

**B-BALL from page 13:**

more aggressive.

"They contested shots better than we did. Our turnovers led to easy baskets for UNCW. They played better than us defensively," said head coach Mac McCarthy of the Rams. "UNCW is strong, aggressive and physical and we didn't react well to that."

He acknowledged the role of the fans recognizing how the Seahawks "fed off the crowd, they got easy points on transition baskets and second chance shots... It's loud, hot, small and they have vocal fans. Overall it helped UNCW win tonight."

Blizzard agreed, explaining that the fans step in to provide encouragement when players' strength is waning. "When the crowd gets up, they just make you want to play good defense," he said.

The action-packed first half came to

an end less than six minutes after the peak score differential of 19 points, with the Seahawks in the lead 35-28. Both teams kept a fast pace through the first fifteen minutes of the second half; with five minutes left in the game, UNCW began to ease up on the pressure.

"We relaxed towards the end," said Blizzard, commenting on the 20-second time-out with only 3:10 left to go. "Coach put us back on track."

"I think this was the best we played this year," Wainwright said. He also gave credit to the Rams: "I feel VCU is one of the top one or two teams in the league. I don't feel that we are. The benchmark of a really good team is to have a good away game."

That chance arrived with last Saturday's away match versus ECU, and tonight's game at James Madison, before returning home to play American University this Saturday, Jan. 29.

**Lions fan enters football Hall of Fame**

ROSEVILLE, Mich. (AP) - The Pro Football Hall of Fame has honored a Detroit Lions fan for his dedication to the team.

Peter Cucinella is one of 31 fans of NFL teams who were inducted into the Hall of Fame exhibit at the Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

The 65-year-old resident of this Detroit suburb left Sunday for a two-day, all-expenses-paid trip to Canton.

A ceremony Tuesday showcased his spirit for the Lions in the form of photographs and testimonials. The exhibit also features famous fan mementos, a film about the NFL's most dedicated and outrageous fans and a plaque honoring past inductees.

This is the second year the Hall has honored some of the NFL's most passionate fans with an exhibit.

Cucinella is a longtime Lions devotee, dating back to when he saw Bobby Layne and other greats of the 1950s play at Briggs Stadium.

But he was honored for his past 10 years of fandom. He has attended every home game except one and nearly half the away games since 1990, a year after he retired from Rouge Steel.

"My brothers Sam and John said I worked hard for this honor, but I don't consider it work," Cucinella told The Macomb Daily of Mount Clemens. "If it is work, it is a labor

of love."

Every Sunday during football season, Cucinella paints his face Honolulu blue and white and goes crazy for his team.

He dons an "I Love the Lions" sweatshirt, rhinestone pants and Borsalino hat on which he pins dozens of buttons displaying photographs of him with players and celebrity fans.

He screams, twists and shouts, trying to fire up the players and the crowd, sometimes losing his voice. He sits in the first row of section 103 behind the Lions bench.

TV cameras often catch his act. He is a regular on NFL highlight films.

The players know him and are friendly with him. Cucinella talks to them before, after and sometimes during games.

Most of the players realize he is looking out for them, although he said he is not blindly loyal.

"I walk in and out of the stadium with them," he said. "I give them input and tell them how they did. It's tough love."

Being a Detroit fan isn't always easy. But Cucinella is willing to ride the highs and lows with a team that has won only one playoff game in more than 40 years.

"Just because the baby is ugly doesn't mean you give up the baby," he said at his home, which has walls covered with Lions photos and paraphernalia. "I'm going to stick with them. Things are going to get better."

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**SPORTS THIS WEEK:**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26:**

**MEN'S BASKETBALL:**  
UNCW at James Madison, 7:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 28:**

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:**  
UNCW at East Carolina, 7:00 p.m.  
*TELEVISED:* HTS (cable ch. 47)

**MEN'S TENNIS:**  
UNCW at Greenville tennis center, TBA

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 29**

**MEN'S BASKETBALL:**  
American at UNCW, 7:30 p.m.

**MEN'S TENNIS:**  
UNCW at Greenville tennis center, TBA

**INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD:**  
UNCW at Navy Quadrangular, TBA

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 30**

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:**  
UNCW at James Madison, 2:00 p.m.

**MEN'S TENNIS:**  
UNCW at Greenville tennis center, TBA