

Emerging Rams?

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because of foul problems.

So here comes 6-7 back-up Maurice Edmunds to take up the slack. Edmunds, not noted for his scoring, put in a solid 20 minutes, ending the night with nine points and eight boards. But to better measure Edmunds' contributions, it's more important to look back at *when and how* he scored and rebounded more so than what his final totals were.

In several sequences during the game, Edmunds made up his mind to take his man to the basket with strong moves instead of passing the ball back to the guards. He didn't always score when he drove to the hole. However, his decision to become more aggressive offensively, made Hampton change their defensive thinking.

Aware that Edmunds doesn't look for the shot, the tendency was to lay back and wait for him to pass, then look to double team Hardin, who's the team's most dangerous low post scoring threat. But with Edmunds going to the hoop, his defender was caught off guard and out of position for the rebound in case of a miss because of the attention that defenses pay to Hardin.

Hardin, by the way, didn't have one of his most stellar games. But he continued to play strong inside the paint. Even though his shot wasn't falling with great regularity, he went to foul line enough to help him score 20 points to go along with eight rebounds.

The story in the backcourt involves three people -- Kevin Edwards, Phillips, and Lorenzo White.

Edwards is a 6-1, 190, muscular type, who can hit the outside jumper which discourages defenses from clogging the middle of the lane. Edwards is also strong enough to go inside against bigger people and score, or at least get to the foul line.

Against the Pirates, Edwards demonstrated that he could be the guy that Gaines has been looking for. He drilled Hampton for 29 points, which included three for six shooting from three-point range. When Edwards wasn't bombing away from the perimeter, he would find open seams in the Pirates defense on the backdoor route, or penetrate into the lane to challenge HU's interior defense.

Phillips, WSSU's defensive ace, did his usual job as a defender, playing the tough, chest-to-chest defense that makes him a valuable commodity for Gaines. But on this night, Phillips became more offensive oriented and which enabled the Rams to open up the floor even more, so they could use some of their quickness. He tallied 12 points and eight rebounds for the evening. Deeper still, his ability to adequately bring the ball upcourt helped the Rams to withstand the



Maurice Edmunds (52) will help the Rams accelerate their climb back to respectability if he continues to play like he did against the Pirates.

Pirates pressing defense. This was particularly critical since starting point man Lorenzo White played just 21 minutes because of foul difficulties.

But while White was on the floor, he was the fella that held it all together for the Rams. The 6-0 freshman's chief asset is his ability to get

everyone involved in the offense while keeping the tempo moderate enough so the Rams don't rush their shots when they go into their offense.

In earlier games, the Rams found themselves getting into deep trouble early in games because they were in too big of a hurry to shoot -- even with a 45 seconds shot clock. With White around to foster more patience

when the Rams have the ball, they make better decisions on shot selection.

However, this team is still learning to deal with itself. The Rams got another opportunity to see how far they had come in a Tuesday night home encounter against rival North Carolina A & T at the Coliseum. But more importantly, they will get a true conference test when they travel to meet Virginia Union on Dec. 14.

"Bighouse" & Co. should know a lot more about themselves after they deal with the Panthers in Richmond.

Photo by T. Lee



Photo by T. Lee

Kevin Edwards (with ball) provides Winston with a soft outside shooting touch and strength to go inside and battle the big guys inside the paint.



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