1992

UA1F WKU Archives Vertical File - Womens Basketball, 1992

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records

Part of the African American Studies Commons, Journalism Studies Commons, Mass Communication Commons, Race and Ethnicity Commons, Sports Studies Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in WKU Archives Records by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
December over, Lady Tops trudge on

By ERIC WOEHLER
The Daily News 1-3-92

In one month, they lost a reserve point guard, four of six games and, perhaps, confidence that they will prevail in tight situations.

Coach Paul Sanderford learns Saturday at New Orleans what his Lady Toppers gained along the way.

Mercifully for Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team, December is over.

The month got off to an ominous start when sophomore LaTonia Bland left the team. Though she was not a consistent contributor, Bland's departure did reduce Western's depth at point guard — a position further depleted when sophomore Kim Warfield injured her knee during the Dec. 2 game at Stephen F. Austin.

That game was the first of two straight losses and dropped Western out of The Associated Press Top 10. The Lady Toppers opened the season at fifth and had advanced a notch after two season-opening wins.

Western did seem to correct some of its problems before Christmas with victories over West Virginia and Morehead State. Last weekend's Seattle Times/Husky Classic loomed as an opportunity for the Lady Toppers to regain the national recognition they had lost.

Instead, two upsets later — both of them close, both of them to unranked teams — Western is 4-4, barely hanging in the poll at No. 22 and trying to remind itself that it is, arguably, the most talented batch of Lady Toppers ever.

Sanderford was probably never so glad to rip a page from the Lady Top poster calendar in his Diddle Arena office.

"We are getting better," Western's 10th-year coach said Thursday before departing with his team for Saturday's 5 p.m. game with the Buc-kettes.

"But it's a slow process. What we need is some continued success. Unfortunately, our schedule does not lend itself to that."

After New Orleans, the Lady Tops play next on Tuesday in Diddle against fourth-ranked Vanderbilt.

Western is as healthy as it has been this season. Forward Debbie Scott is near 100 percent, and Warfield should return mid-month. And the flu, which limited the effectiveness of point guards Renee Westmoreland and Ida Bowen in Seattle, has apparently made the last of its rounds among the Lady Tops.

How badly injured is Western's confidence, though, is something Sanderford can't judge.

"But we've played four really close games — two went to overtime, the others to the last basket, and we've lost three of them," he said. "That didn't happen last year.

"After a while, you start to look up at the scoreboard and say, 'Oh, gosh, here we go again.'"

VERONICA COOK (left), a freshman from Franklin-Simpson High School, has evolved from a spot contributor early in the season, like against Tennessee Tech in Western's second game, to the Lady Tops' starting power forward. She'll get her second start Saturday at New Orleans.

Kim Pehlke, a senior guard, said some players are beginning to come around. She's one of them. After scoring 22 points in Western's 77-75 loss to Michigan last Saturday, "I feel better. I've had some good practices, and things are coming together some.

"But as far as team confidence — we've got to win some games. That's not something we can get in practice, I don't think."

So, in addition to opening Western's Sun Belt Conference season, the game with New Orleans is critical to the Lady Tops' delicate psyche.

The Buc-kettes are 5-3 with the losses coming against Southern Mississippi, Auburn and Louisiana Tech — all three of which at least get votes for the AP poll. Lora Bresson, a 5-foot-8 senior guard, averages 14.3 points a game to lead New Orleans.

Sanderford said Thursday that he would likely start Paulette Monroe at center, Lisa Lang and Veronica Cook at forward and Pehlke and Westmoreland in the backcourt.

"You know, you never like to lose; I hate losing," Sanderford said. "But I really do believe that Seattle was good for our basketball team.

"I do see some players starting to accept responsibility as leaders. I see this team pulling together. There are some good things happening.
Kim Pehlke had four three-point goals among her 18 points in leading the No. 22 Western Kentucky women's basketball team past host New Orleans 89-72 in a Sun Belt Conference game last night.

The outcome left each team at 5-4. It was the conference opener for Western, while New Orleans fell to 0-2. It also broke a two-game losing streak for Western.

The Lady Hilltoppers outscored UNO 15-3 during the final seven minutes of the first half to take a 39-29 lead. They led 81-52 with 4:33 remaining.

Liesa Lang added 10 points and six rebounds for Western.

Western played most of the game without starting center Paulette Monroe, who was ejected for a flagrant foul with 16:11 left in the first half.
The dilemma over Monroe marred an otherwise big season for the 5-4 Lady Toppers. The new year’s first game brought Western a new Sun Belt opponent and the old games of this season.

After scoring 22 points in Western’s loss to Michigan a week ago, Pelhike said her game was falling into place. The 5-foot-7 senior guard appeared ready to go.

“It’s time to pull it together,” Pelhike said after Saturday night’s win. “We were .500 before tonight’s game. It was a conference game. It was time to pick it up and start all over.”

New Orleans is one of the eight new members of the 11-team Sun Belt Conference, formed this summer by the move of the old American South Conference and the three remaining schools in the Sun Belt after a rash of conference-switching last season. The Bucs have the Lady Toppers’ 1st five points, making it 26-24.

But the Bucs are held scoreless during the next four minutes as Western’s trapping, half-court press defense intensified.

To go, Renee Westmoreland intercepted a New Orleans pass, threw ahead to teammate Ida Bowen, whose layup made it 34-26.

Pelhike’s third 3-pointer and a pair of Debbie Hough free throws made it 39-29 at the half.

“I thought they for the last 10 or 12 minutes of the first half we played really well,” Sanderford said.

“They were playing that was really intense, and Lisa Lang was just tremendous.”

Western outscored New Orleans 13-2 during the second half’s opening 5:5 minutes. The Bucs never threatened, as the Lady Toppers opened as wide as a 29-point margin.

“The key statistic was our 25 assists,” Sanderford said. “We had a pair of Debbie Hough free throws made it 39-29 at the half.

Next up for Western is Vandy, a team which will surely fall in this week’s Associated Press poll after losing its last two games.

The Lady Commodores (11-2) lost 61-60 Saturday night to Georgia after leading in the second half.

Nonetheless, the game against Vandy looms as a biggie for the Lady Toppers, particularly in terms of their clout with the NCAA Tournament committee.

Despite rough start Western stumble through December — one of the home games through 16:11 in the half. Sandeford said Vandy did swing at New Orleans center Robin Martin, but that he saw the beginning of the play to know whether Martin swung first at Monroe.

“Something we’ll have to tackle again,” Sanderford said. “That’s something we’ll have to tackle again.”

It was listed by the official as a flagrant technical, according to Sanderford. “She was ejected for taking a swing at a player.”

An NCAA rule stipulates that a player ejected from a game for fighting be suspended for one game.

The incident occurred with 16:11 to go in the half. Sandeford said Monroe did swing at New Orleans center Robin Martin, but that he did not see the beginning of the play to know whether Martin swung first at Monroe.

The 6-foot-4 junior center, the leading scorer and rebounder for Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team, was booted during the first half of the Lady Toppers’ 89-72 win.

“Something we’ll have to tackle again.” Sanderford said. “That’s something we’ll have to tackle again.”

An NCAA rule stipulates that a player ejected from a game for fighting be suspended for one game.

The incident occurred with 16:11 to go in the half. Sandeford said Monroe did swing at New Orleans center Robin Martin, but that he did not see the beginning of the play to know whether Martin swung first at Monroe.

The 6-foot-4 junior center, the leading scorer and rebounder for Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team, was booted during the first half of the Lady Toppers’ 89-72 win.

“Something we’ll have to tackle again.” Sanderford said. “That’s something we’ll have to tackle again.”

An NCAA rule stipulates that a player ejected from a game for fighting be suspended for one game.

The incident occurred with 16:11 to go in the half. Sandeford said Monroe did swing at New Orleans center Robin Martin, but that he did not see the beginning of the play to know whether Martin swung first at Monroe.
By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
Pauline Monroe is in trouble with the Sun Belt Conference, not with her coach.
Monroe, ejected for fighting from Saturday's game at New Orleans, will miss next game. An NCAA rule requires that a player ejected for fighting be suspended for the following game.

That means Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team will go without its leading scorer and rebounder Tuesday night against seventh-ranked Vanderbilt in Diddle Arena.

Coach Paul Sanderford said earlier that he hoped Al Link, the Sun Belt's supervisor of women's basketball officials, would review the film of Saturday night's game and overrule a referee's changing Monroe with a flagrant technical.

"But, basically, there's no appeal process," Sanderford said. "She's out for the Vanderbilt game."

About four minutes into the first half, the junior center issuing New Orleans center Robin Martin.

"It's apparently an NCAA rule that whether it lands or not, a player who throws a punch is automatically ejected," Sanderford said. "And it doesn't matter if the other kid swung first or that no harm was done.

"I think it's awfully severe punishment for such a minor incident."

Sanderford said he plans no discipline for Monroe, who will be suspended for the remainder of the season if she is ejected from another game this season for fighting.

Sanderford said his concern Monday morning he wasn't decided who he would start at center against Vandy.

"We've just lined up and go with who we've got," Sanderford said.

"We played 36 minutes at New Orleans without Pauline. We'll miss her 12 or 13 points and six or seven rebounds," Sanderford said. "But we've got good players, and somebody else will have to pick up the slack."

Chutes, ladders

It's not as though anyone ever said polls make any sense.

But just for fun, here's a couple oddities from this week's Associated Press Top 25, released this morning.

Sanderford was surprised to see his Lady Tops still ranked last week after two straight upset losses at the Seattle Times/Academie Classic. But Western, which had been ranked as high as fourth this season, held on at No. 22.

So in their lone game of the week, the Lady Tops give one of their best performances of the season at New Orleans, beating the Bucs-kettles by 17 and leading by as many as 29...

... and Western (5-4) slips two notches to No. 24

Stranger still...

"It's no shocker that Vandy dropped after consecutive Sun Belt Conference losses. The Lady Commodores"...

New Year

Every new year since she was in high school, Veronica Cook has started basketball games.

A varsity star from nearly her first game for Franklin-Simpson High School, Cook has earned a starting role and is doing a great job for the Buckettes by Western's next foe, fell three to No. 7.

But the team Vandy humiliated (30 points) on national television a week ago, Iowa, made one of the biggest jumps of the week. On the strength of an eight-point upset of Penn State on Friday, Iowa is No. 5 this week.

That's three spots up from last week and two in front of -- you guessed it -- Vandy.

Still Cooking

Every new year since she was in high school, Veronica Cook has started basketball games.

A varsity star from nearly her first game for Franklin-Simpson High School, Cook has earned a starting role and is doing a great job for the Buckettes by Western's next foe, fell three to No. 7.

But the team Vandy humiliated (30 points) on national television a week ago, Iowa, made one of the biggest jumps of the week. On the strength of an eight-point upset of Penn State on Friday, Iowa is No. 5 this week.

That's three spots up from last week and two in front of -- you guessed it -- Vandy.

Still Cooking

Every new year since she was in high school, Veronica Cook has started basketball games.

A varsity star from nearly her first game for Franklin-Simpson High School, Cook has earned a starting role and is doing a great job for the Buckettes by Western's next foe, fell three to No. 7.

But the team Vandy humiliated (30 points) on national television a week ago, Iowa, made one of the biggest jumps of the week. On the strength of an eight-point upset of Penn State on Friday, Iowa is No. 5 this week.

That's three spots up from last week and two in front of -- you guessed it -- Vandy.

Still Cooking

Every new year since she was in high school, Veronica Cook has started basketball games.

A varsity star from nearly her first game for Franklin-Simpson High School, Cook has earned a starting role and is doing a great job for the Buckettes by Western's next foe, fell three to No. 7.

But the team Vandy humiliated (30 points) on national television a week ago, Iowa, made one of the biggest jumps of the week. On the strength of an eight-point upset of Penn State on Friday, Iowa is No. 5 this week.

That's three spots up from last week and two in front of -- you guessed it -- Vandy.

Still Cooking

Every new year since she was in high school, Veronica Cook has started basketball games.

A varsity star from nearly her first game for Franklin-Simpson High School, Cook has earned a starting role and is doing a great job for the Buckettes by Western's next foe, fell three to No. 7.

But the team Vandy humiliated (30 points) on national television a week ago, Iowa, made one of the biggest jumps of the week. On the strength of an eight-point upset of Penn State on Friday, Iowa is No. 5 this week.

That's three spots up from last week and two in front of -- you guessed it -- Vandy.
Finally having fun again, Lady Tops pound Vandy

**BY ERIC WOEBLER**

The Daily News

Opportunities for raw joy haven’t presented themselves often this season. So when one did, Paul Sanderford wasn’t about to let it slip away.

His Lady Toppers leading the country’s seventh-ranked team by 10 and his best free-throw shooter on the line with 36 seconds to go, Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball coach sensed his 300th game on the Hill was nearly in his clutches.

He signaled the crowd to stand, then spun around to Renee Westmoreland before she stepped to the line.

“He said, ‘Hey, you hit these, and we’ve got this thing won, baby. We’ve got this thing won’—Western and Kim slapped fives with the his players on the bench.

The second fell, and whatever comeback hopes Vandy’s late 3-pointer barrage had created were dead.

Sanderford’s exuberance indicated a theme that ran throughout Tuesday night’s 71-63 Western victory in Diddle Arena: basketball—so often a frustration for the 6-4 Lady Toppers through the early season—became a blast.

“Every game seems to be getting a little more exciting,” forward Debbie Scott said. “We’ve finally found our identity, and we’re having fun.”

Sanderford and assistant coaches Steve Small and Crissy McKinney slapped backs at nearly every timeout. The players traded high-fives and thank-you nods with each assist. Even the 2,107 fans—now a record Lady Top draw, but not a bad one considering most Western students haven’t had a Christmas break—seemed to have a good time.

The cardboard cut-out 3s they waved were answered by guards Westmoreland and Kim Pekhle (five-of-eight from long-range com-bined). And the crowd roared when their chosen villain—Vandy’s pesky point guard Jade Huntington—fouled out with 1:30 to go.

Huntington’s physical, full-court pressure defense on Westmoreland drew jeers from the fans throughout Tuesday’s game. It also taxed the 5-foot-10 junior, who played all but two minutes of the first half.

“I got a little tired late in the second half, but I think the emotion pulled me through,” said Huntington, who hit all four of her 3-pointers and finished with 18 points and seven rebounds. “I looked up at the scoreboard and knew we had a chance to beat the fourth-ranked team in the country.”

Actually, Vandy was No. 7 in the Associated Press poll this week before Western’s most recent loss to Kentucky. And the Lady Toppers—by beating No. 5 Iowa on Dec. 28—have since slumped to 9-9.

Coach Jim Foster’s answers were brief after the game. When asked how disappointing it must have been to see his team lack intensity after consecutive losses, his reply was simply: “Venny.”

And their last offensive trip, it tried to exploit its advantage at center, putting up high-low 6-fooot-8 Heidi Gil-lingham. But Western center Paul Wilson had tight defense on the tall Gillingham, and Lisa Lang circled before the Vandy center spat the ball away.

Western was playing without its starting center, junior Paulette Monroe, suspended from Tuesday’s game for the Lady Toppers’ loss to Kansas. Foster thought the game plan that often had Gillingham double-teamed, the Lady Tops held Vandy’s sophomore star to 10.

“We completely disrupted Vandy’s offense in the first half,” Sanderford said. “The Lady Tops closed within 20 points, and we had a 9-0 run after Scott’s 10 points off the bench in the first half, Western led by 18 at the break.

“We knew Vandy would make a run; all good teams do,” Sanderford said. And they did, closing to 43-35 with 14:40 to go.

But after drawing consecutive fouls from Huntington, Westmoreland hit a 3-pointer during the next three minutes that changed the lead back out to 15.

Western led by as many as 21 down the stretch before the Lady Commodores missed their last three free throws in the game’s final four minutes to close the margin.

After the game, Sanderford suggested the win over Vandy might have brought a little of that 5-0 feeling back to Western. The Lady Tops game was the first of a three-game stretch, including a trip to Kentucky, with the next one coming Thursday against Sun Belt foe Texas Pan-American.

“We had a tough Christmas,” Sanderford said, referring to Western’s two losses at the Seattle Times/ Huskie Classic on Dec. 29. “But maybe it’s going to be a happy new year.”

---

**WESTERN KENTUCKY 71**

**VANDERBILT 63**

VANDERBILT (1-0)

2-10 3 PT 5-14 3 PT 5-18 4 PT 2-8 2 PT 5-6 FT 15-23 FG 5-20 3 FG 14-36 TS 0.47 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0

KENNEDY (0-0)

11-20 3 PT 6-18 3 PT 5-12 4 PT 2-12 2 PT 6-6 FT 11-24 FG 5-21 3 FG 12-37 TS 0.42 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0

---

**FINALLY HAVING FUN AGAIN, LADY TOPS POUND VANDY**

Staff Photo by Tracy Glantz

DRIIVING PAST two Vanderbilt defenders, Kim Pekhle (21) sets up for a one-handed layup during the first half of Tuesday’s game in Diddle Arena. Despite the absence of their leading scorer and rebounder, Paulette Monroe, the Lady Tops upset No. 7 Vanderbilt 71-63.

---

**FINALLY HAVING FUN AGAIN, LADY TOPS POUND VANDY**

Staff Photo by Tracy Glantz

rs, Kim Pekhle (21) sets up for of Tuesday’s game in Diddle Arena scoring rebounder, .7 Vanderbilt 71-63.
Lady Toppers have Monroe back for UT-Pan American

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News

The view from the bench was fine, thank you. But once, Paulette Monroe said, was enough.

"It was interesting," the Lady Toppers' junior center said after her team's 71-63 upset of No. 7 Vanderbilt in Diddle Arena. "It was a great game to watch, and it was a different way to look at a game. You get a more overall look from the bench.

"But it was tough to just sit there. I'm ready to come back."'

Her one-game suspension completed, Monroe returns for Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team (6-4) in today's 7 p.m. game in Diddle against Texas-Pan American.

The Lady Toppers' leading scorer and rebounder swung at New Orleans' center Robin Martin in the first half of Western's road win on Saturday. Because she was not in the Post-Game News Manual for the game, the on-court official was not aware of the incident.

Monroe said Thursday what she called her first half was phenomenal.

"It was kind of a false zone by them at first half," Wilson said. "But we were able to rebound and get some fast breaks. I think we played much better in the second half, so over all she did a good job.

"I really didn't think we could stop (Gillingham) like that. But we doubled-down on her, and she had a hard time getting the ball."

Wilson started at center four straight games before injuring her knee during practice in January 1990. She was red-shirted last season but has played in all 10 Lady Top games this year and is averaging career-high of 5.1 points and four rebounds.

"She's really had to work hard to come back," Monroe said Tuesday. "It's a good feeling to see her do so well. In the past, Coach Sanderford has told me, 'We need you to do this, and we need you to do that.' But now we've got Trina and Jennifer Berryman and Debbie (Houk, another reserve center), who have proven that they can get the job done.

"There's not as much pressure."

Continued On Page 12

Lady Toppers in five statistical categories, leads Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team against Texas-Pan American in a Sun Belt Conference game at 7 p.m. today in Diddle Arena. Western is 1-0 in the conference.

RENEE WESTMORELAND (4), who paces the Lady Toppers in five statistical categories, leads Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team against Texas-Pan American in a Sun Belt Conference game at 7 p.m. today in Diddle Arena. Western is 1-0 in the conference.

File photo

After nearly losing big lead, WKU hangs on

By JOE MEDLEY
The Daily News

RADFORD, Va. — Ralph Willard knows how to win. But when Western Kentucky fails to follow his how-to book, a win can sound a lot like a loss.

The Hilltoppers built a large lead then survived Steve Burgess' two missed tap-in tries and Doug Day's two missed free throws in the final seconds for an 81-78 win Wednesday night at Radford.

Little-known Radford (5-6) is coming off a 22-7 season. The Highlanders had won 17 of their last 18 games in the Deacon Center before Western (9-2) beat them and their raucous crowd of 3,000.

"We played good basketball for the first 25 minutes;' I'll give us that," Willard said. "But then we just seemed to relax. We don't seem to have that killer instinct."

Western led 45-26 at 1:11 of the first half only to see Radford close it to 45-33 at intermission.

The Hilltoppers inched back up to a puffy 52-33 cloud with 17:52 to play, but the Highlanders added to the rest.

After a win over North Carolina State last week off, perhaps such collapses are foreseeable — though not forgivable, Willard said.

"When you get a team down, it's especially important on the road not to let them back," Willard said. "We had a chance to send them home at halftime. Instead, they went into the locker room with their heads up and ready for more."

Still, Western made good on senior Harold Thompson's career-
lead at 0:09.  "I thought that second tip was in," Radford coach Ron Bradley said. "I couldn't believe it missed."

After another timeout, Bradley set up Day, who missed from the left side. Western's Darrin Horn grabbed the rebound and was called for traveling with two seconds left.

An extra Day proved short, and Western escaped.

"We've got to learn that we can't play well for a while, then let up," Thompkins said. "We've got to stay the same and keep up that intensity."

Tompkins stayed up after a slow start. He hit 13 of 14 free throws to go with a team-high seven rebounds on his career night.

"After the Bowling Green State game (24 points on Dec. 11), I hadn't really shot the ball well," Thompkins said. "I started off a little slow tonight, but then I hit a couple and got my confidence." Willard said Thompkins was the bright spot in a hollow win.

"He really battled all night," Willard said. "He went to the boards strong and worked hard on defense."

As for Jennings, he spent the night with his foot wrapped in ice. Trainer David Brest said Jennings twisted the same foot he broke before preseason practice started, but Brest said Wednesday's twist doesn't appear serious.

Western will need Jennings in Saturday night's Sun Belt Conference opener at Southwestern Louisiana.

"He won't practice until after we get him home and get him looked at," Brest said. "But we didn't put him back in the game tonight just to be cautious."

W. KENTUCKY (9-2)
Jennings 8-14 4-4 21, Thompkins 6-13 13-14 26, Brown 5-8 2-2 10, Meek 4-6 2-3 10, Bell 3-9 2-2 8, Horn 1-2 0-2, Butts 1-2 0-1 2, Lockhart 1-1 0-0, Boley 1-2 0-2 4, Flowers 0-0 0-0, Totals 26-49 22-32 51.
RADFORD (8-6)
Burgess 10-15 4-4 26, Barber 3-9 1-1 7, Reese 0-2 3-5 6, Hawkins 5-7 6-6 18, Day 3-5 0-0 6, Dalton 2-4 1-2 5, Schmoll 4-4 1-2 11, Harvey 1-2 0-0 2, Totals 27-56 18-21 80.


**Lady Toppers**
**Continued From Page 9**
can just go out and play.''
**Tonight’s game**
Texas-Pan American coach Tim Hicks said before the season that he expected a "breakthrough year for Lady Bronc basketball," and his team's 6-3 start does indicate vast improvement over last year's 7-20 campaign. The Lady Broncs' stiffest test to date is tonight in Diddle.

At 6-foot, Alyya Abdur-Rahman is not one of the Sun Belt Conference's tallest players, but she is its best shot-blocker and one of the country's best. At better than three rejections a game, Abdur-Rahman ranks seventh nationally.

She also averages team-highs of 17.6 points and 8.9 rebounds. Monique Cook is one of the league's tallest guards, averaging 5.3 assists a game while hitting about 36 percent of her 3-point tries.

This is Texas-Pan American's first Sun Belt game. Western is 1-0 in the league.
By ERIC WOEHLER
The Daily News

The lessons were hard ones for the Lady Toppers in Seattle two weeks ago. Among them: how beatable Western is and how unbeatable Vanderbilt can be.

Coming off one upset and waiting for another Dec. 28, Western Kentucky University's women's basketball players tuned in their hotel-room TVs to find Vanderbilt hammering Iowa by 30 points.

Much has changed in the last 10 days.

After losing two straight and slipping to 4-4, the Lady Toppers turned in what many of them say was their best performance of the season in an 89-72 win Saturday at New Orleans.

And since improving to 11-0 and showing a CBS Sports audience how much they deserved the country's No. 4 ranking, the Lady Commodores have lost it. Consecutive losses to Southeastern Conference foes South Carolina and Georgia dropped Vanderbilt to 11-2 and seventh in this week's Associated Press poll.

Trends stand to continue or reverse tonight at 7 when Western hosts the Lady Commodores in Diddle Arena.

"We see this as a great opportunity to play a great basketball team in our home floor," Lady Top coach Paul Sanderford said. "Funny things have happened in here before when we've gotten Diddle Arena rocking."

Back in November, it would not have been a funny thing at all to have suggested that Western would beat Vanderbilt.

Returning four starters from last season's 29-3 Sun Belt Conference champions, the Lady Toppers were among most polls' preseason top-five.

Even with the graduation of All-American center Wendy Scholtens, Vandy's talent was highly regarded, too. But there was instability at the top with Jim Foster entering his first season as head coach.

Since then, Western has gone a long way in backing up what Sanderford has said all along: that his is a team with great potential, but not yet a very good one.

Of the Lady Tops' four losses, three have been to unranked opponents and one of those at home. The highest-rated team going into the Dec. 27-28 Seattle Times/Huskie Classic, Western lost to Colorado and Michigan to finish last in the four-team tournament.

It was also on that same weekend that Vanderbilt was gaining national exposure as one of the country's best, winning 95-63 against Iowa, AP No. 5 at that time.

"Unbelievable" is how Western power forward Lissa Lang recalls Vanderbilt's performance on Dec. 28.

"But if our intensity level is like it was down in New Orleans," Lang said, "this will be a very good basketball game."

"For the first time all season," reserve guard Kristie Jordan said, "we played together, like a team — offensively and defensively."

Sanderford pointed to Western's 25 assists against the Buc-kettes, indicating offensive unselfishness and good ball movement.

Lang said the team's pressure defense was fierce — "and that allowed us to do what we do best: run on them and get easy baskets. When we play great defense, good things are going to happen."

The downside to the win at New Orleans was the loss of center Paulette Monroe for one game. Because the 6-foot-4 junior was ejected for fighting, NCAA rules require that Monroe, Western's leading scorer and rebounder, sit out tonight's game.

"I'll be honest," Lang said, "we're really going to miss her inside. She's probably our best post player, and it's going to be a physical game against Vanderbilt."

"They are a lot like us in that..."
Pehlke's feeds help WKU gobble Broncs

MONIQUE COOK (24) becomes a victim of one of Lisa Lang's two steals Thursday night. Lang's defensive intensity in the Lady Toppers' 85-46 victory over Texas-Pan American won high praise from Coach Paul Sanderford. 

"We work with her throwing lookaway passes in practice, so she's ready to be ready for them. Sometimes you get caught off guard, most of the time I think they're going because they really keep the defense off balance."

"Yes even with her teammates' fans' blessing, Pehlke understood that her scores and rebounding are because of your no-looks," Sanderford said. 

But on Thursday, Pehlke hit most of her targets — even when she didn't see them. In addition to her four assists, she completed several more gimmick passes that didn't turn directly into Lady Top scores, and she had just two turnovers.

"We work with her throwing lookaway passes in practice, so she's ready to be ready for them. Sometimes you get caught off guard, most of the time I think they're going because they really keep the defense off balance."

"Yes even with her teammates' fans' blessing, Pehlke understood that her scores and rebounding are because of your no-looks," Sanderford said. 

But on Thursday, Pehlke hit most of her targets — even when she didn't see them. In addition to her four assists, she completed several more gimmick passes that didn't turn directly into Lady Top scores, and she had just two turnovers.

"We work with her throwing lookaway passes in practice, so she's ready to be ready for them. Sometimes you get caught off guard, most of the time I think they're going because they really keep the defense off balance."

Yet even with her teammates' fans' blessing, Pehlke understands that her scores and rebounding are because of your no-looks, Pehlke said.
So far, new year trying for today's Lady Topper foe

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News

Liz McQuitter had to be feeling pretty good when she awoke to the new year.

On the last day of 1991, her road-weary Lamar University women's basketball team had endured a challenge from pesky Alcorn State, won 90-82 and improved to 7-3 on the season.

In the wake of an ongoing NCAA investigation that began at the end of Lamar's 29-4 campaign of a season ago, Coach Al Barbee had been fired, star guard Brenda Hatchett had been suspended for three games and the team had struggled to an 0-2 start this autumn.

"But with Brenda back," said McQuitter, Lamar's first-year coach, "we had gotten on track and were playing well.

But 1992 has brought only a new batch of problems for the Lady Cardinals—on- and off-court.

News came Tuesday that point guard Ramona Jones, Lamar's all-time assists and steals leader, had been suspended indefinitely in light of the NCAA probe. Without Jones — "our glue," McQuitter said, "Ramona's our glue, there's no doubt about that" — Lamar lost by a bucket at Arkansas State on Thursday in its first game of the new year and in the Sun Belt Conference.

And at 2:30 p.m. today, the Lady Cardinals face the league's preseason favorite, Western Kentucky, in Diddle Arena, where the Lady Toppers have won about 92 percent of their games since Coach Paul Sanderford came to Bowling Green in 1982.

"Western has so much talent that you know they would come together," McQuitter said. "You can sit back and say how a team should be doing, but no but the coach knows the make-up of his or her ballclub and what problems are going on within the team.

"They're definitely coming together. They just had a rough start like we did — though I'm not saying they had anything like the kind of problems we're having."

Indeed, Western (7-4) is a hot team. After going 3-0 through their first eight games, the Lady Toppers have won three in a row — including an eight-point upset of No. 7 Vanderbilt on Tuesday — and are off to a 2-0 start in the Sun Belt.

Practice Saturday was lively to the point of its 25-hour length.

"There's no question we're a lot looser basketball team than we were two weeks ago," Sanderford said. "The attention span we're getting in practice is much greater than it was earlier in the year.

"But some of the things we're doing now, we're doing for the 9,000th time. Obviously, you're going to get better at doing something after doing it 8,000 or 9,000 times."

Once recruited by WKU, Allen ends Hilltopper winning streak

By JOE MEDLEY
The Daily News

LAFAYETTE, La. — Michael Allen drained his dream shot.

The sophomore from Lexington who said he wanted to beat Western Kentucky did, swishing a 26-foot buzzer-beater to lift Southern Louisiana 79-76 Saturday night in the Cajun Dome.

It's something the former Western recruit from Bryan Station High School was dying to do.

"He's been telling us all season that if it comes down to a last-second shot to beat Western, he wants to take it," teammate Marcus Stokes, who set up Allen's bomb with a debossed timeout, said.

Recruited by former-Western coach Murray Arnold, Allen said it was a matter of braggadocio.

"I know a couple of guys on their team," he said after scoring 26 points, including USL's last seven. "I knew Darrin Horn, and I played against Jack Jennings and Mark Bell in high school.

"If they beat me, they'd be teasing me about it all year. It feels good to beat someone from Kentucky."

Western's opener in the new Sun Belt Conference — played in front of 6,276 fans, the largest crowd for a Topper game this season — proved fatal for a six-game winning streak. The Hilltoppers fell to 9-3 while the Ragin' Cajuns rose to 7-5 and 3-0 in the league.

Allen's 3-pointer upstaged controversy just five se-
WKU loses

Continued From Page 1-B

seconds before, when Stokes and Western's Bryan Brown sat on the
door floor struggling to control Darnell
Mee's missed trey.

Stokes' teammate, guard Eric
Mouton, accosted referee Rodney
Shows and got a timeout, but the
ball was rolling away from Stokes
and Brown.

"He called the best timeout I've
ever seen," Western coach Ralph
Willard said. "I didn't think he had
possession of the ball (required to
call a timeout), but it was a heads-up
play."

Stokes said he was "fumbling
around with the ball as I tried to call
timeout." He came back later with,

"I feel like I had possession. It was
a nice call."

USL coach Marty Fletcher wasn't
sure if Stokes had secured the ball,
but he praised Mouton, who faced
up Mee on Mee's 3-point try.

"We had talked in the timeout
with 13 seconds left that we wanted
to call timeout if we got possession,
" Fletcher said. "Eric
played good defense and made a
heads-up play."

After watching his team lose at
17-point first-half lead, Willard said
the call was insignificant.

"We got up on them, then we
started rushing our shots and stop-
ped making them work on defense,"
Willard said. "We stopped boxing
them out, and that's what lost us the
game."

Western held the Ragin' Cajuns
to two field goals in the first 10
minutes of the game. USL suffered
an 8:50 stretch without one.

Mee, who scored 13 points, drove
the left side for the last of Western's
two 17-point leads, 30-13 at 8:39.

But the Ragin' Cajuns got as hot
as their name suggests, ending the
first half with a 23-7 spurt.

Western went the final 4:02 of the
half without a point, and Allen — a
la Lexington and 26 feet — knocked
down 3-pointer to cut it to 37-36 at
the half.

"We just didn't respond when
they made their run," said Harold
Thompkins, who led Western with
24 points to go with Jack Jennings' 23. "We let up on them like we
have been other teams lately."

The second half saw nine lead
changes and five ties.

Thompkins hit three free to
put Western up 76-72 at 2:46,
enter Allen, who jumped off
bench and sank two driving shots
to tie it at 76 with 52 seconds left.

Western worked the game
to 13 seconds and the shot clock
13 before calling timeout. Mee's
try rimmed off, leaving Brown to
fight for it down the baseline. Then came the
delayed timeout.

"We got a break," Fletcher
said. "Lately, the breaks haven't
been going our way."

Thompkins said a bad shot
might be just what Western needs.

"A loss like this will be good for
us," he said. "Lately we've
been getting leads and letting people
get back in it, and we've got to learn
to let up and keep going 40 minutes."

Lady Toppers 1-12-92

Continued From Page 1-B

On Saturday, Sanderford grilled
the Lady Tops on defending the fast
break, which he expects to be a key
today.

"They like to press and get a lot
of transition baskets," Sanderford
said. "We're not the quickest team
in the country, so our transition
defense will be a big key.

"We can't let them get layups. I
hate to see people shoot layups."

Lamar's leading scorer is 6-foot
forward Barbara Hickey, who
averages about 15 points a game.
Fellow forward Bobbie Bean and
center Urannah Jackson, the leading
Lady Cardinal rebounder, both chip
in better than 14. Hatchett, who has
shifted to point guard with Jones' suspension, adds 13 points.

Renee Island, a 5-foot-7 senior,
started in the backcourt against
Arkansas State but produced only
two points to go with her three turn-
overs.

Travesa Gant, a 6-foot-1 forward
who averages about 11 points and
six rebounds, is a key reserve.

Western will go with Renee
Westmoreland and Kim Pehlke at
the guards and Liesa Larsen,
Veronica Cook at forward.
Wilson will likely get her
straight start in the pivot, Sanderford
said, though the 6-foot-5 right knee remains sore.

"This game is a big oppor-
tunity for us," Sanderford said. "We'll beat Lamar, we go to 3-0 in
conference with a road win over
New Orleans) and a win over a
team that I think is a real key for the league championship."

"I think we're 14th in the
country," she said. "Our team has
the potential to be one of the biggest
teams in the country."

Hatchett said she wants to see the
Lady Tops improve their 21st cen-
tury game, but she still hopes to
win.

"We have to think like the
people who are going to beat us," she
said. "We have to win on our own.
" 
ASU steals Lamar's role in league; Lady Toppers 21st turn it around."

Western XXI
A four-game winning streak pushed the Lady Toppers up three spots to No. 21 in this week's Associated Press poll.

The improvement reverses the Lady Tops' tumble in the poll. Western was preseason No. 5 and earned its highest ranking ever, fourth, in the season's early weeks. But after playing .500 ball through its first eight games, the Lady Tops dipped to last week's No. 24.

Virginia (13-0) was just two points short of being a unanimous No. 1 pick, while Texas (6-6) dropped out of the rankings for the first time since Jan. 10, 1982.

On the mend
— Kim Warfield and Lori Abell are back in practice.

Warfield hasn't played since injuring her knee during Western's 58-43 loss at Stephen F. Austin on Dec. 2. She was in uniform Sunday but did not play.

A back injury made Abell a medical red-shirt this year, so the sophomore who has played in only seven games since graduating from Louisville Ballard High School won't be eligible until next season.

"Kids do one of two things in this situation — they either want to cry about not playing or they go out and work real hard," assistant coach Steve Small said. "Lori should have the attitude that she's going to do the things in practice she would normally do if she were playing."

Meanwhile, Trina Wilson's knee is still sore, and she's missed playing time because of it in the last two games. But assistant trainer Alice Burk said Sunday that Wilson had not aggravated the injury that cost her the end of the 1989-90 season.

SURROUNDING A Texas-Pan American player, Western's Jennifer Berryman (left) and Lisa Lang try to wrestle the ball away during the Lady Toppers' 85-46 win Thursday in Diddle Arena. That was the third time the Lady Tops' current four-game winning streak.
League foes, tournaments, witty SIDs and the lot

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
They've got a new coach and a new star. But they play in the same old "dungeon," and Coach Paul Sanderford expects the same old troubles out of the South Alabama Lady Jaguars.

Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team (8-4) is in Mobile, Ala., today, hoping to extend its winning streak to five against a long-time Sun Belt Conference nemesis.

"We always have a hard time in the dungeon," Sanderford said of the Jaguar Gym, where the Lady Toppers will play South Alabama at 7 p.m.

"It's right in the middle of campus, and the people sit right on top of you. The lighting's not too good. It's not the easiest place to play in."

In fact, Western lost there two seasons ago in a 74-70 overtime decision. Most of the current Lady Jags were part of that game. Eight of 11 players on the South Alabama roster are juniors or seniors.

But the Lady Jags' leading scorer is a newcomer: LaWanda Black, a 6-foot-1 junior-college transfer who is averaging 15.2 points and 7.5 rebounds for 3-8 South Alabama.

First-year coach Butch Stockton also has the Sun Belt's leading rebounder in Chana Powell at 12.9 per game and a solid guard tandem in Metta Christensen and T.R. Clements.

"We've got better athletes and more depth than South Alabama," Sanderford said. "But we do need to use this as a chance to get better as a basketball team."

Jrnia Wilson, who has been bothered by a sore knee, will likely start at center for the Lady Toppers. Kim Pehlke and Renee Johnson will be off.

Sanderford said he is unsure of who will get the call at power forward, where freshman Veronica Cook has started the last six games.

The former Franklin-Simpson High School star went scoreless against Lamar in Western's 82-63 win Sunday, and Sanderford said he might start Debbie Scott, a transfer from Tennessee whose game has picked up in the last two weeks.

Belt loop

It's a busy night in the Sun Belt, where the league's hardest team, 0-1 Southwestern Louisiana, has the evening off.

In addition to the Western-South Alabama clash, Arkansas State visits Central Florida, Louisville Tech is at Lamar and New Orleans travels to Texas-Pan American.

Nicole Willett, a 6-foot senior forward for Arkansas State, was the Sun Belt's Player of the Week. The Sun Belt's leading scorer had 48 points in the Lady Indians' two conference wins last week.

Meanwhile, Western is leading the conference in attendance by a huge margin. Home dates for the nine Sun Belt women's basketball teams through Jan. 11 drew 35,427 fans, about 40 percent of which were to Diddle Arena.

Visits to Diddle by Kentucky on Dec. 11 (2,657 fans), by Eastern Kentucky on Nov. 25 (2,531) and Vanderbilt on Jan. 7 (2,107) rank as the most-watched games of the year among Sun Belters.

Tourney talk

The Lady Toppers' current four-game winning streak — which includes victories over Vanderbilt and Lamar — has likely put Western back in the running for a top-16 seed for the NCAA Tournaments, according to one women's basketball follower.

"Even if Western loses no more than three more games — which should be no difficulty — it's very likely they'll get the home game in the second round," said Joe Smith, whose Women's Basketball News Service is published out of Queens, N.Y. "In fact, Western could end up with a top-three seed in one of the regions if it does better than that."

Smith said Western's 4-4 start was one of several eye-openers raisers of the first half of the season. Others include Auburn's sluggish start and Vandy's current four-game slide.

"It's good, to the point that you're not surprised by the surprise," Smith said. "California beat (previously second-ranked) Stanford. Anytime an unranked team beats someone ranked that high, it's a surprise. But things like that have happened so much this season, that it really wasn't that big of a deal.

"With the exception of Virginia (No. 1 and 13), it really does appear any team can be beaten on a given night."

Odds and ends

— Information on tickets for the March 12-14 Sun Belt Conference Tournament in Diddle Arena will be on its way to Lady Topper season-ticket holders. Ticket applications will be available to the public in about a month.

Ticket books, good for admission to all four sessions of the eight-team tournament, will cost $15 for courtyard, "Red Towel" seating, $12 for reserved chairbacks or $10 for general-admission bleacher seats.

Single-season prices will be $7 for Red Towel, $6 for reserved chairbacks or $5 for general admission.

Children, ages 6-16, will be admitted for $2.

Students from any Sun Belt school will be admitted free with a valid student ID.

— This is what happens when someone in Western's sports information office has too much time on her hands.

In the pre-game report Sally Raque headed out to media before Sunday's Lady Topper game with Lamar, it was noted that Western is 7.0 when leading at the half, 5.2 when outrebounding its opponent, 4.1 when it scores first, 1-1 in overtime, 3.0 in 1992 and 1-1 vs. ranked teams.

It went on the Lady Toppers were 0-1 on Mondays, 1-0 on Tuesdays, 0-1 on Wednesdays, 1-0 on Thursdays, 1-1 on Fridays, 2-1 on Saturdays, 2-0 on Sundays and — here's the real gem — 7.0 when outscoring their opponents.

— Western's next game after tonight's will be at Central Florida at 3 p.m. Saturday. The Lady Toppers play in Diddle Arena next at 8 p.m. Wednesday against DePaul.

Sun Belt

Western Kentucky.......................... 8-4
Auburn....................... 12-2
Arkansas........................................ 15-0
Central Florida......................... 3-5
South Alabama............................ 3-5
New Orleans.............................. 2-7

Leila Lang scored a career-high 20 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead No. 24 Western Kentucky to an 82-63 Sun Belt Conference victory over visiting Lamar in women's college basketball yesterday.

Western (7-4, 3-0) opened up with an 11-2 run in the first four minutes, holding Lamar to 14 percent (1-7) shooting. The Lady Toppers' largest lead in the half, 32-22, came on Debbie Scott's two free throws with 4:06 remaining.

Lamar (7-5, 2-2) pulled within 65-51 with 5:58 remaining in the second half, but Western's 10-6 run in the next three minutes put the game out of reach.
**Lady Toppers take early conference lead, whip Lamar**

By **ERIC WOEHLER**

**The Daily News**

Coach Paul Sanderford believes the Lady Toppers have left behind their early-season problems. It's a good thing, too, because the work coming up is the most important so far for Western Kentucky University's women's basketball season, he said.

"We have trimmed this thing around," Sanderford said after the Lady Toppers stretched their win streak to six games with an 90-65 victory at Central Florida on Saturday.

"I see a lot of positive signs in this basketball team. I've asked the players to dedicate themselves over the next six weeks to do as good as we can possibly be," Sanderford said.

Western's win Saturday in Orlando, Fla., capped the first half of the regular season. The Lady Toppers have won six straight since dropping 4-4 in December. Western is 5-0 and tied for the lead in the Sun Belt Conference.

After his team easily whipped Central Florida (5-7 overall, 1-3 Sun Belt), Sanderford looked ahead to upcoming week — which will collect her third foul against Lamar until midway through the second half. Western was already leading by 23 points, and Lang enjoyed a whistle-free final 10 minutes and 37 seconds.

The 5-foot-11 senior forward added 11 rebounds to her career-high 20 points, and the Lady Toppers (8-4 overall) posted their fourth-straight win.

Mostly because of strong offensive rebounding, Western led 38-30 at halftime. Lamar had countered the Lady Toppers' trapping, press defense with full-court mid-court passes that led to layups.

In the second half, though, Western went to a man-to-man defense that took away the long lob passes. Kristie Jordan, a guard, made three steals on in-bounds plays.

The Lady Toppers — get 20 points, including Paulette M. 15, from their reserves — in many as 28 in the second half.

"Our bench played very well," Coach Paul Sanderford said.

Sanderford pointed out the play of senior guard Debbie Hook as being the most important one so far for Western Kentucky University's women's basketball season, he said.

"We have trimmed this thing around," Sanderford said after the Lady Toppers stretched their win streak to six games with an 90-65 victory at Central Florida on Saturday.

"I see a lot of positive signs in this basketball team. I've asked the players to dedicate themselves over the next six weeks to do as good as we can possibly be," Sanderford said.

Western's win Saturday in Orlando, Fla., capped the first half of the regular season. The Lady Toppers have won six straight since dropping 4-4 in December. Western is 5-0 and tied for the lead in the Sun Belt Conference.

After his team easily whipped Central Florida (5-7 overall, 1-3 Sun Belt), Sanderford looked ahead to upcoming week — which will

**<3<br>**

**Lady Toppers' toughest week awaits them**

By **ERIC WOEHLER**

The Daily News

Coach Paul Sanderford believes the Lady Toppers have left behind their early-season problems. It’s a good thing, too, because the work coming up is the most important so far for Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball season, he said.

“We have trimmed this thing around,” Sanderford said after the Lady Toppers stretched their win streak to six games with an 90-65 victory at Central Florida on Saturday.

“I see a lot of positive signs in this basketball team. I’ve asked the players to dedicate themselves over the next six weeks to do as good as we can possibly be,” Sanderford said.

Western’s win Saturday in Orlando, Fla., capped the first half of the regular season. The Lady Toppers have won six straight since dropping 4-4 in December. Western is 5-0 and tied for the lead in the Sun Belt Conference.

After his team easily whipped Central Florida (5-7 overall, 1-3 Sun Belt), Sanderford looked ahead to upcoming week — which will

**Lady Toppers' toughest week awaits them**

By **ERIC WOEHLER**

The Daily News

Coach Paul Sanderford believes the Lady Toppers have left behind their early-season problems. It’s a good thing, too, because the work coming up is the most important so far for Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball season, he said.

“We have trimmed this thing around,” Sanderford said after the Lady Toppers stretched their win streak to six games with an 90-65 victory at Central Florida on Saturday.

“I see a lot of positive signs in this basketball team. I’ve asked the players to dedicate themselves over the next six weeks to do as good as we can possibly be,” Sanderford said.

Western’s win Saturday in Orlando, Fla., capped the first half of the regular season. The Lady Toppers have won six straight since dropping 4-4 in December. Western is 5-0 and tied for the lead in the Sun Belt Conference.

After his team easily whipped Central Florida (5-7 overall, 1-3 Sun Belt), Sanderford looked ahead to upcoming week — which will

**Lady Toppers' toughest week awaits them**
Sandford chilled by Lady Tops’ win in ‘The Dungeon’

By ERIC WOEHLER
The Daily News
Paul Sandford has endured worse trips to “The Dungeon” — as he likes to call South Alabama’s gym — so he was grateful for the Lady Toppers’ 76-54 win there Thursday night.

“But up until tonight, I felt we had made big strides since the beginning of the season,” Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball coach said after the game in Mobile. “But tonight we made the kinds of mistakes that were hurting us early in the year.”

Nonetheless, the victory extends Western’s win streak to five and puts the Lady Toppers (9-4 overall) at 4-0 in the Sun Belt Conference going into Saturday’s 3 p.m. game at league-foe Central Florida.

“We practice in Orlando Friday night,” Sandford said. “Maybe that will give us a chance to work out some kinks.”

Poor shooting — from both the field (42.2 percent) and the free-throw line (60.6 percent) — hurt the Lady Toppers on Thursday. But Sandford seemed more concerned with the lack of concentration his players showed, particularly early in the game against South Alabama.

“We got away with one tonight,” he said. “We were not focused as a team and not patient at all — especially in the backcourt.”

After opening a 6-0 lead against South Alabama (3-9 overall, 1-2 Sun Belt), the Lady Toppers were frustrated offensively, despite a 29-19 advantage at halftime.

Renee Westmoreland, Western’s point guard and one of Sandford’s most dependable scorers, was held scoreless in the first half and finished with just seven points.

Lady Top with 12
“I felt like we got a good effort from Debbie Hoss, Paulette Monroe and Lesa Robison,” Sandford said. “But the kids that have to carry this basketball team — Renee Westmoreland, Lisa Lang, Kim Pehlke — did not get the job done tonight.”

The win makes Western one of two teams still undefeated in the Sun Belt. Louisiana Tech was tagged with its first conference defeat Thursday night, as it lost at Lamar 80-73.

Arkansas State, meanwhile, improved to 3-0 in the league and 12-1 overall, by winning 83-66 at Central Florida, Western’s next opponent.

Central Florida (5-6 overall, 1-2 Sun Belt) boasts two of the conference’s top scorers: 5-foot-11 junior Pamela Corbly (13.2 points per game) and 5-foot-9 senior Yolanda Rhodes (16.8 ppg).

Another key for the Lady Knights is point guard Branda Green, who averages 3.3 steals, 4.8 assists and a Sun Belt-high 5.8 turnovers per game.
The Lady Toppers have lost reserve point guard Kim Warfield for the remainder of the season, Coach Paul Sanderford said today.

Warfield injured a knee in the season's third game, a 58-43 loss at Stephen F. Austin for Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team.

She was having a second surgery performed on the knee this morning in Cincinnati. Sanderford said Warfield would be on crutches for the next six weeks.

Sanderford is looking to red-shirt the 5-foot-8 sophomore from Hebron, but her playing time in Western's first three games might have been too great. If red-shirted, Warfield will have three seasons of playing eligibility left beginning next year.

Warfield tallied four points and three assists during 24 minutes this season.

Western, meanwhile, were voted No. 16 in this week’s Associated Press poll.

Their winning streak up to five games, the Lady Toppers (10-4 overall, 5-0 in the Sun Belt Conference) moved up five positions from last week’s poll. Western plays in Diddle Arena on Wednesday against DePaul.

Western won both games of a short conference road swing last week, beating South Alabama 76-54 on Thursday and Central Florida 90-65 on Saturday.

Maryland’s 67-65 road victory over then-No. 1 Virginia last week vaulted the Terrapins (14-1) into the top spot of the poll released today. Virginia (14-1) fell to second, and Stanford (12-1) moved up a spot to third.

(See the complete poll, Page 2-B.)
Point depth lessens; coach applies to red-shirt Warfield

By ERIC WOEHLER
The Daily News

The Lady Topper talent pool ranks as one of the country’s deepest, but the water gets shallow at point guard.

Our sophomore reserve, LaTonia Bland, left Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team early in the season. Another, Kim Warfield, injured a knee and is lost for the remainder of the year.

Coach Paul Sanderford said today that he has applied for a medical red-shirt for Warfield, which would give her three years of eligibility remaining beginning next season.

When Warfield was injured in the season’s third game, Sanderford made Ida Bowen, a 6-foot-2 freshman, his top point reserve behind starter Renee Westmoreland. And in recent games, he’s given off-guards Pehlke and Kristie Jordan more minutes at the “one” position.

As long as Westmoreland stays healthy, the Lady Toppers will be fine, according to one women’s basketball observer.

Joe Smith, whose Women’s Basketball News Service is published out of Queens, N.Y., ranks Westmoreland as one of the country’s best point guards.

“About a lot of people told Paul he was making a mistake when he recruited Renee,” out of Scottsburg (Ind.) High School, Smith said. “She has always lacked the physical strength some others have and that’s her biggest weakness — though that’s also part of her charm, I guess.”

“But Paul’s learned to protect her, keeping her minutes mostly in the high 20s or low 30s. She’s having a fantastic season. I’d say she’s among the top five.”

Belt loop
Arkansas State, co-leaders of the Sun Belt Conference with Western, finally got a scare and some respect.

The Lady Indians have experienced neither often this season.

ASU’s winning streak is 11 games. That earned the Lady Indians four votes in this week’s AP poll — the first ballots they’ve made this year.

But Arkansas State was nearly embarrassed Saturday when it needed a final-second free throw by Shyla Tucker to fend off the conference’s lowest team, winless Southwestern Louisiana, 62-61 in Lafayette, La.

Arkansas State visits Diddle Arena on Sunday for a 2:30 p.m. clash with Western for Sun Belt bragging rights. But first, the Lady Indians play host to Louisiana Tech on Thursday.

Point of interest: Western — the conference’s leader in scoring margin, beating its opponents by nearly 14 points a game — is the only Sun Belt team without a player among the league’s top 15 in individual scoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point depth lessens; coach applies to red-shirt Warfield</th>
<th>Sun Belt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Lady Topper talent pool ranks as one of the country’s deepest, but the water gets shallow at point guard.</td>
<td>League Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our sophomore reserve, LaTonia Bland, left Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team early in the season. Another, Kim Warfield, injured a knee and is lost for the remainder of the year.</td>
<td>Western Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Paul Sanderford said today that he has applied for a medical red-shirt for Warfield, which would give her three years of eligibility remaining beginning next season.</td>
<td>Western Kentucky 15-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Warfield was injured in the season’s third game, Sanderford made Ida Bowen, a 6-foot-2 freshman, his top point reserve behind starter Renee Westmoreland.</td>
<td>15-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And in recent games, he’s given off-guards Pehlke and Kristie Jordan more minutes at the “one” position.</td>
<td>15-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As long as Westmoreland stays healthy, the Lady Toppers will be fine, according to one women’s basketball observer.</td>
<td>15-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Smith, whose Women’s Basketball News Service is published out of Queens, N.Y., ranks Westmoreland as one of the country’s best point guards.</td>
<td>15-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“About a lot of people told Paul he was making a mistake when he recruited Renee,” out of Scottsburg (Ind.) High School, Smith said. “She has always lacked the physical strength some others have and that’s her biggest weakness — though that’s also part of her charm, I guess.”</td>
<td>15-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“But Paul’s learned to protect her, keeping her minutes mostly in the high 20s or low 30s. She’s having a fantastic season. I’d say she’s among the top five.”</td>
<td>15-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RENEE WESTMORELAND ranks as one of the country’s top point guards, but the depth behind her has deteriorated this season.

Odds and ends
— Paulette Monroe has moved to the bench, but the 6-foot-4 center remains Western’s leading scorer (12.5 points per game) and rebounder (6.1 percent). Lisa Lang in field-goal shooting (57.4 percent); and Jennifer Berryman in free-throw accuracy (90 percent).

Westmoreland and Pehlke share the team lead in assists (3.9 per game) and shot-blocks (six each). Lang and Westmoreland both average about two steals a game.

— After today’s 7 p.m. game in Diddle Arena against DePaul, Western returns to Sun Belt action against Arkansas State at 2:30 p.m. Sunday.
DePaul feels the torment of Lady Tops’ ‘50’ defense

by ERIC WORHLER
The Daily News

Getting the ball inbound was tough enough. But that was nothing compared to getting it up court. And neither even compared to trying to get off a decent shot.

This was DePaul’s torment Wednesday night in Diddle Arena.

If backcourt pressure was the basic man-to-man defense is “50,” the Lady Toppers’ version in the first half against DePaul was at least a 70 or 75.

There was a stretch with about 11 minutes to go in the game when DePaul went three straight possessions and never got the ball inbound. Western forced 11 second-half turnovers. The Blue Demons shot 24 percent in the final 20 minutes.

“The story of the game was Western Kentucky’s defensive pressure,” DePaul coach Frank Bruno said after the 63-51 decision.

“DePaul feels as though Western Kentucky’s defensive pressure was greater than even (fourth-ranked) Tennessee’s.”

Bruno was right.

“At far as defense and rebounding, the Lady Toppers were the best in the backcourt.”

Lady Toppers

Continued From Page 1-B

But Kim Pehlke’s 3-pointer a minute later — Sanderford said after the game that “Pehlke paid for her scholarship with that 3” — stretched Western’s lead back to seven, and DePaul was never closer.

Woodley’s 15 made her the game’s leading scorer. Pehlke had 13 for Western. Lady Topper forward center Paulette Monroe added 11 points and a team-best six rebounds.

“They were a good ballclub,” Pehlke said. “It was physical. There was pushing going on constantly inside.”

DePaul slipped to 7-8, but Sanderford still said “DePaul is a team that, I think, deserves to be in the NCAA Tournament.”

Western, meanwhile, improved to 11-4, and the winning streak is up to seven games. Arkansas State, co-leaders with Western of the Sun Belt Conference, visits Diddle Arena at 2:30 p.m. Sunday.

“The feeling is starting to come back,” Western guard Renee Westmoreland said, comparing the team’s momentum of late with last year’s 7-1 game win streak.

“The last couple of games, we haven’t played that great of competition. But tonight we beat a team that plays one of the toughest schedules in the nation. It was a good win.”

Sports beat

DePaul looks to break Lady Top streak

DePaul’s women’s basketball team visits Diddle Arena today and bring along bad memories for the Lady Tops.

Western hosts the Blue Demons at 7 p.m. The teams’ only other meeting came in Chicago in the NCAA Tournament two years ago. A 73-63 DePaul victory ended Coach Paul Sanderford’s worst season (17-12) in his 10 years at Western.

Don’t be fooled by the 7-7 record this time around. DePaul has the potential to put Sanderford in another gloomy frame of mind tonight.

“They’re the best ‘500’ team in the country,” he said. “I really believe they are NCAA-Tournament caliber.”

The Blue Demons’ schedule ranks as one of the country’s toughest. Through 14 games, DePaul has already played six teams that at least last year's Associated Press poll, and it lost by only eight to the defending national champs, No. 4 Tennessee, two weeks ago.

DePaul is led in scoring by 5-foot-9 junior Rita Hale at 14 a game. Senior Stella Woodley, a 6-foot-2 senior, averages 7.3 rebounds per outing, and Tammy Williams passes about 6.1 a game.

“And on film,” Sanderford said, “they look like the best defensive team we’ve faced this year.”

Western (10-4) is on a six-game win streak after a 90-65 victory at Central Florida on Saturday.

Sanderford said he’ll start Trina Wilson at center, Lisa Lang and Sanderford cook at forwards and Kim Pehlke and Renee Westmoreland in the post.

(See more on the Lady Toppj, Page 6-B.)
Lady Top game Sunday pits league’s best

Arkansas State maintained its perfect Sun Belt Conference record by beating Louisiana Tech 73-66 on Thursday night, making Sunday’s 2:30 p.m. game in Diddle Arena a battle of the league’s last undefeated squad.

ASU (14-1 overall) and Western Kentucky (11-4) are both perfect through five Sun Belt tests. The Lady Toppers, ranked 16th in this week’s Associated Press poll, are on a seven-game winning streak. Arkansas State hasn’t lost since its third game of the season.

At halftime of Sunday’s game — as well as at intermission of Saturday’s 7 p.m. men’s basketball game in Diddle — the 1985 and ’86 Lady Topper Final Four teams will be honored.

Western’s “W” Club is also hosting receptions for the Final Four teams at Howard Johnson’s restaurant at 523 U.S. 31-W By-Pass before and after Saturday’s men’s game. Call club secretary Butch Gilbert at 781-2444 for more information.

Meanwhile, the Lady Topper game at Louisville on Feb. 2 will start at 5 p.m. CST. It was originally scheduled for a 2 p.m. start.

Lady Toppers win, take lead in Sun Belt

From Special Dispatches,

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Western Kentucky rallied from a 13-point deficit to beat Arkansas State 65-76 yesterday in women’s college basketball.

The 16th-ranked Lady Toppers (12-4, 6-0) took over first place in the Sun Belt Conference. Arkansas State, which had a 12-game winning streak snapped, is 14-5, 5-1.

Western trailed 23-10 with 10:45 left in the first half but then went to its bench and turned up the defensive pressure to take command with a 31-10 run. Western led 43-38 at the half after forcing 13 turnovers. The Lady Toppers, whose bench outscored Arkansas State’s bench 20-2 in the first half, were not seriously threatened in the second half.

“We didn’t panic when we were down (and) we got great play from our bench,” Western coach Paul Sandersford said.

Western was paced by Veronica Cook and reserve Kristie Jordan with 16 points each. Another reserve, Debbie Scott, had 14 points. Serena Curtis led Arkansas State with 21.

At Bowling Green, Ky.

ARKANSAS STATE 76 (3-0) — Melodie Pizitz 12, Stacie Edwards 7, Kendra Johnson 17, Keri Rollins 18, Susan Robinson 9, Leslie Mills 3, Phyllis Powers 9, Debbie Scott 14, Serena Curtis 21, Kristie Jordan 16, Debbie Scott 14, Debbie Scott 14, Debbie Scott 14.

Arkansas State, Lady Tops play today in Diddle for Sun Belt lead

By ERIC WOELER
The Daily News

No. 1 is first, but so is No. 4. That Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team sits atop the Sun Belt Conference standings with a 5-0 record is no surprise. The Lady Toppers were the preseason choice of all the league coaches but one — their own — to win the Sun Belt.

That Western is sharing the perch with Arkansas State was not expected. The Lady Indians were picked to finish fourth, behind Louisiana Tech and Lamar.

Arkansas State has already beaten those two teams. The Lady Indians' first shot at the last of the preseason big three comes at 2:30 p.m. today in Diddle Arena.

Lady Topper coach Paul Sandford has said throughout the season that Arkansas State was a quality team.

"But anytime a team is 14-1," he said, "they have to be playing some outstanding basketball. Beating Tech as convincingly as they did (73-55) was somewhat of a surprise."

Western's scouting report from that game Thursday in Jonesboro, Ark.: "They're very impressive," Sandford said. "They have outstanding quickness ... but they're not very big, and they're not very deep."

So don't expect much different out of the Lady Toppers today — inside-oriented offense and exhausting pressure defense.

"We try to play the same way every time out," Sandford said. "We're not going to change much for Arkansas State or anybody else."

Continued On Page 6
Column 4, This Section
Arkansas State’s 6-foot forward Nicole Wilkett is one of the country’s leading scorers. At about 22 points a game, she’s the top scorer in the Sun Belt.

Sanderford ranks Sonja Tate among the best point guards Western faces this season. Tate, a 5-foot-6 junior, averages about four steals and four assists a game, while chipping in about 15 points.

Arkansas State hasn’t lost since a Dec. 3 defeat at Texas.

The Lady Toppers are a hot group, too. Western’s last seven games have justified its lofty preseason rankings as much as the first eight dispelled them. After a 4-4 start, the Lady Tops are on a seven-game win streak.

“The fact that our offense has caught up to our defense a little has made us look better,” Sanderford said. “And we are, I think.

“But I still don’t believe we’ve played our best basketball yet.”

Sanderford pointed out the emergence of guard Kristie Jordan and forwards Debbie Houk and Lea Robinson as dependable reserves among the keys to the Lady Tops’ improvement in the new year.

That doesn’t mean they’re going to make a starting lineup anytime soon. Sanderford will go with the same old five today: center Trina Wilson, forwards Liesa Lang and Veronica Cook and guards Kim Pehlke and Renee Westmoreland.

“I don’t change much when we’re winning,” he said.

Belt loop

Either the good are very good or the bad are very bad. Whatever the case, no giant killer has presented itself in the Sun Belt this season.

Going into Saturday, 12 games pitted one of the league’s top four teams against one of its bottom five. The elite team won all 12 by an average of nearly 23 points a game.

Only twice has one of the bottom five played one of the top four to 10 points or fewer. Louisiana Tech won 65-60 at New Orleans on Dec. 18, and in probably the biggest shocker of the Sun Belt season, 0-15 Southwestern Louisiana lost at home by but a point to 14-1 Arkansas State on Jan. 18.

Southwestern’s Lady Cajuns got theirs on Thursday, though — a 95-37 loss at Lamar.

Odds and ends

— Paulette Monroe, a junior center, still ranks as Western’s leading scorer (12.4 points per game) and rebounder (6.1), though she hasn’t started the last six games.

‘It’s hard,” Monroe said of her reserve role after tallying 11 points and six rebounds in Western’s 61-53 win over DePaul on Wednesday. “Sometimes, you’ve just got to roll with the punches.”

— Members of Western’s 1985 and ’86 Final Four squads will be honored at halftime today.

— Western’s next game after today will be 7 p.m. Thursday in Lafayette, La., against Southwestern Louisiana. The Feb. 2 Lady Top game at Louisville, originally scheduled for a 2 p.m. start, will begin at 5 p.m. CST.
Lady Toppers post early 'must-win' 

By ERIC WOEBLER

The Daily News
January might seem a little early to be talking about a 'must-win' games in college basketball, but Arkansas State's coach said the Lady Toppers got one Sunday.

"I really do believe they had to win this game," Jerry Ann Winters said after Western Kentucky beat her Lady Indians 93-76 in Diddle Arena.

"If you're going to win this league, you've got to win all of your games at home. There are a lot of other places than Bowling Green where this race will be decided. Western still has to go to Tennessee Tech, Lamar and our place -- so they've got no easy road ahead of them.

I've said all season that I don't believe the conference champion will walk through the Sun Belt unattended."

Then Winters cracked a smile and added, "I hope I'm right; otherwise, I guess we're out of it."

(Continued From Next Page)

Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Western's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Arkansas State. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.

Western Kentucky is out to the defense of Arkansas State's Shyla Tucker (30) throws a pass around defense of Western's Debbie Scott during Sunday's 93-76 Lady Toppers win in Diddle Arena. Tucker had 17 points and seven rebounds, v Scott, with 14 points, was one of seven Western players to score double figures.
Tops get needed rest; Lady Tops get bench boost

Willard hopes 2-day pass just the ticket

By JOE MELDY
The Daily News

February's drums are getting louder. College basketball's most month can't be far. Wonder where the Hilltoppers are. Why, they're on R&R.

A brutal week that dragged Western Kentucky's men's basketball team through four games in eight days ended Saturday, and the Hilltoppers got a rare treat — two days off.

That's right, guys. Two days. No practice.

The welcome news came after Saturday night's 72-58 win over Arkansas-Little Rock, the game that culminated hell week, which culminated the semester.

"We're a tired basketball team," Willard said Saturday night. "Since we came back from Hawaii, we've been going double sessions every day. They haven't had a day off except the one the NCAA requires after the semester started."

After Western won the Chaminade Aloha Invitational in late December, Willard sought to make up lost time lost in October and November, when the Hilltoppers had to share Diddle Arena with several groups.

Western couldn't practice three hours a day in the pre-season as Willard wanted because of Diddle scheduling, so Willard upped the pressure while the rest of the student body spent Christmas vacation at home.

That wasn't the way Willard wanted to do things.

"The way it should be done is you go three hours a day" in the pre-season "and then gradually cut back as the season wears on," Willard said. "The concern in doing it this way is that you wear the guys down in February." When Western is making a stretch drive to the Sun Belt Conference schedule, Willard's concerns became reality.

Continued On Page 16

PAULETTE MONROE
photo, white uniform) and Debbie Scott are giving West Kentucky's Lady Toppers a lift off the bench. Meanwhile, the Hilltoppers are hoping to get a lift from two days off practice. Western's men will return to the practice floor today in preparation for Thursday's game at New Orleans. Darrell Mem (3, photo at left) leads the Sun Belt Conference in steals.

Great Scott! WKU's Debbie at her best in biggest games

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News

Debbie Scott doesn't sweat enough in practice to keep a starting job with the Lady Toppers, nor does she appear to sweat in big games when her team is behind.

Yet the latter has made her one of the most valuable players on Western Kentucky University's women's basketball team during the last month.

Scott scores 7.2 points per game. But in Western's two biggest games so far — a 71-63 decision over Vanderbilt on Jan. 1 and Sunday's 93-76 win over Arkansas State — the junior forward has scored nearly twice her average.

On Sunday, Scott was a cool head in an emotional first half. When she came in with 5:42 to go before intermission, Western was down 29-26. She hit back-to-back 18-foot baseline jumpers, giving the Lady Toppers their first lead of the game with 4:04 to go.

Then she had eight points in a key 14-5 Lady Toppers run early in the second half that put Arkansas State at least 10 points behind Western for the rest of the game.

The line on Scott: 14 points on seven-of-eight shooting from the field, three rebounds, a steal and an assist in 19 minutes of work.

"There's no question Debbie Scott's a big-game player," Coach Paul Sandford said after games.

"She's played in the Final Four, in the NCAA Tournament, in the Southeast Conference championships — that experience really helps us a lot."

Scott, named Tennessee's 1988 "Miss Basketball" after her senior year at Gallatin Senior High, transferred to Western two years ago after playing two seasons for Tennessee, where she won a national championship in her freshman year.

She has said she had no intention of

But I start the players who give us their all every day in practice."

Monroe started her sophomore year and did so in 11 games this season. But she's given her way to fellow junior Trina Wilson through the last seven games of Western's eight-game winning streak.

Monroe has remained effective. She's still the Lady Toppers' leading scorer (12.7 points per game) and rebounder (6.0). Moving Scott and Monroe to the bench, in fact, has made for a potent reserve unit. In Sunday's game, for example, the Lady Toppers backups outscored Arkansas State's 44-44 and outrebounded them 18-2.

Belt loop

It could be blowout week in the Sun Belt Conference.

There have already been a bundle of key league games early in the Sun Belt season — none of them bigger than Sunday's game in Diddle Arena which gave the Lady Toppers sole possession of the conference lead and the league's lone perfect record.

But this week could see the rich get richer.

In Thursday's games, Arkansas State should have no trouble at home with South Alabama, while Western plays at wireless Southwestern Louisiana. And while New Orleans played Louisiana Tech in five points early this season, the Lady Techsters have won two in a
A brutal week that dragged Western Kentucky’s men’s basketball team through four games in eight days ended Saturday, and the Hilltoppers got a rare treat — two days off.

That’s right, guys. Two days. No practice.

The welcome news came after Saturday night’s 72-58 win over Arkansas-Little Rock, the game that culminated Hilltopp week, which culminated bell month.

“We’re a tired basketball team,” Willard said Saturday night. “Since we came back from Hawaii, we’ve been going double sessions every day. They haven’t had a day off except the one the NCAA requires after the semester started up.”

After Western won the Chaminade Aloha Invitational in late December, Willard sought to make up practice time lost in October and November, when the Hilltoppers had to share Diddle Arena with several groups. Western couldn’t practice three hours a day in the pre-season as Willard wanted because of Diddle scheduling, so Willard upped the pressure while the rest of the student body spent Christmas vacation at home.

That wasn’t the way Willard wanted to do things.

“The way it should be done is you go three hours a day” in the pre-season “and then gradually cut back as the season wears on,” Willard said. “The concern in doing it this way is that you want the team to be down in February,” when Western is making it stretch drive in the Sun Belt Conference schedule.

Willard’s concerns became reality.

Continued On Page 10

Column 1, This Section

Sun Belt men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>League</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>13-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>12-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>11-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>10-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>9-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>8-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In biggest games

By ERIC WOHLER

The Daily News

Debbie Scott doesn’t sweat enough in practice to keep a starting job with the Lady Toppers, nor does she appear to sweat it in big games when her team is behind.

Yet the latter has made her one of the most valuable players on Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team during the last month.

Scott scores 7.2 points per game. But in Western’s two biggest games so far — a 71-63 decision over Vanderbilt on Jan. 7 and Sunday’s 93-76 win over Arkansas State — the junior forward has scored nearly twice her average.

On Sunday, Scott was a cool head in an emotional first half. When she came in with 5:42 to go before intermission, Western was down 29-26. She hit back-to-back 18-foot baseline jumpers, giving the Lady Toppers their first lead of the game with 4:51 to go.

Then the Lady Toppers blow a point in the last half of the game. But that didn’t change the fact that Willard’s team is now 14-5 and has won its last seven games.

But I start the players who give us their all every day in practice.

Monroe started throughout her sophomore year and did so in 11 games this season. She’s given the Butler Councils to follow junior Trina Wilson through the last seven games of Western’s eight-game winning streak.

Monroe has made improvements. She’s still the Lady Toppers’ leading scorer (12.7 points per game) and rebounder (6.0). Moving Scott and Monroe to the bench, in fact, has made for a point reserve unit. In Sunday’s game, for example, the Lady Toppers scored 32 points in their first seven games, but outscored Arkansas State 54-44 and outrebounded them 18-2.

Belts

It could be blowout week in the Sun Belt Conference.

There have already been a bundle of key league games early in the Sun Belt season — none of them bigger than Sunday’s game in Diddle Arena which gave the Lady Toppers sole possession of the conference lead and the league’s home court record.

But this week could see the rich get richer.

In Thursday’s games, Arkansas State should have no trouble at home with South Alabama, while Western plays at Wilmington.

On Saturday, Lamar plays the University of Central Florida and the Lady Toppers have two more games in a row, including a 66-66 upset of No. 19 Texas Tech on Monday.

Central Florida and Texas-Pan American also play Thursday.

More walks for the biggest Saturday: Louisiana Tech goes to Central Florida, New Orleans is at Arkansas State and Lamar plays in South Alabama’s “dungeon.”

Also, that long-awaited Pan Am-Southwestern clash is set for 7 p.m.

Continued On Page 10

Column 5, This Section

PAULETTE MONROE

Photo, white uniform) and Debbie Scott are giving Western Kentucky’s Lady Toppers lift off the bench. Mean-while, the Hilltoppers are hoping to get a lift from two days off practice. Western’s men return to the practice floor in preparation for Thursday’s game at New Orleans. (3, photo at left) leads Sun Belt Conference in steals.

PAULETTE MONROE (top, photo, white uniform) and Debbie Scott are giving Western Kentucky’s Lady Toppers a big lift off the bench. Meanwhile, the Hilltoppers are hoping to get a lift from two days off practice. Western’s men return to the practice floor in preparation for Thursday’s game at New Orleans. (3, photo at left) leads Sun Belt Conference in steals.

Staff Photos by Tracy O’Leary
MEMBERS OF the Lady Toppers’ 1985 and ’86 Final Four teams were honored at Western’s men’s basketball game Saturday against Ark-

Lady Toppers

Continued From Page 8

Saturday in Edinburg, Texas. Tickets are still available.

Odds and ends

— Western plays next at 7 p.m.

Thursday in Lafayette, La., against Southwestern Louisiana. After that, the Lady Toppers go to Louisville for their final non-Sun Belt game of the regular season.

Tickets for Sunday’s 5 p.m. CST game at Louisville were to go on sale Wednesday. Two hundred $5 general-admission tickets will be available through the Western's ticket office in Diddle Arena, open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays. Call the ticket office at 745-5225 for more information.

The game will be played at Louisville’s Bknap Campus in the 840-seat Student Activities Center.

— Western jumped two spots to 14th in this week’s Associated Press poll. Maryland (16-1) remained first.

Two other Sun Belt schools, Lamar and Arkansas State, received votes but did not make the Top 25, while three teams which Western faced this year were ranked.

Stephen F. Austin, a 58-43 winner at home against Western on Dec. 2, is No. 6; Vanderbich, which lost 71-63 in Diddle on Jan. 7, is 11th; and West Virginia, an 85-34 overtime loser in Bowling Green on Dec. 15, entered the poll this week at 25.

Western men

Continued From Page 8

last week. It was never more evident than in an 84-72 loss to South Alabama. Western (11-5 overall, 2-3 in the Sun Belt) held the Sun Belt’s top scoring team to 28 first-half points, then got outsized 56-32 in the second half.

Even in Saturday’s win over UALR, Western sputtered offensively. The Hilltoppers survived on 26 turnovers and 17 steals created by the defense.

So Willard relented, hoping to recharge the Hilltoppers for February.

“The idea is to be the best team we can be come Sun Belt tournament time,” Willard said. “We really want to see some improvement” in February.

Western won two out of four games last week, beating the state of Arkansas — State 80-66 and Little Rock — and losing to South Al 84-72 and Jacksonville 89-83 in overtime.

Disappointed by the losses, Willard acknowledged the Hilltoppers “are in a bit of a slump right now,” but he’s not increasing his risk for a heart attack over it.

“Slumps happen to every team, and I’m confident we’re going to snap out of it.” Willard said.

“We’ve lost a couple of games this week, but we had a chance to win every game. I’m very positive about that.”

Deja vu

It was about this time last season when Willard flung his arms upward on the sidelines in an attempt to elevate a sleeping crowd in Diddle Arena.

Willard later appealed for more noise in post-game remarks to the press. He not only got more noise, he got more fans; Western averaged nearly 7,000 for its final two home games.

The appeal is out again. In Willard’s weekly television show Sunday, he asked for bigger and louder crowds at the remaining five home games.

“...for a school like ours with the tradition it has to be fourth in the Sun Belt in home attendance is a little disappointing to me,” Willard said. Western averages 4,840 a game. “If we have 8,000 against South Alabama, I bet we beat them.”

Willard would also like more decibels.

“I had a comment made to me that the 3,500 they had at Radford were louder than the 5,000 we have here,” he said. “It just seems that the people who come to our games are spectators and not fans.

“People wonder why we don’t get home whistles. It’s because our crowd isn’t intimidating enough for officials.”

New Orleans

Western’s next tilt is Thursday night at New Orleans (13-7, 5-2), perhaps the biggest team in the Sun Belt.

The Pirates sail with 6-foot-11 center Ervin Johnson and 6-10 helpmate Sydney Rice, and, oh yes, they lead the Sun Belt blocked shots at 5.4 a game.

UNO is also second in scoring defense and field-goal percentage.

“They’re much bigger and more physical and athletic than we are,” Willard said. “If they play power game, they present huge matchup problems for us.”

Where’s Western?

Western leads the Sun Belt in three team categories, steals (10.9 a game), turnover margin (plus 4.0) and 3-pointers per game (7.1). (See Page 9 for all of the Sun Belt stats).

Individually, junior guard Damell Mee leads in steals at 3.0 a game. Senior forward Jack Jennings would lead the league in scoring at 22.1 ppg, but he’s played just 11 games because of a preseason foot fracture.

About 26 more turnovers and 17 more steals would help.

“We need to really turn it up defensively,” he said. “It’s a game where, for us to win, it’s got to be at our pace.”
Lady Toppers facing winless Lady Cajuns

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
LAFAYETTE, La. — Finding the bright spot in an 0-15 tunnel of a season is creative work.
But if there is one in the University of Southwestern Louisiana’s women’s basketball campaign, it is a one-point loss to Sun Belt Conference-power Arkansas State here two weeks ago.
"They probably weren’t ready for us," Southwestern coach Dwayne Searle said. "I’m sure they took us a little lightly."
Searle can only hope his team is similarly disregarded by Western Kentucky tonight.
"But even if they do that," Searle said, "quite frankly, they’re still probably good enough to beat us pretty easily."

Worst meets first in the 5,000-seat Blackham Coliseum at 7 p.m. The Lady Toppers (12-4 overall, 14th in this week’s Associated Press poll) will be looking to extend their Sun Belt-leading record to 7-0. Southwestern is out to break the monotony of an 0-15, 0-5 campaign.

Searle had no illusions of immediate grandeur when he took over the Lady Cajin program two years ago. Nor did he expect a 3-39 record after his first season-and-a-half on the job.
"We didn’t expect to do great in terms of the number of wins," he said. "But, no, it hasn’t gone as we had expected, either."
Statistics certainly offer Searle no comfort. The Lady Cajuns can’t score, but they make up for it by playing little defense.
Southwestern cards Sun Belt-losers in team scoring, scoring defense, field-goal shooting and rebounding. The only columns USL topic: opponents rebounding, free-throw shooting and field-goal percentage.
"We did’s expect to do great in terms of the number of wins," he said. "But, no, it hasn’t gone as we had expected, either."

Statistics certainly offer Searle no comfort. The Lady Cajuns can’t score, but they make up for it by playing little defense.
Southwestern cards Sun Belt-losers in team scoring, scoring defense, field-goal shooting and rebounding. The only columns USL topic: opponents rebounding, free-throw shooting and field-goal percentage.

"Well," Searle said, "we finally shot the ball. We shot 48 percent that night, and we’re shooting about

Lady Toppers

Continued From Page 1-B
30 percent on the season. Shooting has really killed us. We would have been able to win some games if we could have just hit a shot.
"And we played with intensity. We went 40 minutes against Arkansas State. We’ve played well in spurts this season, but we haven’t played with any consistency."
Southwestern’s top player is off guard Alyson Habets, one of the league’s better 3-point and free-throw shooters.
But she would be forgiven if her concentration lacks some in the second half of the season. The 5-foot-5 sophomore is also the first baseman for Southwestern’s nationally ranked softball team, which began practicing recently.
Sophomore forward Karen Buller will miss tonight’s game. She was injured in an automobile accident last week. Searle will have back senior Konda Roon, suspended earlier this season.

Her experience is welcome on a team dominated by freshmen and sophomores.
"For as young as we are, though," Searle said, "it’s great that the players have maintained as good an attitude as they have."
The Lady Toppers arrived in Lafayette late Wednesday after a practice Sanderford called "very good. I see some positive things happening: Paulette Mouser, Debbie Scott, Trina Wilson — they’re really picking it up in practice here in the last few days.
For all but the first of Western’s eight-game winning streak, Sanderford has started Wilson at center, Lisa Lang and Veronica Cook at forwards and Kim Pekhle and Renee Westmoreland in the backcourt.
But on Wednesday, he hadn’t settled on today’s starters, though he mentioned, "I think we need to find a way to get (juniors guard) Kristie Jordan some more minutes."
Sanderford said he hasn’t tried to downplay the mismatch that this game appears to be.
"We haven’t told everybody that Southwestern Louisiana is 15-0," he said. "Everybody knows they are 0-15. I would hope that we have enough pride to come out and play with intensity."

Nonetheless, Sanderford said that because it is a nothing-to-win, all-to-lose scenario for the Lady Toppers, tonight’s game scares him.
It’s likely, however, that the least knuckles belong to Searle.
"Against Western, we’ll be looking to improve on some areas of our game," he said. "We just have to keep our heads up and try to keep getting better. We feel like we are. It’s just hard with such a young team."
"But we have not given up on this season."
Lady Toppers can't lull Lady Tops to sleep

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
LAFAYETTE, La. — A portable wooden floor that creaks with every dribble, worn nets secured to crooked rims by athletic tape — if the Southwestern Louisiana winless record isn’t enough to overwhelm visitors, the Blackham Coliseum is.

But just as Arkansas State did two weeks ago, Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team learned Thursday that taking the Lady Cajuns lightly is risky.

When Arkansas State played in Lafayette on Jan. 18, the Lady Indians showed up a half hour before the game, passed up shooting practice, and proceeded to struggle to a one-point win.

The Lady Toppers gave Southwestern more credit, and, in turn, were given less of a challenge.

An 80-48 margin does not a nailbiter make.

But with the Lady Cajuns up 15-6 with 10 minutes into the game, it was evident Southwestern intense defense and streaky 3-point shooting had caught Western off guard.

"You could see why they only lost to Arkansas State by one point," Western coach Paul Sanderford said. "That was no fluke. They do some smart things on the basketball court."

His own team, meanwhile, was "very flat," Sanderford said. "We were getting no leadership from our seniors, and we didn’t play with any intensity at all early."

This was what Sanderford had feared before the game. He had said he hoped that despite the fact the game matched the Sun Belt Conference’s best and worst teams, the Lady Toppers would take control early.

When it didn’t happen, he let his players know at halftime his disappointment.

"He was pretty upset," junior center Paulette Monroe said. "They should have been the ones trying to stay with us, but, really, we were trying to stay with them."

Even after Sanderford’s halftime scolding, the Lady Toppers did not soon shake Southwestern. The Lady Cajuns were within eight with 12:27 to go in the game.

From that point, though, Western outscored the Lady Cajuns 32-8 and the home crowd of 217 — many of them there for a middle school exhibition basketball game at halftime — saw Southwestern lose its 20th straight game dating back to last February.

"Western Kentucky has so much depth and talent that they just physically and mentally wore us down," Southwestern coach Dwayne Searle said.

Searle, though, could hardly be upset with his team (0-16 overall, 0-6 in Sun Belt), which had given chase to the country’s 14th-ranked team for 28 minutes.

"We have a long way to go," he said. "We can’t be satisfied with just playing a good half. But you’ve got to play a good half before you can play a good whole game."

Twelve Lady Tops scored, led by Kristie Jordan’s 15 points. The junior guard also had four rebounds, assists and steals each.

"We took them for granted in the first half," Jordan said.

The Lady Tops (13-4, 7-0) take their nine-game winning streak to Louisville for a 5 p.m. Sunday meeting with the Lady Cardinals.

Winless SWL can’t lull Lady Tops to sleep

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
LAFAYETTE, La. — A portable wooden floor that creaks with every dribble, worn nets secured to crooked rims by athletic tape — if the Southwestern Louisiana winless record isn’t enough to overwhelm visitors, the Blackham Coliseum is.

But just as Arkansas State did two weeks ago, Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team learned Thursday that taking the Lady Cajuns lightly is risky.

When Arkansas State played in Lafayette on Jan. 18, the Lady Indians showed up a half hour before the game, passed up shooting practice, and proceeded to struggle to a one-point win.

The Lady Toppers gave Southwestern more credit, and, in turn, were given less of a challenge.

An 80-48 margin does not a nailbiter make.

But with the Lady Cajuns up 15-6 with 10 minutes into the game, it was evident Southwestern intense defense and streaky 3-point shooting had caught Western off guard.

"You could see why they only lost to Arkansas State by one point," Western coach Paul Sanderford said. "That was no fluke. They do some smart things on the basketball court."

His own team, meanwhile, was "very flat," Sanderford said. "We were getting no leadership from our seniors, and we didn’t play with any intensity at all early."

This was what Sanderford had feared before the game. He had said he hoped that despite the fact the game matched the Sun Belt Conference’s best and worst teams, the Lady Toppers would take control early.

When it didn’t happen, he let his players know at halftime his disappointment.

"He was pretty upset," junior center Paulette Monroe said. "They should have been the ones trying to stay with us, but, really, we were trying to stay with them."

Even after Sanderford’s halftime scolding, the Lady Toppers did not soon shake Southwestern. The Lady Cajuns were within eight with 12:27 to go in the game.

From that point, though, Western outscored the Lady Cajuns 32-8 and the home crowd of 217 — many of them there for a middle school exhibition basketball game at halftime — saw Southwestern lose its 20th straight game dating back to last February.

"Western Kentucky has so much depth and talent that they just physically and mentally wore us down," Southwestern coach Dwayne Searle said.

Searle, though, could hardly be upset with his team (0-16 overall, 0-6 in Sun Belt), which had given chase to the country’s 14th-ranked team for 28 minutes.

"We have a long way to go," he said. "We can’t be satisfied with just playing a good half. But you’ve got to play a good half before you can play a good whole game."

Twelve Lady Tops scored, led by Kristie Jordan’s 15 points. The junior guard also had four rebounds, assists and steals each.

"We took them for granted in the first half," Jordan said.

The Lady Tops (13-4, 7-0) take their nine-game winning streak to Louisville for a 5 p.m. Sunday meeting with the Lady Cardinals.
Lang, Jordan put bite on Buc-kette offense

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News

Linda Lang added the mad to the Lady Topper's "mad-dog" defense this year. This season - thanks to newcomer Kristie Jordan - the dog is barking.

Lang's 5-foot-11, wide frame is more than just a defense asset; she's accustomed to seeing in three-quarter-court defenses. That they then don't see Jordan at all, lacking a passing lanes, has made Western's pressure the all the more abid.

"We couldn't handle it at all," New Orleans guard Erin Middleton said. She was responsible for two of 15 good basketball shots over Sunday in Diddle Arena, and the errs left New Orleans in a 49-26 hole at halftime.

"After that," Middleton said, "we had shell-shock." The Buc-kettes made one second-half charge, but Western Kentucky's Conference's basketball team held on for a 78-62 win. They forced their hold on the Sun Belt Conference lead and eliminated New Orleans from contention for the regular-season league crown.

"It was tough," said the Lady Topper's basketball team that we beat badly today," Western coach Paul Sanderford said. "It's good to see us go well against a good basketball team.

Particular so after a stretch in which the Lady Toppers appeared listless. Lang missed Thursday's overtime shots to keep the Lady Toppers from winning because of a twisted knee. Her return to the starting lineup seemed to revitalize her teammates.

In her first season as a Lady Topper last year, Lang endeared herself with Western coaches and fans by tenacious defense. Jordan, a transfer student from Louisville's Sullivan Junior College, has done the same this season.

"I try to anticipate their plays," said Jordan, a 5-foot-10 guard. "Plus, I always like it to be in the game when Linni's in, because we seem to get going when she's in.

"I'm more physical than she is, but we have the same quickness," Lang, a senior forward, said. "It's great playing with her. I think we make a good combination.

"That's not taking anything away from Renee Westendorf or Kim Pekhle, because they're outstanding players, too. But I think Kristie's one step quicker on defense.

Jordan got her first start Sunday because Westendorf twisted an ankle in Thursday's game. Jordan produced a team-high 18 points on six-10 shooting and four assists.

Facilities, our day to day.

Pehlke too hyper early, too much late against Louisville

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - Kim Pehlke had enough adaptable stamina to play through Sunday to play two games. Statistics from the Lady Topper game at Louisville show she played all 40 minutes.

Pehlke was averaging about 10 points and six rebounds per game going into Western Kentucky University's game with Louisville on Sunday, and she still has the Lady Cardinals.

But this was no average game for the senior guard, first time since graduating from Louisville's Doss High School, she was playing at the arena. Among the turns in which the drain on which they are in the Pekkle before tipoff.

"I was jumping two inches higher than normal; I was throwing the ball into the seats," Pehlke said after Thursday's 78-62 loss to Louisville. "We settled down.

This made for a rocky first half.

She started, then took a seat four minutes into the game. Pehlke was back on the bench for minutes to go back out little more than a minute later. In with about 10 minutes remaining in the half, the games were, but the arena the all night with the Pehlke before tipoff.

In 8-38, out at 2:02.

Sanderford gave Pehlke another chance with about 40 seconds remaining in the first half. The game was soon over Western; possession, however, brought back on side, and the drain on which the Pehlke before tipoff.

But the Pehkette offense scored in the final seconds.

After missing a jump shot, Pehlke turned and looked for the scorecard - 30-26. Louisville - shook her head and turned tail to the locker room.

"Kim was so hyper in the first half," Sanderford said after the game. "She was throwing the ball

"We couldn't handle it at all," New Orleans guard Erin Middleton said. She was responsible for two of 15 good basketball shots over Sunday in Diddle Arena, and the errs left New Orleans in a 49-26 hole at halftime.

"After that," Middleton said, "we had shell-shock." The Buc-kettes made one second-half charge, but Western Kentucky's Conference's basketball team held on for a 78-62 win. They forced their hold on the Sun Belt Conference lead and eliminated New Orleans from contention for the regular-season league crown.

"It was tough," said the Lady Topper's basketball team that we beat badly today," Western coach Paul Sanderford said. "It's good to see us go well against a good basketball team.

Particular so after a stretch in which the Lady Toppers appeared listless. Lang missed Thursday's overtime shots to keep the Lady Toppers from winning because of a twisted knee. Her return to the starting lineup seemed to revitalize her teammates.

In her first season as a Lady Topper last year, Lang endeared herself with Western coaches and fans by tenacious defense. Jordan, a transfer student from Louisville's Sullivan Junior College, has done the same this season.

"I try to anticipate their plays," said Jordan, a 5-foot-10 guard. "Plus, I always like it to be in the game when Linni's in, because we seem to get going when she's in.

"I'm more physical than she is, but we have the same quickness," Lang, a senior forward, said. "It's great playing with her. I think we make a good combination.

"That's not taking anything away from Renee Westendorf or Kim Pekhle, because they're outstanding players, too. But I think Kristie's one step quicker on defense.

Jordan got her first start Sunday because Westendorf twisted an ankle in Thursday's game. Jordan produced a team-high 18 points on six-10 shooting and four assists.
The 14th-ranked Western Kentucky University women's basketball team, led by Kristie Jordan, has been one of the league's hottest teams recently. In a Metro Conference game, the Lady Toppers defeatedLouisville 93-54 on January 15th, and have now won six of their last seven games.

According to Coach Paul Sanderford, "I think we're seeing a team that's really coming together. We're playing well defensively and Offensively, and we're getting contributions from a lot of different players." Jordan, a senior guard, has been particularly impressive, averaging 14.7 points per game. "She's playing really well right now," said Sanderford.

The Lady Toppers are currently in third place in the Metro Conference, just half a game behind the first-place team. If they continue their current form, they could potentially reach the NCAA Tournament for the first time.

For Louisville, the loss was a bitter pill to swallow. "We were very lackadaisical in the first half," said Coach Sanderford. "We let them get away with a lot, and we played poorly against their trapping defense." The Cardinals, who had been on a five-game winning streak, now find themselves in danger of falling out of the NCAA Tournament hunt.

Louisville's Coach Richard Stansbury says, "We are certainly not taking this game lightly. We know that the Lady Toppers are a dangerous team, and we need to come out with a strong, focused performance tomorrow." The Cardinals are looking to improve their conference record to 9-4, and are currently in fourth place in the Metro Conference.
Lady Toppers feel at home at U of L

By JIM TERHUNE
Staff Writer

A 29-minute span in which Western Kentucky University turned the game of basketball into volleyball on the glass powered the No. 14 Lady Toppers past Louisville 80-70 last night at U of L's Student Activities Center.

It didn't hurt that Western found a home court away from home.

Cheered on by the majority of the 774 fans in the 1,000-seat campus gym, WKU dropped a 13-2 run on the Lady Cardinals like an anvil, changing a 47-44 deficit into a 57-49 lead midway through the second half.

Four of the points came on follow shots and four more on rebound fouls. Louisville never got closer than four points after that as the Sun Belt Conference leaders won their 10th straight game and improved to 14-4, Louisville, unbeaten in the Metro, slipped to 12-6 with its fifth loss to a ranked club.

"We didn't box out," said U of L guard Jody Martin, who twice boosted her team back into the thick of things with four-point plays when she hit a three-pointer and added a free throw. "We played great defense overall, but we didn't finish."

"They're real strong inside," added Louisville forward Gwen Doyle, who returned to the interior from the perimeter for this game. "We made a lot of silly fouls."

More disheartening to U of L coach Bud Childers was the distribution of support. Although attendance was 225 shy of capacity, the Staff

Page 2, col. 4, this section

Toppers feel right at home at Louisville

Continued from Page D 1

game was officially sold out. The unoccupied seats belonged to Louisville season ticket holders.

"It's disappointing to have a sell-out and have three-quarters of the crowd be Western fans," Childers said. "That speaks volumes about our fan support and how far we need to go." All those people were not just supporters of the three girls on Western's team from Louisville. It was kind of discouraging to our players when they realized it was a pro-Western crowd.

Western coach Paul Sanderford wasn't surprised.

"We'd have had another 500 here if they'd had seats," he said. "This is a hometown (alumni-wise) for us, too."

Kim Pehlke (Doss High School and Renee Westmoreland (Scottsburg, Ind.) were Miss Basketball in their respective states and the Lady Toppers' starting guards.

Jodie Jordan played at Ballard.

Pehlke led Western with 10 points after a rocky first half in which she had seven turnovers and no points.

Westmoreland, after needing several minutes to recover from a blow on the wrist when U of L's Kelly Rose fell on her, scored eight.

Jordan, a transfer from Sullivan Junior College, came off the bench to score 12. She's led the Lady Toppers in scoring the last two games.

"A blessing in disguise, considering she had arthroscopic knee surgery in late October," Sanderford said of Jordan.

Pehlke, a senior, said her mother and father bought 20 tickets for her first hometown appearance since a scrimmage four years ago. Western, which holds an 18-13 lead in the series with five straight victories, and U of L hadn't met in four years.

"I was hyper at first," she said. "I was jumping two inches higher and throwing passes harder. Then I calmed down. We were all antsy at first. They were very physical, but we kept our temper under control better than we usually do." Louisville claimed a 30-26 halftime lead with a 15-4 run at the end of the half. We were passive," Sanderford said. "We turned it over 23 times the first half. We don't do that against Tennessee or anybody."

A more focused Western answered with the second 13 points of the second half. Then Doyle (28 points overall) and Martin (15) scored 15 in a 17-11 spurt that came before WKU's fateful power game.

"We played as hard and aggressively as we could play," Childers said.

In a game Saturday night:

Alabama 78, Kentucky 72:

No. 24 Alabama (15-3, 4-2) scored six points, four on free throws, in the last 1:08 to beat the visiting Lady Cats (11-9, 4-2) in a Southeastern Conference game.

UK's Mia Daniel tied it 72-72 with two free throws with 1:53 left.

Nees Johnson led Alabama with 15 points, including four free throws in the closing span.

Alabama rebounded the Lady Cats 49-39 behind Marlene Johnson's 13 rebounds.

Stacy McIntyre paced UK with 25 points on 9-of-16 shooting.

Louisville's Tuonisia Turner-Cummings, left, tried some vocals in an attempt to pressure Western's Kim Pehlke.
Once powerful Lady Techsters trying to rebuild old dynasty

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News

RUSTON, La. — Lady Techster fan patience, long a tradition, is being tested.

The home crowd stands until the opposing team scores in the Thomas Assembly Center. Ten years ago, Louisiana Tech fans waited through two Paul Sanderford timeouts and an 11-0 Lady Techster run before Western Kentucky finally scored.

But back then, Louisiana Tech was one of women's college basketball's nearly untouchable powers.

Now fans in Ruston are waiting for Coach Leon Barmore to build another national challenger.

After appearing in 10 of the last 11 Final Fours and winning three NCAA crowns, Louisiana Tech is 12-7, unranked and trying to stay alive in the Sun Belt Conference race.

Western (14-4 overall, 7-0 Sun Belt) leads the league standings, while Tech (5-3 conference) is fourth-place. The teams meet here at 7 p.m. today.

Tech struggled through an 18-12 campaign a year ago, and its stock with poll-voters has fallen this season.

"But they are capable of beating anyone in the country," Sanderford said.

Shanel Hardison, a 5-foot-9 senior guard, is the biggest reason Tech is so dangerous. She averages about 16 points, eight rebounds and five assists per game.

"She's an experienced player and a super athlete," Sanderford said. "She's quick, strong and can take the ball to the basket."

The second-leading Lady Techster scorer is a freshman, forward Amy Brown who averages slightly more than 10 points per game.

But she usually plays behind forwards Cara Guillen and Danielle Whitehurst. Lisa Payne joins Hardison in the backcourt, and Michelle Martin, a 6-foot-3 junior, is the center.

Western will counter with center Paulette Monroe, forwards Veronica Cook and Lisa Lang and guards Kim Pehlke and Renee Westmoreland.

Sanderford is concerned about the impact of a harsh travel schedule on his Lady Toppers. "This is almost like an NBA schedule right now," he said.

Western is in the middle of a five-game road swing, and the team didn't check into its Ruston hotel until about 2 this evening.

"We'll just have to survive," Sanderford said. "We've got three games left (Tech, at Texas-Pan American and at Lamar) of this stretch, and I think we've got to win two of three to win the Sun Belt regular-season championship."

Belt loop

Lamar, once seemingly destined to post a .500 mark, is having a difficult season. Lamar coach Al Barbre, before the season and Hatchett and Jones in short stints during it.

How much of its 1990-91 magic Lamar has recaptured could be revealed against its next two foes after Pan Am: Sun Belt second-place Arkansas State and leader Western Kentucky.

Odds and ends

— Tonight's game at Louisiana Tech is the third of a five-game road swing for the Lady Toppers. From Ruston, the team goes to Edinburg, Texas, where it will face Texas-Pan American at 7 p.m. Saturday. After stopping back in Bowling Green to check mail and do laundry early next week, Western returns to the road to face Lamar in Beaumont, Texas, on Wednesday.

— Early this season, Sanderford said that if his Lady Toppers matched their 21-game win streak of a year ago, he would sing the National Anthem in Diddle Arena before the 22nd game. Western hasn't lost in the new year, and his players apparently aren't going to let Sanderford out of his promise.
Lady Tops regain slight Sun Belt lead

Lamar pounded Arkansas State 84-65 in Beaumont, Texas, on Sunday, giving Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team a half-game lead in the Sun Belt Conference.

The Lady Toppers’ 8-1 league record is best in the Sun Belt, with Arkansas State (8-2), Lamar (7-2), Louisiana Tech (6-3) and New Orleans (6-4) still in the hunt for the regular-season crown.

Western (15-5 overall) next plays at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Lamar.

Meanwhile, Shantel Hardison’s performance against the Lady Toppers on Thursday made her the Sun Belt’s Player of the Week. Hardison’s 34 points, including 12-of-12 free-throw shooting, was the key to Louisiana Tech’s 79-66 homecourt upset of Western.

Hardison, a 5-foot-10 senior guard, also tallied seven rebounds and four steals in Tech’s lone game of the week.

No. 12 Western women done in by 36 turnovers

Special to The Courier-Journal

RUSTON, La. — Louisiana Tech forced No. 12 Western Kentucky into 36 turnovers in rolling to a 79-66 Sun Belt Conference women’s basketball victory Thursday night, snapping Western’s 10-game winning streak.

“We turned the ball over 18 times in the first half, and that was the difference,” Western coach Paul Sanderford said after the Lady Techsters improved to 14-5 and 7-1.

The Lady Toppers (13-7, 6-9) out-shot the winners 52.9 percent to 39.1 percent and out-rebounded them 34-29.
Lady Tops face rocky road in

By ERIC WOEHLER

The Daily News 2-11-91

If the Lady Toppers are, indeed, to win the Sun Belt Conference race they lead, they will earn the victory in the battle's final weeks.

Five teams are in the hunt for the Sun Belt's women's basketball title. Western leads the league, followed by Arkansas State, Lamar, Louisiana Tech and New Orleans.

Among them, Western (15-5 overall, 8-1 Sun Belt) is the only team to have games remaining against all four fellow upper-division teams. And the Lady Toppers play two of them on the road — a Feb. 27 visit to second-place Arkansas State and Wednesday's 7 p.m. game in Beaumont, Texas, against third-place Lamar.

Wednesday's will be the last of a five-game road swing for Western. On the way to Ruston, La., last week to face Tech on Thursday, Coach Paul Sanderford predicted that his team's Sun Belt regular-season chances would take shape in the next few games.

"We've got three games left in this stretch," he said. "I really do believe we have to win two of three to win the Sun Belt regular-season championship."

Western was upset at Tech 79-66 but rebounded impressively to whip an improving Texas-Pan American squad 96-64 Saturday in Edinburg.

In addition to molding the Sun Belt race, the Lady Toppers' remaining seven regular-season games will also affect Western's seeding for the NCAA Tournament.

"To have an opportunity to win the national championship," Sanderford said, "you really cannot afford to be seeded lower than fourth in a regional. Otherwise, you end up playing a great team early."

Recruiting

Louisiana Tech's freshman class this year was rated among the country's best. But it's a Tech graduate who is the recruiter making the most noise in Ruston this season.

Jim Robkens was hired away from the University of Arkansas during the summer to direct Tech's band.

Robkens had Tech's band in rare form for Western's visit Thursday. If play interrupted their song, band members forewent instruments and hummed the endings. Once when Lady Top point guard Renee Westmoreland called out her team's offense, the band mimicked the junior's high-pitched chirp of "Two, two!"

Plus, the band was chiefly responsible for keeping the 2,306 in Thomas Assembly Center involved during timeouts.

Western's game in Edinburg offered contrast.

In fact, the only commotion during a timeout Saturday came about five minutes into the second half, when it was announced that Mr. Gatti's pizza coupons would be given to the first 12 fans wearing UT-Pan Am green who approached the scorer's table.

Western whistles huge deficit but bows in OT

From Special Dispatches

Lamar outscored Western Kentucky 14-7 in overtime last night in Beaumont, Texas, to hand the Lady Hilltoppers an 82-75 loss in Sun Belt Conference play.

Lamar (15-5, 8-2) opened a 21-lead after just five minutes and led 46-29 late in the first half. But Western (15-6, 8-2) eventually sent the game into overtime on Kim Pehlke's three-point goal with one second left.

"I though the first five or six minutes Lamar played like they in the NBA," Western coach Paul Sanderford said. "We showed a lot of courage and poise coming back from 15 points down to make it a game."

WOMEN

Eastern Kentucky 83, Tennessee-Martin 68

Gina Warren led Tennessee-Martin (10-16) with 16 points.

Eastern led 40-21 at the half and pushed the margin to 62-31 with 13:22 remaining.

The Lady Colonels were outbounded 52-45 and outshot from the field 42 percent to 41 percent. Tiffany Mayfield had six of Eastern's 22 steals.

Gina Warren led Tennessee-Martin (10-16) with 16 points.
Lady Toppers' guards back up in rout of Tex-Pan

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News

EDINBURG, Texas - Admit­tedly embarrassed by Louisiana Tech in their last game, the Lady Topper backcourt trio got an ego boost Saturday night.

Starters Renee Westmoreland and Kim Pehlke and reserve Kristie Jordan accounted for 21 of 36 Western turnovers in a key 77-69 Sun Belt Conference loss at Texas on Thurs­day.

But against Texas-Pan American on Saturday, Westmoreland, Pehlke and Jordan had only four turnovers, none in the first half.

"That’s unusual for us," Pehlke said with a sigh afterward.

Meanwhile, they combined for 41 points, nine assists and nine steals as Texas-Pan American never led and never challenged in a 96-64 decision.

"Regardless of who we were playing," Pehlke said, "this was a big game for us.

"Louisiana Tech was a win we needed and didn’t get because we weren’t mentally focused from the start."

Westmoreland added, "Nobody came out and said it, but I think we all said to ourselves, ‘Tonight, we need to come out and get the job done.’"

Pehlke’s 24 points and Westmoreland’s five steals lead Western to the win that returned a share of the Sun Belt lead to the Lady Toppers.

Western (15-5 overall) and Arkansas State, which plays at Lamar today, owns 8-1 league marks.

The Lady Toppers’ intensity was nearly relentless Saturday. Even as Lea Robinson’s follow-up with 11:33 to go gave Western its longest lead, 36 points, Coach Paul Sand­erford screamed to his defense.

"Pressure, pressure," he said.

"This was a classic mismatch," said Tim Hicks, coach of Texas-Pan American (8-11, 1-8). "Add to that the revenge factor of them just hav­ing lost to Louisiana Tech, and this one didn’t bode to well for us from the beginning."

Sanderford’s mood had been dark-to-pitch throughout the 48 hours between the Louisiana Tech and Texas-Pan American games.

The win Saturday returned at least a half-smile to the 10-year coach’s face.

"Things were much different tonight," he said. "I wrote two words on the chalkboard: mental focus. Our approach to the game was so much better tonight than it was Thursday.

"We got our pride hurt at Loui­siana Tech. But we got it back tonight, and you can look at our inten­sity as the reason why.

"So thorough as annihilation it was, Sanderford was able to play every Lady Topper on his bench Saturday at least four minutes.

"That’s why they are where they are," Hicks said.

Depth is especially important at this point in the season when sched­ules take on an NBA feel. Satur­day’s was Western’s fourth road game in a row.

The Lady Toppers return to Bowling

Continued From Page B-18

Columbus 4, This Section


day

TEX-PAN AM 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN KY. 56

I-B

W.TEX-PAN AM 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WESTERN ENDOUR 61

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.

WASHINGTON 64

1. - Tripes — New... - 158.
Tech bops Lady Tops from atop Sun Belt

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
RUSTON, La. — It took the Lady Toppers just 17 seconds to sit them down, but they couldn’t shut up new Tech.

In fact, the 2,306 fans in the Thomas Assembly Center on Thursday are probably still talking about their Lady Techs’ 79-66 upset of Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team.

It was after, “one of the best wins this school has ever had,” according to Louisiana Tech coach Leon Barmore.

Granted, the win did come against the country’s 12th-ranked team, and it knocked Western (14-5 overall, 1-2 in Sun Belt Conference) out of the league lead.

But Barmore’s ranking Thursday’s win among Tech’s biggest ever was surprising, considering the three national championships and 10 trips to the Final Four.

During the decade-plus worth of success, the Lady Techsters have built an unclimbing following, making the Thomas Assembly Center one of women’s college basketball’s most daunting arenas.

One of its faithful traditions is standing under the visitor’s score. Lisa Lang took care of that quickly, giving the Lady Toppers a 2-0 lead with the clock reading 19:43.

The fans, though stayed, involved, berating officials and cheering each Tech bucket. Then when Western coach Paul Sanderford called timeout with 14:20 to go in the game — in the middle of a 12-0 Tech run that produced a 23-point deficit — it was easy and sang to their band’s rendition of “It’s Hard To Be Humble.”

Humility came easy to Kim Pehlke.

“Now I know,” Western’s senior guard said, “how it feels to be an opposing team in Diddle Arena.

Now she also knows how it feels to be playing against a truly oppressive defense. Tech’s full-court, physical pressure recalled the Lady Tops on a good defensive night.

Western committed 36 turnovers, many of them coming on fast breaks when Pehlke or fellow guards Renee Westmoreland and Kristie Jordan would have the ball slapped away or behind on fast breaks.

Sanderford praised Tech’s defense, but also laid blame on his offense he described as “total confusion.”

“We can handle that kind of heat,” he said. “Thirty-six turnovers? They’re beat wasn’t that outstanding.

“It’s really disappointing for me, in February, for us to play so un disciplined — and that’s what we were, undisciplined.”

Sanderford was equally displeased with his defense: “Terrible. We absolutely did not get the job done.”

Certainly not on Shantel Hardison, a senior guard who tallied 34 points on 11-of-19 shooting from the field and 12-of-12 from the foul line.

“I told everybody before the game, ‘Let’s just go out and compete,’ ” Hardison said. “’No matter what happens, we’re not just up.

That was the key — we never let up throughout the whole game.’”

Western did make a run after Tech opened its 23-point lead. It was 68-58 with 1:57 to go.

“The game was over when they made that run,” Sanderford said. “Louisiana Tech’s too good of a team to lose a 23-point lead.”

Proving Sanderford’s point, the Lady Techsters hit 11 of 12 free throws in the final two minutes.

The Lady Topper road show traveled to Memphis, Texas, today, where Western plays Texas-Pan American at 7 p.m. Saturday.

“It all comes down to how we respond to this loss,” Sanderford said. “But this loss hurts. It really hurts.”

“’It’s like I told the kids in the locker room after the game: Tomorrow, we lost to tradition.”

Lamar out to nail WKU on boards

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
BEAUMONT, Texas — Rebounding against the Lady Toppers on the scoreboard will mean rebounding on the backboard, Lamar coach Liz McGehee said.

In the key Sun Belt Conference game of the week, who the Lady Cardi nals host Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team at 7 tonight at the Montagne Center.

When the teams met Jan. 11 in Bowling Green, Western won 82-63. The margin’s girl, McGehee said, could be traced to the Lady Toppers’ 52-18 rebounding edge.

McGehee said she was humiliated by the statistic. “Playing, coaching — I’ve never seen that in anything like that ever.”

But this is a different Lamar team than the one that left Bowling Green a month ago apparently headed for a worst performance.

The loss to Western was Lamar’s third in four games. The Lady Cardinals were coming off a 2-point loss at Sun Belt rival Arkansas State, and their point guard, Ramona Jones, had just been suspended indefinitely in a light of NCAA investigation.

The NCAA probe continues. But Jones, who is considered among the Sun Belt’s best guards, is back, and Lamar is on a seven-game winning streak.

Their last game was an 84-65 homecourt blasting of Arkansas State University on Sunday.

Lamar (14-5 overall, 7-2 in the Sun Belt) is expecting 5,000 fans to turn out tonight to boost the Lady Cardinals’ charge up the Sun Belt standings.

“We’re intense and focused,” McGehee said. “We need it to put all together for 40 minutes. We haven’t done that, but this would be the perfect night to do it.”

Brenda Hatchett, who averages 15.6 points a game, will join Jones in Lamar’s backcourt. Jones was leading the Sun Belt in assists before her Sun Belt suspension. She averages better than six scoring passes a game.

Urianah Jackson, a 6-foot-2 senior center, will likely become Lamar’s all-time leading scorer tonight. Debra Hickey, whose 16-17 average leads the Lady Cardinals, starts at one forward. Bobbie Bean will start with her, but forward Travessa Grant brings a team-high 8.1 rebounds per game off the bench.

Western (15-5, 8-1) will go with guards Renee Westmoreland and Veronica Cook, and center Paulette Monroe.

Every remaining Lady Topper game carries with it significance in the Sun Belt race. It also determines the Lady Topper’s spot in NCAA Tournament committee.

Barmore has to do all of the things we’ve talked about this season — going to the NCAA Tournament, getting to the Final Four,” Pehlke said, “then we’ve got to mentally focused every game from here on out.

“Otherwise, they’re going to make us play Mary Hardison at Lamar, Tennessee at Tennessee, Virginia at Virginia — something like that.”

Odds and ends

The Lady Top individual leaders through 20 games: Paulette Monroe

Continued On Page 3

Columns 4, This Section

Lady Toppers

Continued From Page 1-8

Monroe, scoring (12.3 points per game) and rebounding (6.2); Veronica Cook, field-goal shooting (60 percent); Lisa Lang, steals (two a game); Kim Pehlke, assists (3.9 per game); and Renee Westmoreland, free-throw shooting (84 percent).

Westmoreland has shot 75 percent for 40 points (11 of 14), including 3 of 4 behind the arc.

Lamar was 21-of-40 from behind the arc, including 9 of 15 from the 3-point line.

Monroe, meanwhile, took — and hit — her lone 3-point attempt of her collegiate career in the waning moments of the 79-66 loss at Louisiana Tech.

“I was trying to do anything just to get back into it,” the junior center said.

Thursday’s game at Louisiana Tech resumed format of its first half Tuesday evening.

Neither player recalled high school glory Thursday, however.

Westmoreland had seven turnovers and only four points, while Gullion didn’t score in five minutes of action.

In keeping with a promise, New Orleans coach Joey Favors said he wouldn’t share his head last week. Favors said he’d part with his hair if the Buc-kettes coach for the first time ever, and they did, 69-54, in Ruston.

Weber tonight’s game at Lamar, Western next plays at 2:30 p.m. Sunday in Diddle Arena against South Alabama.


Continued On Page 3

Columns 4, This Section

Lady Toppers

Continued From Page 1-8

Monroe, scoring (12.3 points per game) and rebounding (6.2); Veronica Cook, field-goal shooting (60 percent); Lisa Lang, steals (two a game); Kim Pehlke, assists (3.9 per game); and Renee Westmoreland, free-throw shooting (84 percent).

Westmoreland has shot 75 percent for 40 points (11 of 14), including 3 of 4 behind the arc.

Lamar was 21-of-40 from behind the arc, including 9 of 15 from the 3-point line.

Monroe, meanwhile, took — and hit — her lone 3-point attempt of her collegiate career in the waning moments of the 79-66 loss at Louisiana Tech.

“I was trying to do anything just to get back into it,” the junior center said.

Thursday’s game at Louisiana Tech resumed format of its first half Tuesday evening.

Neither player recalled high school glory Thursday, however.

Westmoreland had seven turnovers and only four points, while Gullion didn’t score in five minutes of action.

In keeping with a promise, New Orleans coach Joey Favors said he wouldn’t share his head last week. Favors said he’d part with his hair if the Buc-kettes coach for the first time ever, and they did, 69-54, in Ruston.

Weber tonight’s game at Lamar, Western next plays at 2:30 p.m. Sunday in Diddle Arena against South Alabama.
Sports beat

Tickets on sale for Sun Belt tourney

Ticket sales for the March 12-14 Sun Belt Conference Women’s Basketball Tournament in Diddle Arena are underway.

Eight of the Sun Belt’s nine women’s basketball teams will vie for a berth to the NCAA Tournament. Five teams — Western Kentucky, Arkansas State, Lamar, Louisiana Tech and New Orleans — remain in contention for the regular-season crown.

“I think the Sun Belt has the opportunity to send four teams to the NCAA field of 48,” Western coach Paul Sanderford said. “I don’t think but two other conferences in the country are in the same position.”

Ticket books covering all seven games, including the 7 p.m. March 14 championship, cost $15 for courtside, Red Towel seating; $12 for reserved chairbacks, and $10 for general admission.

Tickets for individual games cost $7 for Red Towel seating, $6 for reserved chairbacks and $5 for general admission. Tickets for children, ages 6-12, cost $2.

Students of any Sun Belt school will be admitted free.

Credit-card orders cost an additional $2. Call 1-800-524-4733 or order at the WKU Ticket Office at 745-5222 for more information.

Today’s game a must-win for Lady Tops

With the Sun Belt Conference race so tightly contested and their NCAA Tournament seeding still under scrutiny, today’s game against South Alabama is one the Lady Toppers cannot afford to lose.

Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team meets the Lady Jaguars at 2:30 p.m. in Diddle Arena.

The Lady Toppers (15-6 overall, 8-2 Sun Belt) are coming off a five-game road swing of which they lost two — at Louisiana Tech on Feb. 6 and at Lamar on Wednesday.

Western is a half-game behind first-place Arkansas State and a half-game ahead of Louisiana Tech and Lamar in the Sun Belt.

South Alabama (6-15 overall) is 3-7 in the conference. The Lady Jaguars lost at home to Western 76-54 on Jan. 16.

LaWanda Black, a 6-foot-1 junior, and Chanta Powell, a 5-foot-11 senior, pace first-year coach Butch Stockton’s team at 15.5 and 15.1 points per game, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun Belt</th>
<th>League</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas State</td>
<td>13-6-1</td>
<td>16-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Kentucky</td>
<td>12-6</td>
<td>15-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamar</td>
<td>13-5-2</td>
<td>13-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Tech</td>
<td>11-6-1</td>
<td>13-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>6-7-2</td>
<td>6-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Alabama</td>
<td>4-8-2</td>
<td>4-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas A&amp;M</td>
<td>4-8-2</td>
<td>4-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Kentucky</td>
<td>3-9-2</td>
<td>3-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.T.-Orlows</td>
<td>2-10</td>
<td>2-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D/A 2-16
Bad Lady Jags victimized by Lady Tops

By ERIC WOHLER
The Daily News
The Lady Jaguars who had been good Saturday night weren't nearly good enough on Sunday afternoon.
They had less-talented players to begin with. Having about half as many of them only widened the mismatch. So what started as a bad trip to Bowling Green for the University of South Alabama's women's basketball team only got worse: 97-45, Western Kentucky.
"First, the van breaks down on our way here from Nashville," Coach Butch Stockton said. "Then when we get to the hotel, one of the girls turns on the air conditioner; she gets shocked and has to go to the hospital. Then we have three players who decide to break curfew Saturday night. Two of the three were starters, but I had to suspend them."
"When you come in and play as fine a team as Western Kentucky, you've got to have your entire team focused and ready to play. You can't afford to suspend anyone."
That was not the case with Coach Paul Sanderford. His Lady Toppers did fine without 6-foot-4 junior center Paulette Monroe, Western's leading scorer and rebounder who sat out the game.
"It's a one-game suspension for disciplinary reasons," Sanderford said of his punishment of Monroe before declining to elaborate.
The Lady Jags in uniform Sunday numbered six. The Lady Tops had 11; -- Debbie Scott sat the first half, Sanderford said, because she missed the team's pre-game meal.
"We needed everybody just to have a chance," Stockton said.
The win boosted the Lady Toppers' record to 16-6, helped them hold to the No. 17 spot in this week's Associated Press poll and returned to them a share of the league (Western is 9-3 in the Sun Belt).
Such an easy game allowed Sand­ erford to exhaust his bench. Every Lady Topper played at least eight minutes. Everyone scored.
"It was good to get the whole team involved," said forward Deb­ bie Hook, one of Sanderford's top reserves. "It's very hard to stay up for practice if you're not getting into the games."
Stockton, also, got a chance to give extended playing time to some of his young players.
"The play of freshman Dina Jones was a bright spot," he said. "She showed she could shoot the ball, which she hasn't done. And Monica Thigpen showed she could be a floor leader."
Two of the South Alabama's (6-16, 3-8) three leading scorers, LaWanda Black and Metta Christensen, were among those suspended for staying out past curfew to watch a movie Saturday night. In their absence, senior for­ ward Chanta Powell had a team-high 17 points.
Senior guard Kim Perlke tallied team-highs of 21 points, four assists and four steals for the Lady Top­ pers. Fellow senior Lisa Lang pac­ ed all rebounders with nine.
Perlke had said after Wednes­ day's loss at Lamar that she doubted Western's losing two of three games

Lady Tops cruise

Continued From Page 5
would hurt team morale. She ap­ parently was right.
"Nobody thought anything of them," she said Sunday. "We would have liked to have won, but we didn't. So we put them behind us. We're still focused on winning the Sun Belt."
Next up is Central Florida, a visitor to Diddle Arena at 7 p.m. Thursday. UCF is another team in the bottom division of the Sun Belt standings.
"We've got to win them all," Sanderford said. "We've got five (regular-season) games left. If we win all five, nobody's going to catch us."

LADY TOPPERS 97
SOUTH ALABAMA 45

2-12 (24) 9-2 29 1-1 20 12 49 5 10
3-15 (20) 6-7 31 1-1 20 6 58 0 11
4-15 (20) 7-4 38 3-3 21 7 61 5 10
5-15 (20) 8-4 42 2-4 24 13 67 10 19
6-15 (20) 9-4 54 0-0 30 20 84 0 20
7-15 (20) 10-3 67 1-1 37 20 97 12 20

Continued On Page 6

Column 5, This Section
Kim Pehlke scored 21 points to lead No. 15 Western Kentucky to a 97-45 victory over South Alabama in a Sun Belt Conference women's game yesterday in Bowling Green, Ky.

Pehlke, a Doss High School product, hit 9 of 13 shots, including two three-pointers as Western improved to 16-6 and 9-2 in the league.

Chanta Powell led South Alabama (6-16, 3-6) with 14 points. South Alabama coach Butch Stockton suspended three players, including starters LaWanda Black and Metta Christensen, for missing curfew.

Kentucky 73, Louisiana State 66:

Kentucky (19-2, 10-0) moved up one spot to No. 2 and 3, respectively. Oklahoma State fell from second to No. 8.

Kentucky vaulted from 19th to No. 13 in the weekly Associated Press poll, while Indiana dropped from a tie for fourth to No. 7. Duke remained No. 1, while UCLA and Kansas each moved up one spot to No. 2 and 3, respectively. Oklahoma State fell from second to No. 8.

Women's AP Top 25 poll

1. Duke
2. Tennessee (1)
3. Stanford (2)
4. Notre Dame (3)
5. UCLA (4)
6. LSU (5)
7. Tennessee (5)
8. Tennessee (9)
9. LSU (10)
10. Baylor (11)
11. Alabama (12)
12. Mississippi State (13)
13. Louisiana State (14)
14. Georgia (15)
15. Georgia (16)
16. Virginia (17)
17. Harvard (18)
18. Connecticut (19)
19. Washington (20)
20. Arizona (21)
21. South Carolina (22)
22. Texas A&M (23)
23. Southern California (24)
24. Oklahoma State (25)

Women's AP Top 25 poll

1. Duke (1)
2. Tennessee (2)
3. Stanford (3)
4. Notre Dame (4)
5. UCLA (5)
6. LSU (6)
7. Tennessee (7)
8. Tennessee (8)
9. LSU (9)
10. Baylor (10)
11. Alabama (11)
12. Mississippi State (12)
13. Louisiana State (13)
14. Georgia (14)
15. Georgia (15)
16. Virginia (16)
17. Harvard (17)
18. Connecticut (18)
19. Washington (19)
20. Washington (20)
21. South Carolina (21)
22. Texas A&M (22)
23. Southern California (23)
24. Oklahoma State (24)
25. Oklahoma State (25)

Tisha Hill tied the score twice in the final three minutes, the last time on a layup off a steal with 10 seconds remaining. She then fouled Foster, who made the winning free throws.

Dawn Douglas led Indiana (14-7, 6-6) in the Big Ten with 18 points and 10 rebounds. Amy Che-rubini added 13. Nicole Tunis added 10 points for the Hawkeyes (19-2, 10-1).

In a game Saturday night:

Louisville 73, Southern Mississippi 67: Gwen Doyle scored 24 points, handed out six assists and added 13. Nicole Tunsil added 13, while forward Amy Che-rubini added 10 points.

Louisville improved to 14-7 and 8-1 in the league. Southern Miss slid into a tie for fourth place in the Metro Conference.

Foster, who led the Hawkeyes with 27 points and 10 rebounds, keyed an 11-9 run with five points over the final three minutes.
they will make a run. I'm one of those people who believe history repeats itself.'

One hint that the Lady Toppers might be up for a traditional February-March surge is that Sanderford is only now playing all of his cards. Thursday's game included Ida Tuck's senior forw ard Felicia Chism. From last year's team, Coach Sonja Moore got 18 of her team-high 20 points and six of her 12 rebounds in the second half. Pehlke sealed the comeback with a last-second 3-pointer.

Over time, the Lady Cardinals have become the hottest team. Moore said, "Bull Plus, we've got a chance. Like they said, 'We've got a chance.'" That's the way the Lady Toppers feel, too. They've won eight in a row, reducing consecutive wins over Arkansas State and Western. Lamar is 15-5, 8-2 in the Southland, 5-6 in league mark. The Sun Belt is back with a last-second 3-pointer, setting the stage for the Lady Top center Urannah Jackson to say, "We know we can beat anybody."

Over time, the Lady Cardinals have become the hottest team. Moore said, "Bull Plus, we've got a chance. Like they said, 'We've got a chance.'" That's the way the Lady Toppers feel, too. They've won eight in a row, reducing consecutive wins over Arkansas State and Western. Lamar is 15-5, 8-2 in the Southland, 5-6 in league mark. The Sun Belt is back with a last-second 3-pointer, setting the stage for the Lady Top center Urannah Jackson to say, "We know we can beat anybody."
Lang, Westmoreland injuries add to Lady Topper mystery

BY ERIC WOELKER
The Daily News

Coach Paul Sanderford had just watched his Lady Toppers dodge a near loss in Diddle Arena. Now he was going to check how his team fared in their basement.

There sat Lisa Lang and Renee Westmoreland and, with them, much of the promise Western Kentucky University’s women’s basketball team holds.

Without Lang, an emotional sparkplug, the engine of the country’s 17th-ranked team never quite fired Thursday night.

But with an overtime flurry of offense — the highlight of which was Westmoreland’s 3-pointer with 1:25 to play — the Lady Toppers held off one of the Sun Belt Conference’s second-division teams, Central Florida, 90-77.

Westmoreland turned an ankle after the shot and was helped off the floor. Lang twisted a knee going for a rebound in practice earlier this week. Thirty minutes after Thursday’s game, they were still the subject of trainers’ analytic eyes and whispers.

The injuries had Sanderford "scared to death" after the game, though both Lang and Westmoreland might be OK to play 2:30 p.m. Sunday against New Orleans in Diddle.

Westmoreland was hoping to be able to practice today. Lang’s knee was to be tested today, "but I feel like I’ll be ready by Sunday, too," she said.

How quickly and fully Western’s regular point guard and small forward heal is a big question facing the Lady Toppers with just four games to go before the March 12-14 Sun Belt tournament.

But Sanderford is also puzzled why his team sometimes fails to carry over intensity from practice to game time.

"I really felt like tonight we were going to play well," he said Thursday. "We had a great practice on Tuesday, and yesterday’s wasn’t bad.

"But tonight we weren’t very good at all in the beginning."

In fact, Western’s lackluster start against Central Florida was eerily similar to one Feb. 6 in Louisiana Tech. That was the first of two losses in three Sun Belt games for Western and also touched off what Sanderford called the Lady Toppers’ "February swoons."

After a 10-game winning streak that pushed the Lady Toppers (17-6 overall, 10-2 Sun Belt) to 12th in the Associated Press poll, Western has appeared weary. A five-game road swing had a lot to do with that, but the Lady Tops were still not up to par Thursday even after having been in Bowling Green for a full week.

"For some reason, we’ve been slacking off here lately," said Kim Pehlke, a senior co-captain. "It’s like we’re trying to glide through to the end.

"You look at the calendar, and there’s not much time left. We have national-championship talent here. It would be a shame if we wasted it."

On Thursday, Central Florida appeared done at halftime. The Lady Topper mystery forward Debbie Scott had four points and a pair of rebounds in the opening minutes of the second half. Then Western’s 3-pointer gave the Lady Toppers the lead back on the road.

"Coach Sanderford told us after the game that it’s the mark of a good basketball team when you can play your worst and still win," Pehlke said.

But he also said "we definitely weren’t the 17th-best team in the country tonight."

The uncertain status of Lang and Westmoreland only adds mystery to a Lady Topper team that has Sanderford stumped.

"I wish someone could explain it to me," he said, "because I sure can’t."
**Sanderford wants Lady Toppers to win, toss coin option**

**By ERIC WOEHLER**

*The Daily News*

Western (16-6 overall, 9-2 Sun Belt) had lost just two of its last three games of a five-game road swing, before beating South Alabama in Diddle Arena on Sunday.

"I think those two losses were a wake-up call for us, though," assistant coach Debbie Houk said after Sunday's game. "Being home is so much different."

Living out of your suitcase, having nothing to do when you're off the court — when you have a string of games on the road like that, it's really hard to stay up.

"But now I feel at home," Houk said, "and I think we're ready to get back on track." 

Central Florida is not among the five still vying for the league's regular-season title. UCF (12-12 overall, 4-7 Sun Belt) is one of the four teams in the bottom division of the league standings that has yet to upset one of the five in the upper section.

The Lady Knights are led in scoring (18.6 points per game) and rebounding (10.3) by 5-foot-10 freshman forward Tashika Coley. Fellow forward Yolanda Rhodes, a 5-foot-9 senior, averages 17.2 points.

Guard Kala Loomis and Brinda Green, both of them seniors, chip in between 10 and 11 points per game each.

Debby Tazt, a 6-foot-2 sophomore, is the lone center on the UCF roster. She contributes better than eight points and nearly seven rebounds a game.

Western beat Central Florida 90-65 in Orlando on Jan. 18.

**Belt loop**

The biggest game in the Sun Belt tournament is against New Orleans where Lamar visits.

New Orleans, which visits Diddle Arena on Sunday, has been one of the Sun Belt's hottest teams recently. It won at Louisiana Tech on Jan. 30, then played Arkansas State to a tie in Jonesboro, Ark., on Feb. 1. Lamar, too, has been hot, winning eight in a row before falling in overtime at Tech on Saturday.

In other league games, Heather Brandt, Arkansas State center, Southwestern Louisiana and Texas Pan American visits Louisville, Tech.

In a siting up the Sun Belt race, South Alabama coach Butch Stockton, whose team lost 97-45 in Diddle Arena on Sunday, said Western was "definitely one of the top teams in the Sun Belt."

They have plenty of depth. They can shoot; they've got good rebounders. They have all the ingredients it takes to be a championship-caliber team.

But, Stockton added, "Lamar is the most talented team in the conference."

**New boss, old boss**

Virginia is back at No. 1 in the Associated Press poll after replacing previously top-ranked Maryland on Feb. 18. The Lady Cavs' win at Maryland came as no surprise to Western coach Paul Sanderford, who cast Virginia's lone vote for No. 1 through most of the last month.

In fact, that Virginia and Tennessee, the defending national champs, hold the country's top two spots backs up Sanderford's analysis of Final Four prospects.

"I think you've got two teams, Virginia and Tennessee, who have legitimate chances of making the Final Four," he said recently. "That leaves two teams. Where they'll come from, I don't know."

Meanwhile, Western's early-season loss at Stephen F. Austin must be looking all the more forgivable, its overtime win at home over West Virginia all the more impressive in the minds of the NCAA Tournament committee.

Stephen F. Austin, which confused the Lady Toppers in a 58-43 win in Nacogdoches, Texas, on Dec. 2, moved up to No. 3. The Ladyjackets are 21-1.

West Virginia (19-2) hasn't lost since an 85-84 defeat in Diddle Arena on Dec. 15. The Mountaineers are 15-3.

Sun Belters Lamar and Louisiana Tech received votes for the poll but were not ranked.

**Pelehke's pursuit**

Kim Pelehke's recent scoring binge has quickened her climb up the Lady Toppers' all-time scoring list.

"I haven't changed anything" since a sluggish start this season, said. "They play a lot like I would like to play."

**Good-will game**

Central Florida's Nicole Dauria showed a cool head late in Thursday's game in Diddle Arena. She contributed nine points on four-of-six shooting from the field, three rebounds, three assists and three steals off the bench.

Dauria earned even greater respect after the Lady Toppers' 90-77 overtime win, in the eyes of Western point guard Renée Wockett.

It was Dauria's foot that Westmoreland landed on late in Thursday's game, resulting in a sprained ankle that kept her out of Westmoreland's game. She had 13 points and seven rebounds in overtime against LSU in March 1982.

"She stepped on the locker room after the game to see if I was OK," Westmoreland said of Dauria. "I really appreciated that."

Westmoreland is a senior forward who led Lady Bells to the NCAA title game in 1986. She's having a great senior year, averaging 19.7 points per game and 10.9 rebounds.

"We hope she'll be ready by Thursday" at Arkansas State, Westmoreland said. "How quickly a player comes back is effective is often up to the player, but it usually takes seven-to-10 days to get over something like this."

In Westmoreland's absence, Kristie Jordan will likely start with guard Kim Pelehke, center Trina Wilson and forwards Debbie Scott and Lisea Lang today.

Lang's right knee — she twisted it early last week in practice — was examined Friday. No cartilage tear was detected, and the senior small forward sat through the UCF game.

"This wasn't a very fun game to watch," Lang said Thursday night. "It was very hard, knowing I might have been able to give us that extra rebound or the extra steal."

Sanderford said his decision to start Scott, a junior, over freshman Veronica Cook is based on "game performance. Debbie Scott's playing very well for us right now, and coming off the bench might take some pressure off Veronica."

**Odds and ends**

— Tickets for the March 12-14 Sun Belt tournament in Diddle Arena are on sale. Call Western's ticket office at 745-5222 for more information.
Buc-kettes, UCF hope to play similar tourney roles

By ERIC WOHLER - The Daily News

The previous two Lady Topper foes are out of the regular-season Sun Belt Conference race, but both fared well enough to keep the postseason hopes of a contender or two.

"We're the sleeper," New Orleans guard Emie Middleton said of her team's role in the Sun Belt women's basketball tournament March 12-14 in Diddle Arena.

"I think we're definitely a sleeper," Central Florida coach Gale Falkenburg said.

Detect a theme here?

The lingering, remote chances of New Orleans winning the regular-season crown were squelched Sunday with the Buc-kettes' 78-62 loss to Western Kentucky in Diddle Arena.

"The Alaskan tournament will be a good test for us," Middleton said of the Northern Lights Invitational, a tournament Friday-Sunday in Anchorage. "This will tell us if we can get it mentally together before the conference tournament."

Until back-to-back losses to Lamar and Western, New Orleans had been one of the Sun Belt's hottest teams. But with only two league games remaining, the Buc-kettes have no chance for the tournament's top seed.

UCF was out of the race long ago. But the Lady Knights flashed an upset mindset last week in Diddle, playing Western to overtime before falling 90-77.

"We're just playing better and better," Falkenburg said. "We've definitely been playing our best basketball in the last three weeks."

And maybe it's good the tournament is here," she said of Diddle. "We did pretty well in here tonight.

This week's poll

Western is up one spot to No. 16 in the new Associated Press poll.

West Virginia is 12th, the Mountaineers' highest ranking ever. The Lady Topper beat West Virginia 85-84 in overtime on Dec. 15.

"Early in the year when we lost to Western Kentucky, we were 3-2, and I told our players to go out and win the next 20," West Virginia coach Scott Hamilton told the AP.

His team's winning streak is up to 19 games after a 61-50 win over 15th-ranked George Washington on Monday.

"I think West Virginia's at least that good," Western coach Paul Sanderford said of the No. 13 ranking. "Break win over: George Washington was at G.W., too, so that's really a big win for them.

Two other Lady Topper foes made the poll. Stephen F. Austin, a 58-43 winner over Western on Dec. 2, is seventh, and Vanderbilt, which the Lady Topper beat 71-63 on Jan. 7, is No. 12.

Lamar and Louisiana Tech both received votes for the poll but were not ranked.

"I'm not trying to be biased," Sanderford said.

"But I've been voting Louisiana Tech in the Top 25. You look at who they've lost to - Mississippi by three, Iowa by four, they've lost to Tennessee, Lamar, Arkansas State. They're all quality basketball teams."

"Lamar and Louisiana Tech, I think, are both Top 25 basketball teams."

Injuries

The rest of the Lady Topper are Lisa Lang's right knee and Renee Westmoreland's left ankle to thank for their day off from practice Monday.

Sanderford said he would have put his players to work had it not been for his starting small forward's and point guard's injuries. Both played fewer than 20 minutes Sunday.

Lang injured her knee during a practice last week. She set out last week's win over Central Florida, then aggravated the injury Sunday. But she said after the game she expected to play in the 7 p.m. Thursday day game at Arkansas State.

Westmoreland, who hurt her ankle during overtime against UCF, was not expected to play Sunday but contributed five points, an assist and a steal off the bench. She'll probably go against the Lady Indians, as well.

"They're not the only gimp Lady Toppers. Kristie Jordan bruised her knee, and Paulette Monroe's shin splints are achy. Neither are expected to miss playing time, though.

Odds and ends

Western's statistical leaders through 24 games: Monroe, scoring (12.5 points per game); Lang, rebounding (6.3); Kim Pohlke, assists (4.1) and turnovers (4); Veronica Cook, field-goal shooting (37.5 percent); Debbie Scott, free-throw shooting (84 percent); Westmoreland, minutes (30) and 3-point shooting (40 percent); Trina Wilson, blocks (13 total).

Lang and Westmoreland share the team lead in steals at 1.7 per game.

UCF game Thursday was Western's fourth overtime game of the regular season. That's a Lady Topper record.

Western's next game is 7 p.m. Thursday at Arkansas State. The Lady Topppers finish the regular season with home games March 1 against Southwestern Louisiana and March 8 against Louisiana Tech.

Tickets are on sale for the March 12-14 Sun Belt Conference tournament in Diddle Arena. Call Western's ticket office at 745-4812 for more information.

Ole Miss tops UK; Western rolls

WOMEN

Lady Cats could get no closer.

Western Kentucky 70, New Orleans 62: The 170-ranked Lady Topper's 18-6, 11-2) went on a 17-0 run midway through the first half and beat New Orleans (16-9, 8-6) in a Sun Belt Conference game.

Leading 10-8 after six minutes, Western surged to a 27-9 lead before New Orleans scored at the 6:09 mark. WKU led 42-25 at halftime.

"I think we definitely a sleep - ," Central Florida coach Gale Falkenburg said.

Detect a theme here?

The lingering, remote chances of New Orleans winning the regular-season crown were squelched Sunday with the Buc-kettes' 78-62 loss to Western Kentucky in Diddle Arena.

"The Alaskan tournament will be a good test for us," Middleton said of the Northern Lights Invitational, a tournament Friday-Sunday in Anchorage. "This will tell us if we can get it mentally together before the conference tournament."

Until back-to-back losses to Lamar and Western, New Orleans had been one of the Sun Belt's hottest teams. But with only two league games remaining, the Buc-kettes have no chance for the tournament's top seed.

UCF was out of the race long ago. But the Lady Knights flashed an upset mindset last week in Diddle, playing Western to overtime before falling 90-77.

"We're just playing better and better," Falkenburg said. "We've definitely been playing our best basketball in the last three weeks."

And maybe it's good the tournament is here," she said of Diddle. "We did pretty well in here tonight.

This week's poll

Western is up one spot to No. 16 in the new Associated Press poll.

West Virginia is 12th, the Mountaineers' highest ranking ever. The Lady Topper beat West Virginia 85-84 in overtime on Dec. 15.

"Early in the year when we lost to Western Kentucky, we were 3-2, and I told our players to go out and win the next 20," West Virginia coach Scott Hamilton told the AP.

His team's winning streak is up to 19 games after a 61-50 win over 15th-ranked George Washington on Monday.

"I think West Virginia's at least that good," Western coach Paul Sanderford said of the No. 13 ranking. "Break win over: George Washington was at G.W., too, so that's really a big win for them.

Two other Lady Topper foes made the poll. Stephen F. Austin, a 58-43 winner over Western on Dec. 2, is seventh, and Vanderbilt, which the Lady Topper beat 71-63 on Jan. 7, is No. 12.

Lamar and Louisiana Tech both received votes for the poll but were not ranked.

"I'm not trying to be biased," Sanderford said.

"But I've been voting Louisiana Tech in the Top 25. You look at who they've lost to - Mississippi by three, Iowa by four, they've lost to Tennessee, Lamar, Arkansas State. They're all quality basketball teams."

"Lamar and Louisiana Tech, I think, are both Top 25 basketball teams."

Injuries

The rest of the Lady Topper are Lisa Lang's right knee and Renee Westmoreland's left ankle to thank for their day off from practice Monday.

Sanderford said he would have put his players to work had it not been for his starting small forward's and point guard's injuries. Both played fewer than 20 minutes Sunday.

Lang injured her knee during a practice last week. She set out last week's win over Central Florida, then aggravated the injury Sunday. But she said after the game she expected to play in the 7 p.m. Thursday day game at Arkansas State.

Westmoreland, who hurt her ankle during overtime against UCF, was not expected to play Sunday but contributed five points, an assist and a steal off the bench. She'll probably go against the Lady Indians, as well.

"They're not the only gimp Lady Toppers. Kristie Jordan bruised her knee, and Paulette Monroe's shin splints are achy. Neither are expected to miss playing time, though.

Odds and ends

Western's statistical leaders through 24 games: Monroe, scoring (12.5 points per game); Lang, rebounding (6.3); Kim Pohlke, assists (4.1) and turnovers (4); Veronica Cook, field-goal shooting (37.5 percent); Debbie Scott, free-throw shooting (84 percent); Westmoreland, minutes (30) and 3-point shooting (40 percent); Trina Wilson, blocks (13 total).

Lang and Westmoreland share the team lead in steals at 1.7 per game.

UCF game Thursday was Western's fourth overtime game of the regular season. That's a Lady Topper record.

Western's next game is 7 p.m. Thursday at Arkansas State. The Lady Topppers finish the regular season with home games March 1 against Southwestern Louisiana and March 8 against Louisiana Tech.

Tickets are on sale for the March 12-14 Sun Belt Conference tournament in Diddle Arena. Call Western's ticket office at 745-4812 for more information.
Conference coaches' foresight of

By ERIC WEBBER

The Daily News

About four months and 130 conference games later, those coaches don't look so dumb, after all.

With less than two weeks to go in the regular season, the Sun Belt Conference standings show the Lady Toppers leading a pack of four teams at the top, a sleeper or two in the middle and a bunch of patatas at the bottom.

Back in October — back before all the upsets that gave women's college basketball in first season of true parity, before all the school-long winning streaks, shuffle-ups starts and wearying routs — the Sun Belt coaches got together in Gallatin, Miss., and took a stab at predicting the conference standings come season's end and March.

Their foresight: the Lady Toppers leading a pack of four teams at the top, a sleeper or two in the middle and a bunch of patatas at the bottom.

If so, then I think the regular-season winner will get the second berth, he said.

"Looking at it that way, winning the regular-season title is very important."

Tonight's game and a March 8 home date with Louisiana Tech loom as big obstacles in Western's path. Those two games — which sandwich the Lady Toppers' game Sunday in Diddle Arena with winless Southwestern Louisiana — are the only two remaining regular-season games pitting a pair of the league contenders.

Sanderford was livid with his team after a lackluster practice Tuesday. Things were only a bit more cheery after Wednesday's workout. With starting point guard Renee Westmoreland and small forward Lisa Lang still limping on sore ankles and knees, respectively, Sanderford is worried that his team is less than primed physically or mentally for tonight's game in Jonesboro.

"Actually, I don't think our problem is physical — our problems are mental," Sanderford said. "I'm not sure how hungry this team is. You can't turn it on and off and expect to be a championship basketball team."

Sanderford is worried that so re are less than primed physically or mentally for tonight's game. You can't turn it on and off and expect to be a championship basketball team."

Sun Belt

The automatic NCAA berth goes breaking scheme, the Lady Techsters have the best chance of upsetting Western for the regular-season title.

If Tech wins the league's regular-season finale in Bowling Green on March 8 and finishes tied with Western at the top of the standings, the Lady Toppers will enter the March 12-14 Sun Belt tournament with the top seed.

Tech beat Western in Ruston, La., on Feb. 6, and head-to-head competition is the first tie-breaker in the Sun Belt.

Coach Leon Barmore has sent seven Tech teams to the Final Four. Three have won national championships. Maybe this batch of Lady Techsters will not produce another banner for the Thomas Assembly Center rafters, but Sanderford believes Barmore has molded another Top 25 unit despite their absence from the poll.

"I'm not trying to be biased," Sanderford said. "But you look at who they've lost to — Mississippi by three, Iowa by four; they lost to Tennessee, Lamar, Arkansas State. They're all quality basketball teams."

Lamar

As long as they do not stumble in any of their last three league dates — all of them relatively easy ones — the Lady Cardinals can wait for Western to be upset, then hope the league's tie-breaking scheme smokes them.

Lamar was whipped 82-63 in Bowling Green on Jan. 12, but it gained a split in the series with an 82-75 win in Beaumont, Texas, a month later.

The loss in Diddle Arena was Lamar's third in four games. An NCAA investigation had led to short suspensions of guards Brenda Hachett and Ramona Jones, "and at that time I was fighting for this team's life," Coach Liz McQuiter said. "Every practice, every game was a struggle."

Since then, Lamar has won 10 of 11 games, and a mutual opponent says the Lady Cardinals are on Western's level.

"Lamar and Western are one, two," New Orleans guard Emie Middleton said. "And you can put them in either order. It doesn't matter, they're that close."

Arkansas State

The Lady Indians have cooled since a blazing start on its league schedule, and Arkansas State desperately needs a win tonight to keep chase for the regular-season title.

Arkansas State built a 13-point first-half lead before falling 93-76 in Bowling Green on Jan. 26. In that game, Western held the Sun Belt's leading scorer, senior forward Nicole Wickett, six points below her 20-per-game average. But Senora Curtis, a brisk, 5-foot-10 center, surprised the Lady Indians with a keen arching jumper and tallied 21 points.

Arkansas State was finally hurt by Western's depth as seven Lady Toppers scored in double-figures.

The injuries won't keep Westmoreland and Lang out of action tonight. So Western's depth may not be quite the factor it was in January.

"The keys for us will be the same as always — taking care of the basketball and rebounding," Sanderford said. "And we've got to be focused, because Arkansas State is going to come out like it's playing in the World Series."

The rest

An upset or two kept New Orleans in the hunt for the regular-season crown until its 78-62 loss Feb. 23 in Diddle. But the Box-kettles feel they could be a sleeper for the tournament.

So does Central Florida after stretching the Lady Toppers to overtime before falling 90-77 in Diddle on Feb. 20. The Lady Knights are coached by Gale Fuliken, who also handles men's and women's tennis at UCF and took over the duties of the women's basketball team when Laura Smith left before the start of the season.

South Alabama is having an off year. Texas-Pan American is a hard-working gang who can't shoot straight. And Southwestern probably will be left out of the eight-team league tournament in Bowling Green.

"The Sun Belt has a chance to get three teams in the tournament," Sanderford said. "It's a good league. The team that wins on the road down the stretch will win the race.

"But, you know, we could beat Arkansas State, Southwestern and Louisiana Tech, and if we lose in our first game of the tournament, then I'm going to feel like we failed."

SUN BELT

The automatic NCAA berth goes to the conference tournament winner. But Western coach Paul Sanderford expects the Sun Belt to receive no fewer than two invitations, "and if the tournament and regular-season champions are not the same team, then I think the regular-season winner will get the second berth," he said.

"Looking at it that way, winning the regular-season title is very important."

Tonight's game and a March 8 home date with Louisiana Tech loom as big obstacles in Western's path. Those two games — which sandwich the Lady Toppers' game Sunday in Diddle Arena with winless Southwestern Louisiana — are the only two remaining regular-season games pitting a pair of the league contenders.

Sanderford was livid with his team after a lackluster practice Tuesday. Things were only a bit more cheery after Wednesday's workout. With starting point guard Renee Westmoreland and small forward Lisa Lang still limping on sore ankles and knees, respectively, Sanderford is worried that his team is less than primed physically or mentally for tonight's game in Jonesboro.

"Actually, I don't think our problem is physical — our problems are mental," Sanderford said. "I'm not sure how hungry this team is. You can't turn it on and off and expect to be a championship basketball team."

Louisiana Tech

Because of the Sun Belt's tie-breaking scheme, the Lady Techsters have the best chance of upsetting Western for the regular-season title.

If Tech wins the league's regular-season finale in Bowling Green on March 8 and finishes tied with Western at the top of the standings, the Lady Toppers will enter the March 12-14 Sun Belt tournament with the top seed.

Tech beat Western in Ruston, La., on Feb. 6, and head-to-head competition is the first tie-breaker in the Sun Belt.

Coach Leon Barmore has sent seven Tech teams to the Final Four. Three have won national championships. Maybe this batch of Lady Techsters will not produce another banner for the Thomas Assembly Center rafters, but Sanderford believes Barmore has molded another Top 25 unit despite their absence from the poll.

"I'm not trying to be biased," Sanderford said. "But you look at who they've lost to — Mississippi by three, Iowa by four; they lost to Tennessee, Lamar, Arkansas State. They're all quality basketball teams."

Lamar

As long as they do not stumble in any of their last three league dates — all of them relatively easy ones — the Lady Cardinals can wait for Western to be upset, then hope the league's tie-breaking scheme smokes them.

Lamar was whipped 82-63 in Bowling Green on Jan. 12, but it gained a split in the series with an 82-75 win in Beaumont, Texas, a month later.

The loss in Diddle Arena was Lamar's third in four games. An NCAA investigation had led to short suspensions of guards Brenda Hachett and Ramona Jones, "and at that time I was fighting for this team's life," Coach Liz McQuiter said. "Every practice, every game was a struggle."

Since then, Lamar has won 10 of 11 games, and a mutual opponent says the Lady Cardinals are on Western's level.

"Lamar and Western are one, two," New Orleans guard Emie Middleton said. "And you can put them in either order. It doesn't matter, they're that close."

Arkansas State

The Lady Indians have cooled since a blazing start on its league schedule, and Arkansas State desperately needs a win tonight to keep chase for the regular-season title.

Arkansas State built a 13-point first-half lead before falling 93-76 in Bowling Green on Jan. 26. In that game, Western held the Sun Belt's leading scorer, senior forward Nicole Wickett, six points below her 20-per-game average. But Senora Curtis, a brisk, 5-foot-10 center, surprised the Lady Indians with a keen arching jumper and tallied 21 points.

Arkansas State was finally hurt by Western's depth as seven Lady Toppers scored in double-figures.

The injuries won't keep Westmoreland and Lang out of action tonight. So Western's depth may not be quite the factor it was in January.

"The keys for us will be the same as always — taking care of the basketball and rebounding," Sanderford said. "And we've got to be focused, because Arkansas State is going to come out like it's playing in the World Series."

The rest

An upset or two kept New Orleans in the hunt for the regular-season crown until its 78-62 loss Feb. 23 in Diddle. But the Box-kettles feel they could be a sleeper for the tournament.

So does Central Florida after stretching the Lady Toppers to overtime before falling 90-77 in Diddle on Feb. 20. The Lady Knights are coached by Gale Fuliken, who also handles men's and women's tennis at UCF and took over the duties of the women's basketball team when Laura Smith left before the start of the season.

South Alabama is having an off year. Texas-Pan American is a hard-working gang who can't shoot straight. And Southwestern probably will be left out of the eight-team league tournament in Bowling Green.

"The Sun Belt has a chance to get three teams in the tournament," Sanderford said. "It's a good league. The team that wins on the road down the stretch will win the race.

"But, you know, we could beat Arkansas State, Southwestern and Louisiana Tech, and if we lose in our first game of the tournament, then I'm going to feel like we failed."
fell in the first half. Three- and four-minute stretches between Western scores were the norm. The Lady Toppers shot 30.5 percent from the field for the game — their least accurate night of the year.

"The refs, the bad calls, all the mouthing between the players, the cheap elbows — all of that frustrates you," Western center Trina Tate said. "But you can't let it take you out of your game, and it did us tonight."

Sanderford said he didn't help his team at halftime.

"I needed to calm them down," he said. "Instead, I tried to pump them up. And they did come out and play hard, but nothing seemed to work."

The Lady Toppers closed within 34-29 on a Wilcox layup with 10:20 to play in the game, but Arkansas State followed with 12 unanswered points. Western was never closer than eight the rest of the way.

Western's poor shooting did not grate on Sanderford nearly as much as its 45-44 rebounding disadvantage.

"We're bigger, and we're stronger," he said. "And we still didn't win the battle of the boards. That's a matter of not putting a body on somebody and blocking out, and there's no excuse for that."

Lady Arkansas had 11 rebounds to go with five points. Monroe was the Lady Toppers' high scorer with 14 points.

Odds and ends — Kim Pelhke's February was outstanding until Thursday in Jonesboro.