vanderbilt coach Melanie Balcomb. "If they all listen like that, well, we'd be really good right now."

Sherwood added, "She was joking with me, but she told me maybe she should set the bar higher next time."

On a more serious note, Balcomb said Sherwood's performance is crucial to the team's success.

"She played a full game tonight, and she did well on both ends of the court," she said. "Her offensive rebounding was just what we needed. She was going strong to the hole and doing the things we need Liz to do for this team."

As a team, the Commodores grabbed 17 offensive rebounds and scored 38 points in the paint. They were able to get easy looks by establishing the high-low with Sherwood and senior Carla Thomas, who had 19 points in just 18 minutes of action. Thomas, the leading scorer in the Southeastern Conference at 19.3 points per game, was coming off a 32-point outing against University of Alabama at Birmingham.

"She's playing very well and very consistent," Balcomb said of Thomas. "Traditionally she's a very good Southeastern Conference player. Carla knew what the big games were and always stepped up in the big games."

"Now, she's playing on a whole 'nother level because her preparation is on a whole 'nother level. I can't say enough about where she is right now mentally and physically."

Thomas converted an 'and-one' to put Vanderbilt ahead 11-9, and the Commodores never looked back, as they went on a 17-2 run to take a 25-11 lead midway through the first half.

Clemson cut the lead to five at 27-22, but Sherwood had a layup and freshmen Lauren Leuders and Merideth Marsh nailed three-pointers, and the Commodores were back up by 12. At halftime, Vanderbilt led 43-27 behind 13 points from both Sherwood and Thomas.

By dominating the interior for the first 20 minutes, Vanderbilt opened up the perimeter for Williams and company in the second half.

"It is nice having a team that you have so many weapons that if your threes aren't going, you go high-low, and if your high-low isn't going, you go to your threes," Balcomb said. "We have that capability. Whatever wasn't working, we went to the other."

Williams' three-pointer with 7:56 remaining put the Commodores ahead 67-43 (their largest lead of the game), and they went on to win, 82-63.

Sophomore Christina Wirth added 12 points, five rebounds and four assists, while the Commodores' bench players scored a combined 35 points compared to the Lady Tigers' 15.

"It makes them better because they know they can go hard and there are people to relieve them," Balcomb said of the team's depth. "We've not had that push in the past."

Williams added, "We have the potential to be the deepest team we've ever been and one of the best teams we've had here so far, so we just have to make sure our mentality is right every game."

Vanderbilt's next game is in Durham, N.C., against the No. 5 Blue Devils on Thursday. ■



Carla Thomas drives for the hoop Sunday in Vanderbilt's game against Clemson. The Commodores defeated the Tigers 82 - 63 at Memorial Gym.

BRETT KAMINSKY / VU Media Relations

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Beal's efforts in the clutch lead Dores to victory

By Jarred Amato
HUSTLER SPORTS EDITOR

Freshman point guard Jermaine Beal's driving layup and ensuing free throw with 4.4 seconds left in overtime gave Vanderbilt (2-3) a sorely-needed 98-93 victory over Toledo at Memorial Gymnasium Saturday night.

"We wanted to open the floor, set a high-ball screen," said Vanderbilt coach Kevin Stallings.

"They were fearful of hedging on the ball screen, so the play was for — if he turns the corner and somebody comes, make the pass, and if not, put his shoulder down and go. It was the prettiest 'and-one' I've seen in awhile."

While the game itself was not pretty — the Commodores trailed by seven at halftime and by as many in five in overtime — the players never quit.

"We just showed a lot of grit," said senior

Derrick Byars, who had a team-high 28 points to go along with four rebounds and four assists. "Coming into the game, we knew it was a must-win game for us, so we just wanted the victory by any means necessary...whatever it was gonna take."

Trailing by as many as eight points in the second half, Vanderbilt cut the lead to one on a Byars' three-pointer and went ahead 70-69 on the next possession when senior Dan Cage (11 points, four assists) hit junior Ross Neltner for a layup.

The Commodores led by four after Beal pushed the ball up the court and found Neltner (career-high 20 points, eight rebounds) for another layup, but the Rockets did not go away. Keonta Howell's jumper with 52 seconds left gave Toledo an 84-82 lead.

After Byars hit two free-throws to tie the game, the Commodores prevented the Rockets from taking a shot in their final possession.

"It was probably the best defensive effort our team has had up until this point in the season," Byars said. "It started with 33 seconds, and they didn't even get an attempt — that's just great lockdown defense on everybody's part."

The Commodores started slow in overtime, but Byars' three-pointer with 2:13 left cut the Rockets' lead to two. Then Beal penetrated and kicked to Neltner, who buried the three-pointer to give his team a 93-92 lead.

Toledo's Tyrone Kent hit one free throw with 13 seconds remaining, setting the stage for Beal's heroics.

"Coach told me to come off the screen; I had a small defender on me, so I just took it," Beal, who finished with a career-high 13 points and dished out four assists, said. "It was a great feeling."

Beal said he did not even have a chance see the ball go in because he was tackled by Shan Foster and his teammates.

"For Jermaine to come through in a situation like that was phenomenal," Stallings said.

"That was very much how he played in the preseason leading up to the games, and that's why he won the starting job."

After losing to Furman last Tuesday, it was important for the Commodores to have a good showing against the Rockets.

After connecting on just two of 17 three-pointers against Furman, Vanderbilt was 11-for-24 Saturday night. Byars was 5-for-9 and Foster (21 points) was 3-for-7.

"I thought Beal and Byars and Neltner were all somewhere between good and really really good," Stallings said.

With the injury to forward Alan Metcalfe, Stallings said his team is still trying to figure out its identity.

"We don't have the same people running the same things that we did a week and a half ago," he said. "We're a team that's searching for our strengths while trying to fix our weaknesses and trying to figure out what suits this team best."

"We've got to with what we have and do the best we can with it, and that's what they did tonight."

Although the Rockets were just 2-3 coming into the game, the Commodores knew it was going to be a test and are glad to come away with a victory.

"This is a great win for us," Byars said. "Every game in college basketball is a grind. You've got Kansas losing to Oral Roberts and Georgetown losing to Old Dominion. You can't choose or say who's going to win." ■



MASON HENSLEY / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Vanderbilt's freshman point guard Jermaine Beal defends during the Commodores 98-93 victory Saturday against Toledo.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

After win, Vandy must not underestimate mid-majors

By Andrew Hard
HUSTLER REPORTER

Fatigue. Miscommunication. Sluggishness.

All of these can be attributed in some way to Vanderbilt's team during a 1-3 start to the season. And for 28 minutes Saturday against Toledo, it looked as if the Dores might be resigned to another loss in which they looked confused and disoriented on both sides of the ball. But with the help of Derrick Byars and rapidly maturing freshman Jermaine Beal, Vanderbilt stormed back, making it seem at least for a day that it has the chemistry and resolve to step it up down the stretch and erase a late deficit.

While it may seem disconcerting that, for half the game, Vanderbilt was flat outplayed by a mid-major team for the second straight game, let me remind you that the talent gap in college basketball has shrunk tremendously, and nothing that seems like a sure thing "on paper" can be approached as such on game day. Vanderbilt found that out the hard way against Furman last Tuesday, but so did Kansas against Oral Roberts and Marquette Saturday night against North Dakota State.

So with that being said, even with Toledo on the other side of the ball, for Vanderbilt to be tested and come back with such resolve could perhaps be the spark that allows this team to play to its full potential. Furthermore, this team showed its veteran leadership very early in the season, and "knowing" how to win games late is a skill that some teams take all season to learn.

Coach Kevin Stallings said that with the loss of Alan Metcalfe, this team is still looking to find its

identity at this point in the season.

"We're a team that's searching for our strengths while trying to fix our weaknesses and trying out what suits this team the best," he said.

While Vanderbilt could overlook its next two opponents, ETSU and Lipscomb, it needs to approach these games with the same intensity it showed over the last 15 minutes of Saturday's game if it wants those two victories.

There is still time to find that identity, but it can't come at the expense of tough defense (45 Toledo points in the first half) or defensive rebounding (19-8 Toledo advantage in second chance points).

"We're got a long way to go defensively, and I've got to be a better coach defensively so that we're not giving up 45 points in the first half," Stallings said. "That's my fault. We just have to continue to get better."

With the Southeastern Conference perhaps as tough as it has been in 10 years, it is vital for Vanderbilt to find that identity quickly and string together victories between now and Jan. 6.

Yes, everyone in college basketball plays to win. ETSU and Lipscomb won't merely be excited to participate in Memorial Madness; they'll be looking to return to their respective corners of Tennessee with W's over a big-time program.

"Every game in college basketball is a grind," Byars said. "You can't choose or say who's going to win."

With a loss to Furman and a squeaker against Toledo, Vanderbilt seems to be well aware that the term "mid-major" may no longer apply in today's college basketball environment. ■



MASON HENSLEY / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Vanderbilt forward Derrick Byars hoists up a three during the Commodores win over Toledo. Byars' 28 points led all scorers.

GAME BREAKDOWN

Quote of the game

"Coming into the game, we knew it was a must-win game for us, so we just wanted the victory by any means necessary."

—Senior forward Derrick Byars on the importance of Saturday's 98-93 victory over Toledo. The Commodores improved to 2-3 on the young season.

Play of the game

With the game tied at 93, point guard Jermaine Beal came off a high ball with the option of kicking it out to a teammate or attacking the basket. The freshman chose the latter, laying the ball in and drawing the foul. Beal made the free throw to complete what coach Kevin Stallings called the "prettiest 'and-one'" he had seen in a while. The Commodores went on to win 98-93.

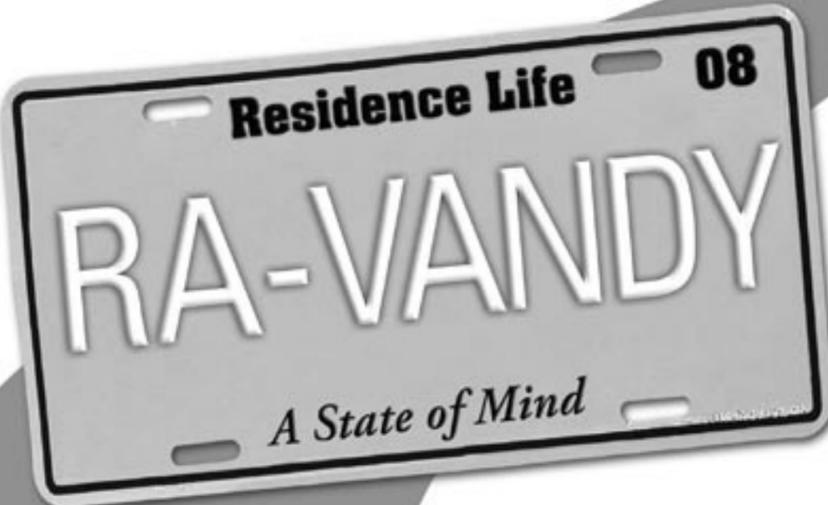
Player of the game

Player of the game: Derrick Byars

Byars turned in a solid performance, scoring 28 points while grabbing four rebounds and dishing out four assists. Byars played 39 minutes without committing a turnover and held Toledo's Keonta Howell (32 points) scoreless in overtime. After shooting poorly in the loss to Furman Tuesday, Byars was 8-for-17 from the field, including 5-for-9 from beyond the arc and 7-for-8 from the foul line.

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OFFICE OF HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION OFFICIAL NOTICE

TO: The Residential Community
FROM: Jim Kramka, Senior Director of Housing Facilities, Operations, & Mgmt
Tina Smith, Senior Director of Residence Life and Residential Education
SUBJECT: SEMESTER BREAK

Semester Break extends from December 17, 2006 – January 7, 2007. **During the break, all undergraduate residence halls will close.** Residence halls will close at **9:00 a.m., Sunday, December 17**, and reopen on **Saturday, January 6, at 8:00 p.m.** **Card access for all residents will be turned off during break.** Fall residents who will not return to campus for spring semester must completely vacate their rooms no later than 9:00 a.m., Sunday, December 17.

DON'T PANIC! READ ON. Fall residents who will also be residents for the spring semester needing to stay in any of the residence halls for any part of the break may do so if they register by midnight, Wednesday, December 13. Students may register online at www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd anytime during the period December 4 - 13. Only students who are in residence for both fall and spring semesters may register to stay for any part of break.

Please post an "Occupied" sign on your door when you are in your room during break. "Occupied" signs will be available from all main desks.

PLEASE NOTE: It may not be possible to provide residential staff in a particular building, or to provide staffing of information desks in a particular building. **Because card reader access may be the only means of entry, compliance with the registration procedures above is essential. In addition, remaining students should take even greater care regarding their personal safety and security.**

During the break, maintenance and housekeeping personnel will be working in student rooms. Please make sure that maintenance personnel can easily access the air handling unit by your window as well as kitchen and bathroom appliances and plumbing fixtures. Please move furniture and personal belongings away from the air handling units. Work crews will be inspecting rooms between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- **Execute a full backup of data** on your computer. **Turn off the power, and unplug the power cord** from the wall or power strip. If the computer is turned off and disconnected from its power source, it need not be disconnected from the network.
- **Defrost, clean out, turn off, and unplug refrigerators** to prevent damage from power surges and outages.
- **Turn off and unplug all other appliances.** (Note: television channels on some sets may have to be reprogrammed when the power is restored.)
- **Remove fish from, drain, and clean out aquariums.**
- **Carry your trash to the dumpsters.** Do not pile garbage or trash in the common area or bathroom where it will remain until the residence hall reopens. Clean out your recycling containers.
- **Set your thermostat midway between the "warm" and "cool" settings.** If we are experiencing cold temperatures during the break, heat in the halls will be set at a moderate level.
- **Move your bed** a short distance from the wall if it is directly below a window. Condensation sometimes forms on cold windows and might find its way to bedclothes immediately below.
- **Do not leave belongings on the floor of your room.** If freezing temperatures strike causing broken pipes, flooding may occur in affected areas.
- **Lock your door and take your key with you!**

RESIDENCE HALL SECURITY AND SAFETY

1. During break, residential staff will perform safety and security checks in student rooms. **Violations of University policy will be documented and students may face disciplinary action.**
2. Be sure to close and lock your windows, open the curtains or blinds, turn off all lights. **Carry your key with you and lock your doors, including private bedrooms in suites and apartments.** If you live at ground level, make certain no valuables are visible from the outside. Please move bikes into your room or another secure area to reduce risk of theft.
3. **Do not leave jewelry or other valuable items in your room.** Vanderbilt University will make every effort to keep the residence halls secure during the break period, but cannot assume responsibility for your possessions. You should, therefore, take appropriate measures to safeguard your valuables.
4. **Residence halls will reopen at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 6, 2007. Students returning to campus before this time must register before leaving. Unless you have registered, do not arrive on campus prior to January 6, 2007 and expect to be admitted to a closed residence hall.**

Please plan now for the closing of these residence halls. If this causes a problem for you and you are unable to find a suitable solution, please see your RA or AD for assistance.

HAVE A GREAT BREAK!

BOWLING

New line-up helps bowlers defeat Nebraska

Team hopes to carry momentum towards national championships in April

HUSTLER STAFF REPORT

Vanderbilt enjoyed perhaps its best day of bowling in its brief program history Dec. 3, and it captured a stirring victory at the Mississippi Valley State Invitational.

The Commodores, 28-4 on the season, averaged over 200 in four Baker game sets, enough to overcome a 156 pin tie-breaker deficit to edge Nebraska by 11 pins for the title.

"We went lights out; the day was incredible," said coach John Williamson. "We were probably in the best attack mentality we've been in from the beginning. The team knew it was going to make it a contest. We sent a message in our first game with an 1,109 score that we were going to compete."

Williamson moved his lineup around for the first time this fall, and the change paid big dividends.

"We moved the lineup around and had Karen Grygiel bowl anchor," Williamson said. "She was fantastic; the shot played to Karen's strength, and once again she was able to

take advantage of it. As a whole, everybody was on it today. Total team effort. (I) put people in positions they weren't comfortable with, and everyone excelled."

Grygiel was second in the individual standings by a mere pin to Husker All-American Amanda Burgoynne, 851-850. In the process she made the all-tournament team for the second straight event, joined on that honor squad by Commodore freshman Josie Earnest.

Another modification in today's lineup was the insertion of Kaitlin Reynolds into the rotation in place of southpaw Mandy Keily.

"Sometimes the lanes (are) just set up to where there isn't a good opportunity for a left-hander, and that was the case here," Williamson said. "I was proud of Kaitlin for coming through so well, but the real pleasing thing to me is that we have the depth to be able to make such a move. Back in Wisconsin, Mandy won the individual championship, so this was just a matter of playing to our strengths."

Grygiel said her teammates played a major role in her outstanding performance.

"I found out after our morning warm-ups that I was being moved to anchor, and to be honest, I was a little nervous about it," Grygiel said. "This was my best tournament yet in college. Everyone was supportive of me, and that helped me believe in myself. They were constantly cheering me on. The coach showed great confidence in me - he told me he knew I would come through."

Grygiel was not surprised the team made up the tie-breaker deficit today.

"We knew where we were and took it one frame at a time; everyone took their time and was patient," she said. "Steady wins the race. We wanted to throw one good shot after another, and we didn't really think about the tie-breaker deficit. We knew we had 20 Baker games, and while 150 pins sounds like a lot, it isn't."

A new poll from the National Ten Pin Coaches Association is due out soon, and Vanderbilt, rated fourth in the first release, is expected to climb after a strong third place finish in Wisconsin and back-to-back championships at Maryland-Eastern Shore and Mississippi. ■

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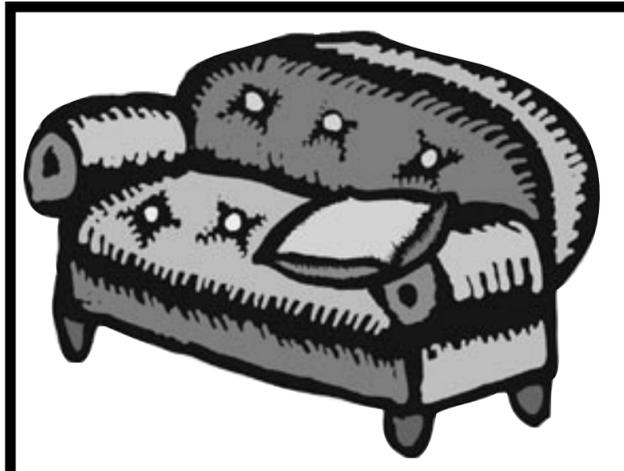
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