

Still Bee-lievers

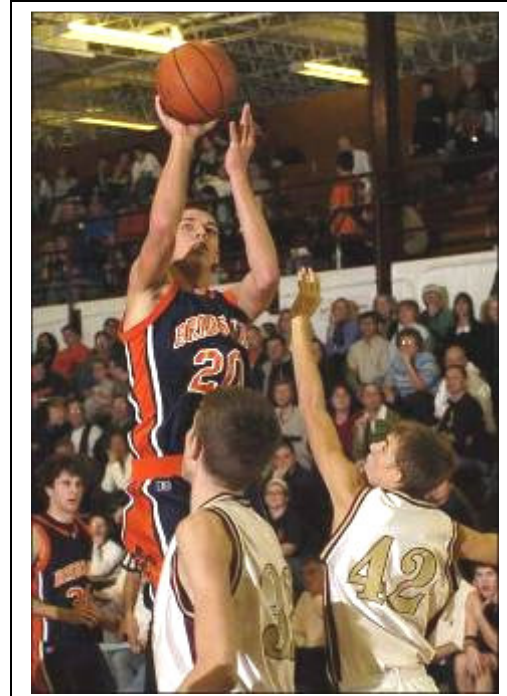
Bridgman conquers Bobcats

BOB OPPENHEIM - Tribune Staff Writer

NILES -- It was a predictable outcome between two boys basketball teams with different goals this season.

No. 5-ranked (Class C) Bridgman, which easily beat Brandywine, 69-45, expects success and is looking to claim its second straight Lakeland Conference title. The Bees improved to 11-0 overall and 7-0 in the conference.

In contrast, the Bobcats are rebuilding under first-year coach Nathan Knapp and looking for progress throughout the season. "We're looking at taking strides at getting better," said Knapp, whose team lost for the sixth straight time and dropped to 2-10 overall and 0-7 in the league. "Bridgman is No. 5 in the state and it shows. They're a good ball club. They beat you in transition and inside. They're just a smart team."



Dan Kunde of Bridgman shoots over Brandywine's D.J. Elrod, left, and Kyle Low.

Bridgman coach Mike Miller began substituting freely in the first quarter and gave his starters plenty of bench time in the second half. Miller used 13 players. The Bees led 20-8 six minutes into the game and 37-14 midway through the second quarter. Miller was even more impressed with how his squad built its lead to 59-27 after three quarters. "What says more to me is that third quarter," said Miller. "We've had a tendency this year to be up 20-some points and relax. We really didn't do that tonight."

Zac Nemitz led Bridgman with 16 points. **Dan Kunde added 15 points and seven rebounds**, Nick Sweet had 11, while Craig McNeas totaled 10.

The much taller Bees dominated on the glass, outrebounding Brandywine, 39-24. Miller's lone disappointment came in the fourth, when his team was outscored, 18-10. "I was kind of disappointed in our defensive effort and some of our ball-handling," Miller said. Adam Prescott was Brandywine's lone double-figures scorer with 10 points. With the win, Bridgman clinched its 10th straight winning season. "I don't know how many teams in our area have 10 (winning seasons) in a row," Miller said, "but we're very proud of that as a program." But would another Lakeland Conference championship make Miller and his staff even prouder. "Of course," Miller said.

See next page for game Stats.

BRIDGMAN 69, BRANDYWINE 45

At Niles

BRIDGMAN (69): Dan Kunde 7 0-1 15, Craig McNeas 5 0-1 10, Todd Hendricks 2 0-0 4, Dan Ponegalek 2 0-0 5, Nick Sweet 4 2-5 11, Jon Malm 0 1-2 1, Zach Welsher 0 0-0 0, Zac Nemitz 5 3-4 16, Seth Coffing 1 2-4 4, Boo Ott 0 0-1 0, Blake Ivers 0 0-0 0, Casey Berli 0 0-0 0, Pat Kading 1 0-0 3.
TOTALS: 27 8-18 69.

BRANDYWINE (45): Ryan Hartman 1 0-0 2, Matt Wieger 2 0-0 5, D.J. Elrod 0 0-0 0, Justin Ely 3 0-0 8, Kevin Curran 2 0-0 5, Cory Barber 1 0-0 2, Kyle Low 0 1-2 1, Matt Beaver 2 0-0 5, Chris Casey 1 2-2 4, Adam Prescott 3 2-4 10, Bill Bussey 0 1-2 1, Billy McDonald 0 0-0 0. Caleb Frazier 1 0-0 2.
TOTALS: 16 6-10 45.

Bridgman	25	40	59	69
Brandywine	11	19	27	45

3-point goals: Bridgman 7 (Nemitz 3, Kunde, Sweet, Ponegalek, Kading), Brandywine 7 (Prescott 2, Ely 2, Curran, Wieger, Beaver). Total fouls (fouled out): Bridgman 15 (none), Brandywine 16 (none).
Technical: Brandywine (Wieger). Shooting: Bridgman 27-of-60 for 45 percent, Brandywine 16-of-45 for 35 percent. **Rebounding: Bridgman 39 (Kunde 7)**, Brandywine 24 (Frazier and Bussey 5 each).
Turnovers: Bridgman 16, Brandywine 19.

From the Harold Palladium - Lakeland Conference

Bridgman 69, Brandywine 45

Bridgman had four players in double figures to stay undefeated. Zac Nemitz scored 16 points to lead the Bees (7-0, 11-0), ranked No. 5 in Class C, and Dan Kunde added 15 points, Nick Sweet scored 11 points, and Craig Mc Nees chipped in 10 points. Adam Prescott scored 10 points to lead the Bobcats (0-7, 2-10).

Bridgman spoils homecoming night for Brandywine

By ERIKA PICKLES / Niles Daily Star

Friday, January 27, 2006 11:39 PM EST

NILES - Undefeated Bridgman visited the Brandywine gymnasium Friday evening and had no problem handing the Bobcats a 69-45 Lakeland Conference loss. "They're a lot quicker than we are. Height wise they're not much taller than us, but they played smart and that's something we didn't do," Bobcat head coach Nate Knapp said after the game.

Bridgman opened the game on a very positive note in front of a huge homecoming night crowd. Senior Dan Kunde, who had 15 points for the Bees, pounded a dunk into the basket right after tip-off.

Brandywine was never able to take a lead and only came with three points of Bridgman, 8-5, at the 6:40 mark of the first period. Even a pair of back-to-back threepointers from Adam Prescott with 3:49 on the clock wasn't enough to make a comeback, as Bridgman ended the first with a 25-11 lead.

In the second period, the Bees extended the lead to 40-19 at halftime, only allowing Brandywine eight points in the quarter. Knapp was not pleased with the fact that his players didn't take a lot of open shots.

“When you play a team like Bridgman, you can't overlook those threes. They're very important and I don't know why, but our guys just weren't shooting tonight,” Knapp said.

Brandywine actually did start hitting shots, but it wasn't until the fourth period when the damage had already been done. Trailing 59-27 heading into the fourth, the Bobcats outscored the Bees 18-10. Justin Ely nailed two three-pointers, while Matt Beaver added one three and a bucket. Adam Prescott added three points to Brandywine's score, while Cory Barber and Ryan Hartman added two points each. But the last minute effort was not enough as the Bees took home another win. “We got in trouble early and tried to play a catch-up game the rest of the night. We still have a lot to work on, but we're only halfway through the season and I think we are making big improvements,” Knapp added. Prescott was the leading scorer for Brandywine with 10 points. Ely added eight and Beaver and Curran had five points each.

Zac Nemitz led Bridgman with 16 points, Dan Kunde had 15 points and 7 rebounds, Nick Sweet had 11 and Craig McNees added 10.