

Rockets lose to Clinton County in season opener

By: Doug Ponder

The Rockcastle County Rockets varsity basketball team lost their first game of the season on Monday night at Clinton County to the Bulldogs 64-50.

The Rockets kept up with the Bulldogs in the first half, tied 12-12 at the end of the first quarter and only trailing 31-28 at halftime. However, the Bulldogs pulled away from the Rockets in the second half and led 48-34 at the end of the third quarter and put the game away in the fourth quarter for a final score of 64-50.

The Rockets were led in scoring by junior Sam Pensol with 17 points, junior Blake Mullins was next with 13, senior Gage Reynolds got 11, senior Corey McPhetridge scored 7 and senior Tyler Harper got 2.

Head Coach Benny Blanton said that he was pleased with how his team played during the first half of the game and how they stayed close in scoring to a talented Bulldogs team.

"The third quarter was the difference in the game as we got down by as many as 18 points. But we fought hard and got as close as 7 points in the fourth quarter," Blanton said. "Clinton County has a good team and overall I thought we played well. We just had trouble scoring in the third quarter."

The Rockets will play at 7:30 p.m. Friday night at Lincoln County in a doubleheader with the Lady Rockets.

Blanton said the Patriots are ranked first in the 45th district and fourth in the 12th region. He said the Patriots will be another tough test for his squad this early in the season, especially since the game is being played in Stanford.

"They are returning four talented starters from last year that shoot the ball really well," Blanton said. "In order to win we will simply have to play really well and defend really well. It will be another away game too which always is a huge challenge for us as well."



Junior Sam Pensol is shown above playing defense on senior Tyler Harper during Rocket Madness. Pensol led the Rockets in scoring during Monday night's 64-50 loss to the Clinton County Bulldogs. The Rockets will join the Lady Rockets in a double header Friday night when they both travel to Stanford to take on the Lincoln County Patriots. Tip-off for the boys' game is at 7:30 p.m.

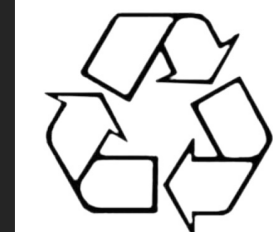
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Junior Amelia Eversole applies the defense to a Lady Cardinal during the Lady Rockets' loss to Wayne County Monday night.



Junior Alaina Coguer looks for an open teammate during Monday night's 65-47 loss to Wayne County. Coguer and freshman Mahala Saylor led the Lady Rockets in scoring with 8 points each.



Sophomore Morgan Renner stops a penetration drive by a Lady Cardinal during Monday night's 65-47 loss to Wayne County. The Lady Rockets travel to Madison Central Thursday (tonight) and will join the Rockets in a double header Friday night when they both travel to Stanford to take on the Lincoln County Lady Patriots. Tip-off is at 6 p.m.

Lake Cumberland striped bass fishing improving

The striped bass in Lake Cumberland haven't had the best of times since repair work began on Wolf Creek Dam several years ago.

The rehabilitation work caused the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to drop Lake Cumberland 40 feet to relieve pressure on the ailing dam. At normal water levels, striped bass had acres and acres of cool, oxygenated water to inhabit. The drawdown reduced that wide open pasture of water in which stripers could feed down to a small paddock.

By late summer and early fall, the available cool, oxygenated water diminished greatly. This stressed the striped bass in the lake, leading to poor growth and the death of some large stripers.

The major repair work concluded this past March and the dire situation is easing. "We had a wet year this year and that extra water in the lake really helped the striped bass," said John Williams, southeastern fisheries district biologist for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. "They made it through the rough part of the year with much less stress. I think we are over the hump."

Williams, who oversees the fisheries management of

Lake Cumberland, said the body condition and growth rates of the striped bass improved greatly since last year. As a testament to the improved water quality, the fisheries division stocked 686,759 fingerling striped bass in 2013.

"Things are looking up," he said. "The fishing has been good for keeper-sized fish up to 30 inches." Lake Cumberland has a 22-inch minimum size limit with a two fish daily creel limit on striped bass.

Anglers on Lake Cumberland caught stripers up to 15 pounds bottom fishing with live shad in 30 to 65 feet of water earlier this week.

"They are schooled up tight," said Benjy Kinman, deputy commissioner of Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "Most have been catching them downrigging doll flies with a 4- to 5-inch curly-tailed grubs for trailers or bottom fishing on steeper banks."

Doll flies are an old school term for a hair jig with a ball-shaped head. The originals were dressed in polar bear hair, but now manufacturers use craft or deer hair.

Kinman, who conducted striped bass research on the lake for many years, prefers white doll flies over all oth-

Lady Rockets lose to Wayne 65-47 Monday

By: Doug Ponder

The Rockcastle County Lady Rockets varsity basketball team lost their season opener to the Wayne County Lady Cardinals on Monday night 65-47.

The new KHSAA rules concerning "hand check" fouls played a huge factor as the Lady Rockets had a staggering 29 fouls called against them in the game. In the second half, the Lady Cardinals were in "double bonus" in the third quarter. Senior Kayla Reynolds and junior Amelia Eversole both fouled out near the beginning of the fourth quarter.

The Cardinals led the Lady Rockets throughout the game, ahead 18-14 at the end of the first quarter and 38-23 at the half. In the second half, the Cardinals put the game away leading 51-32 at the end of the third quarter and 65-47 at the end of the game.

The Lady Rockets were led in scoring by junior Alaina Coguer and freshman Mahala Saylor who had 8 points each, senior Kayla Reynolds, junior Amelia Eversole and sophomore Morgan Renner were all credited with 6 points each, freshman Emily Payne scored 4, senior Brianna Hansel got 3 and senior Rebekah Ponder, freshman Hope Kelley and sophomore Ashley McKinney all had 2 points each.

Head Coach Chrysti Noble said her team has got to work on scoring more points and running more offensive plays effectively. She also said her players need to adjust to the new "hand check" foul rule.

"We're going to really focus hard on adjusting to the new foul rule so we don't shoot ourselves in the foot by giving the other team free throw opportunities," Noble said. "We also need to pick up our tempo on offense and have more players scoring in double digits during games."

The Lady Rockets will join the Rockets in a double header Friday night when they travel to Stanford to take on the Lincoln County Patriots. Tip-off for the Lady Rockets game is at 6 p.m.

Noble said the Lady Patriots are one of the toughest teams they will face all year as they are ranked number one in the 45th district and number two in the 12th region.

"They won the region championship last year but they graduated five of their seniors, who were their five starters as well. But they will still be just as tough for us this season," Noble said. "The biggest thing we need to do is to handle their defensive pressure and create more scoring opportunities on offense."



RCMS eighth grader Cade Burdette was recently named to the Kentucky Middle School Golf First Team All-State. Burdette has also played on the RCHS varsity golf team for the last three years and has a career average of 76 for 18 holes. He is the son of Jeff and Treena Burdette of Mt. Vernon.

ers. "I like a chartreuse grub for my trailer with a white doll fly," he said. "I also like a pearl trailer."

Creek channels in the major creek arms in the lower lake such as Beaver, Otter and Indian creeks are good places to troll doll flies right now. Areas where the creek channel swings close to the bank or a point are the most productive spots.

Water temperatures are in the high 60s right now, but when the longer, colder nights cool the water a few more degrees, the striped bass move shallower. Casting a 1/2-ounce doll fly or hair jig on points and channel banks produces strikes during this time.

"I always throw a white doll fly, sometimes with a little red thread mixed in with it," Kinman said. "The most important thing is getting the lure in front of their nose."

Just like earlier this weewek, bottom fishing live shad, alewives or large shiners on points and on channel banks is highly productive in fall and early winter for Lake Cumberland stripers.

"I use a slip-sinker rig for my bottom fishing," said Ryan Oster, assistant director of fisheries for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "I use a

lighter leader than most, usually 14- or 17-pound monofilament line. You want your bait off the bottom. Monofilament floats compared to fluorocarbon line and works better in this situation."

Oster also said jump fishing, when striped bass herd schools of shad to the surface and rip through them, will improve with cooler water temperatures. "The water is still a little warm for those bigger stripers to pin the shad against the surface," he said. "There is some jump activity going on now, but it will get better."

A chrome casting spoon is a great choice to cast into the boils of feeding striped bass because you can cast them a long distance. White or chrome saltwater-sized chugger topwater baits work for jump fishing as well.

The striped bass fishery in Lake Cumberland is healing up. The high numbers of medium-sized fish portends excellent fishing in the coming years.

"You'll catch a lot of fish right now and it is just going to get better," Williams said.

Lake Cumberland will return to historic levels in the spring of 2014.

Author Lee McClellan is an award-winning associate editor for Kentucky Afield magazine.