

Bridgman cruises to holiday title

South Bend Tribune

Dan Kunde scored 14 points and pulled down 10 rebounds to lead Bridgman (6-0) over Saugatuck (3-3) 55-26 in the championship game of Bridgman Holiday boys basketball tournament Thursday night. Zac Nemitz added 12 points as the Bees won their sixth straight.

BRIDGMAN 55, SAUGATUCK 26

BRIDGMAN (55): Dan Kunde 5 4-8 14, Todd Hendricks 3 3-3 9, Dan Ponegalek 2 2-4 6, Nick Sweet 4 0-0 9, Jon Malm 1 0-0 2, Zach Welsher 0 0-0 0, Zac Nemitz 4 1-2 12, Seth Coffing 0 0-2 0, Boo Ott 1 0-0 3, Blake Ivers 0 0-0 0, Casey Burli 0 0-0 0, Pat Kading 0 0-0 0. TOTALS: 20 10-19 55.

Saugatuck	7	14	20	26
Bridgman	7	26	48	55

3-point goals: Saugatuck 3 (Nemets, Capotosto, Lanning), Bridgman 5 (Nemitz 3, Ott, Sweet). Total fouls (fouled out): Saugatuck 13 (none), Bridgman 9 (none). Varsity records: Bridgman 6-0, Saugatuck 3-3.

Bees press on to victory

By AL AREND

H-P Sports Writer

BRIDGMAN — Bridgman coach Mike Miller hadn't been happy with the play of his team in its full-court, trap press. Until Thursday night.

The Bees' defensive pressure forced Saugatuck into 18 turnovers in the middle two quarters, and Bridgman took advantage of nearly every one of them in blowing out the Indians 55-26 in the championship game of the Bridgman Holiday Tournament.

"We came out in the second quarter with our trap press and turned the momentum our way," said Miller, whose team improved to 6-0 heading into next Friday night's Lakeland Conference showdown against undefeated Berrien Springs. "Our press hasn't looked good all year, but it certainly did tonight. It really bothered them in the third quarter." After a sluggish first period that ended in a 7-7 tie, the Bees' pressure forced eight second-quarter turnovers as they raced to a 26-14 advantage at intermission.

Bridgman then put the game away in the first 1:30 of the third period going on an 11-0 run, including seven quick points off the press, for a commanding 37-14 lead.

"They do a nice job of changing up their defenses, and we never really adjusted to their fullcourt pressure," said Saugatuck coach Russ Doane. "I was extremely happy with our play in the first quarter, because we didn't want to get into a running game with them. But their press quickly changed the game's tempo. We missed having our point guard (Jon Hoshor, out with a separated shoulder) tonight. But, Bridgman has a nice ballclub." The Bees dominated the statistics, outshooting the Indians from the floor 48 percent (20 of 42) to 34 percent (10 of 29); outrebounding them 29 to 22, and committing 13 fewer turnovers.

Dan Kunde led Bridgman with 14 points and 10 rebounds. The 6-foot-7 senior was moved from his usual forward slot to center as starting center 6-5 junior Craig Mc Nees missed the game due to a sprained ankle. Mc Nees said he should be back for the Berrien Springs game.

Zac Nemitz filled in admirably, scoring 12 points, and starters Nick Sweet and Todd Hendricks chipped in nine apiece. Sweet also had four assists and Hendricks came up with four steals.

Holiday Tournament trophy to remain in Bees' hive

By David Johnson, News editor – Harbor Country News

BRIDGMAN - A slow start wasn't nearly enough to keep the Bridgman High School varsity basketball team from claiming first place in its holiday tournament by a 55-26 tally.

The Bees were tied with Saugatuck after one period of the tourney's Dec. 29 championship game, but by halftime they held a 12-point lead. After three quarters of play, the Bridgman advantage had soared to 28 points.

Two quick hoops by Cory Mirto vaulted the Indians on top 4-1. Dan Kunde answered with three straight baskets to give the Bees a 7-4 lead, but Nick Capotosto's three-pointer left the score knotted at 7-all 8 minutes into the game.

Bridgman's Zac Nemitz untied it for good early in the second quarter with an inside move and bucket. Todd Hendricks streaked to the rim off a turnover and Jon Malm sank a tough shot to open up a 14-7 advantage. And the Bees were just getting warmed up.

Kunde poured in six more points and Nemitz was on the mark from three-point land to make it a 26-12 ballgame with less than a minute to go in the first half.

Bridgman's trapping press produced eight Indian turnovers in the second stanza, and the Bees took advantage on offense. "We went to our trapping press to start the second quarter, and it really made all the difference in the world," said Bridgman coach Mike Miller. "Our press hasn't looked good all year, and it did tonight."

Mirto hit a jumper at the halftime buzzer to pull Saugatuck within a dozen points of the lead, but that was as close as they would get.

Bridgman dominated the third stanza, and it started right off the bat. Nemitz made another trey 14 seconds into the quarter, and Hendricks pulled off a shot-plus-foul three-point play 17 seconds later to open up an 18-point chasm (32-14).

Nick Sweet then heated up like a microwave, tallying nine third-period points. Dan Ponegalek added a pair of field goals, and the Bees cruised into the fourth quarter in complete control - the score stood at 48-20.

Sweet said the Bees always seem to do well after the halftime break. "We started out the third quarter strong like we always do. It seems like we're a third-quarter team ... we started out pressing, and everyone just started getting hot," he said.

Again, Bridgman's defensive pressure paid off, this time in the form of 10 third-quarter turnovers.

Hendricks later said it was the aggressive defensive effort that got the Bee going on offense.

“We got easy fast-break lay-ups off turnovers,” he said. “I've got to give it to Zach Welsher, Dan Ponegalek and Jon Malm for really flustering their guards.”

Nemitz got in one last three-point hoop at the 6:28 mark before the starters were pulled. One of Bridgman's reserves, Boo Ott, collected a trey of his own with just 19 seconds remaining in the game.

Kunde finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds. Nemitz totaled 12 points. Sweet had 9 points and 4 assists. All three were named to the all-tournament team.

Hendricks contributed 9 points, 4 steals and a lot of defensive pressure for the Bees (6-0). Mirto, another all-tourney selection, paced Saugatuck (3-3) with 13 points and 8 boards.

Also named to the All-Holiday Tournament squad were New Buffalo's Matt Parker and Jeff Cerven of Decatur.

Bridgman is slated to spring back into action on Friday, Dec. 6, at Berrien Springs. Both varsity teams enter the Lakeland Conference contest undefeated. The Bees hope to have front-court starter Craig McNees, who suffered an ankle sprain on Dec. 27, back for the showdown with the Shamrocks.