

SPORTS

Arcola boys split LPC games, nip Central A&M, now 9-9

By Mike Monahan

MOWEAQUA – It was an up and down three games for the Arcola boys' basketball team as they went 2-1, but the one loss was a 54-29 Lincoln Prairie Conference loss to Okaw Valley. The victories included a 63-50 conference triumph over Villa Grove and a non-conference win over Central A&M Saturday, 51-46.

Arcola was 9-9 overall and 2-2 in the LPC prior to Tuesday's game against Cerro Gordo/Bement at Cerro Gordo. The Purple Riders will compete in the conference tournament. The pairings were too late for the Record-Herald, but it is in Argenta and has games Friday and Saturday.

Arcola 51, Central A&M 46

Arcola had the largest lead of the game, 34-24 after a basket by Gerardo Alanis with 3:12 left in the third quarter. It was still an eight point lead with six minutes remaining when the Raiders rallied to within one, 40-39 with 3:08 remaining.

Central A & M's Gavin Houchins scored 11 of his 13 points in the 6:24 to help the Raiders rally.

The Raiders, who played a 2-3 zone most of the time, got two free throws by Maddix Plain with 1:24 remaining to make it a 45-43 game, in favor of Arcola, who trailed two times, with the last time occurring early in the second quarter, 16-15.

"Keeping the lead late was huge," said Arcola coach Greg Gisinger. "It allowed us to just focus on taking care of the ball and making free throws late instead of playing catch up. We made some big plays on the defensive end. A big charge and a couple of blocks and some big rebounds."

Jackson Miller made one of two free throws with one minute remaining. A Central A&M player was going up for two when Alanis blocked his shot and Miller made a pair of free throws for a 48-43 advantage with 45.1 left.

"Alanis' late block was huge for us as it gave us a chance to go shoot free throws to ice the game which we were able to do," said Gisinger whose team made 7-of-11 free throws in the final six minutes.

The Raiders did make it a one possession game with 13.5 left after two free throws by Kaden Piersall. Aldo Garcia made a pair of free throws with 10.4 left for the final points of the game.

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The Raiders, a member of the Central Illinois Conference, have lost eight straight and have a record of 2-13.

Miller led Arcola with 19 points, including 11 in the fourth quarter. Miller's 3-pointer with 1:40 left put AHS up 45-41. Garcia made all of his six free throws and finished with 10 as did Alanis.

Okaw Valley 54, Arcola 29

Arcola led 5-4 in the opening 4:39, but Okaw Valley reeled off 14 unanswered points in a span of 4:07 starting with back-to-back 3-pointers by freshman Braden Montgomery.

At halftime Arcola had 14 turnovers against the Timberwolves 2-2-1 zone. The defense had held the Purple Riders to just 3-of-17 shooting from the field, yet Okaw Valley led just 22-12. Okaw Valley scored the

first six points of the second half, all by Montgomery and the Purple Riders didn't get closer than 13 after that.

The Timberwolves, who improved to 7-10 overall and 2-1 in the LPC, forced Arcola into 27 turnovers.

"We work on it every day," said Okaw Valley and former Arcola coach Brooks Inman. "We have been challenging the guys to get a road win. We struggled on the road (4-9), getting leads and allow teams to come back. We really needed a road win and I thought the guys responded pretty well tonight. We pride ourselves on our defense. It is still a work in progress. I still think we can do better. Offensively, we are not very clean."

Braden Phillips led Arcola with nine points and eight rebounds.

"I thought their defensive pressure sped us up too much and we just were not solid with the basketball," said Gisinger. "Alanis did a good job. I thought Braden Phillips did a good job of handling the pressure. We just threw the ball away too much. None of the adjustments we would make would matter if we are going to throw the ball away 27 times. We knew they were going to play a 2-2-1 half court and things were open early on it. I thought we were just passive early on it. We didn't do a good job of drawing the double team and then making the good pass. We would try and dribble through a double team or pick it up and just throw it and not even look, or make a wrong read and not cut to the backside."

In the final minutes the Okaw Valley faithful were chanting 'Okaw Valley'.

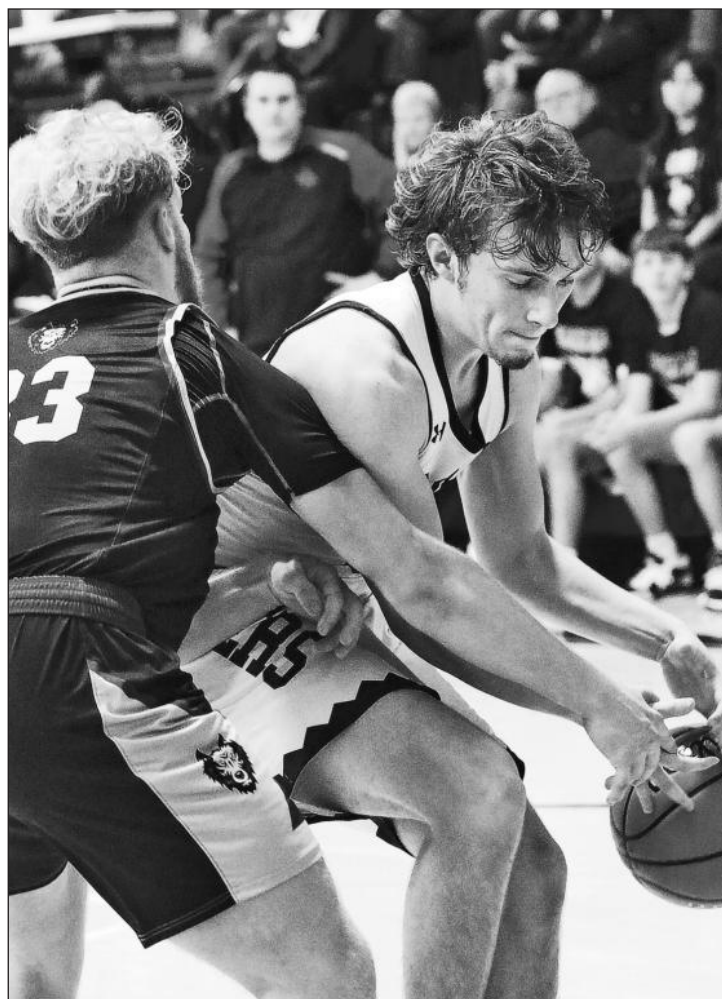
"When you turn the ball over 27 times you are going to get beat," said Gisinger. "I don't care who you are playing. Hats off to them. They played good defense. I think they wanted it more than we did. I think their fans wanted it more. I think they were better in every aspect including coaching. I have to do better too."

Hudson Ruppert led Okaw Valley with 13, including nine in the second half. Montgomery finished with 12 points.

"Montgomery has started all year," said Inman whose team had four starters with two fouls each. "He had a couple of nice games early (17 vs. Newton in the Thanksgiving Tournament. We are still waiting for him to get going a little bit. Being a freshman can be hard in that role, but he has



ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL junior Jackson Miller (14) works towards the basket in the varsity game with Okaw Valley played Friday, Jan. 13 in Arcola. Arcola's varsity lost 52-29. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL junior Tyson Lewis (5) fights for possession of the ball in the varsity game with Okaw Valley played Friday, Jan. 13 in Arcola. Arcola's varsity lost 52-29. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

got a lot of potential and we are excited for him."

Arcola 63, Villa Grove 50

Arcola junior varsity coach David Myers took over for Gisinger, who couldn't coach due to two technicals against Decatur LSA, one on purpose to get the team fired up and one after the game when he talked to the officials.

Myers improved to 3-0 as a coach.

The Purple Riders were led by Braden Phillips with 19 and two others finished in double digits as Miller has 17 and Garcia 14. Phillips had 15 in the second half. Miller had 11 in the first half, including three 3-pointers and Garcia had 10 points in the opening quarter as Arcola led 15-6. The Purple Riders led 40-20 at the half and led 50-34 heading into the final stanza.

Junior varsity

The junior varsity topped Central A&M 35-30 after falling to Okaw Valley 42-13.

Aiden Smith led Arcola against the Timberwolves with six points.

Scoring information against Central A&M and Villa Grove were unavailable at press time.

Freshmen

The freshman lost Monday to Sullivan 45-43 in overtime at Sullivan. The team hosted Maroa-Forsyth, but results and scoring were not available at press time.

Varsity

Arcola	13	13	8	17-51
Central A&M	12	10	6	18-46

ARCOLA: Ryan Lindstrom 1-0-2, Aldo Garcia 2-6-10, Gerardo Alanis 4-1-10, Brandon Phillips 2-3-7, Jackson Miller 7-3-19, D.J. Stevens 1-0-3, Totals 17-17-51

3-point goals: Arcola 4 (Alanis 1, Stevens 1, Miller 2), Central A&M 2 (Gavin Houchins 2). Free throws: Arcola 13-17 .765, Central A&M 18-27 .667. Bench points: Arcola 3, Central A&M 7

Okaw Valley	14	8	16	16-54
Arcola	5	7	13	4-29

ARCOLA: Garcia 0-2-2, Alanis 2-2-8, Tyson Lewis 1-0-2, Phillips 2-5-9, Miller 2-0-5, Lindstrom 1-0-3, Stevens 0-0-0, Max Rardin 0-0-0, Kaden Brawner 0-0-0, Bryan Mendoza 0-0-0, Alan Guevara 0-0-0, Wayne Humphrey 0-0-0, Adrian Vazquez 0-0-0, Totals 8-9-29

3-point goals: Arcola 4-16 .250 (Alanis 2-3, Lindstrom 1-2, Miller 1-7, Garcia 0-3), Okaw Valley 3-7 429 (Braden Montgomery 3-4, Dickens 0-2, Hudson Rupper 0-1). Free throws: Arcola 9-14 .643, Okaw Valley 11-16 .688. Rebounds: Arcola 24 (Phillips 8), Okaw Valley 17 (Rupper 3). Bench points: Okaw Valley 8, Arcola 3. Turnovers: Arcola 27, Okaw Valley 19. Shooting percentages: Arcola 8-29 .276, Okaw Valley 20-35 .571

Arcola	15	25	10	13-63
Villa Grove	6	14	14	16-50

ARCOLA: Garcia 6-1-14, Alanis 3-1-9, Lewis 1-2-4, Phillips 9-1-19, Miller 7-0-17, Lindstrom 0-0-0, Stevens 0-0-0, Totals 26-5-63

3-point goals: Arcola 6 (Miller 3, Alanis 2, Garcia 1), Villa Grove 4 (Robert Francher 2, Layne Rund 7). Free throws: Arcola 5-10 .500, Villa Grove 3-6 .500. Bench points: Arcola 0, Villa Grove 3.

Junior varsity

Okaw Valley	9	14	17	2-42
Arcola	2	6	3	2-13

ARCOLA: Stevens 0-0-0, Wesch 1-0-3,

Aiden Smith 2-1-6, Rardin 0-0-0, Mendoza 2-0-4, Guevara 0-0-0, Haris Mayhall 0-0-0, Kaden Brawner 0-0-0, Humphrey 0-0-0, Vazquez 0-0-0, Aiden Myers 0-0-0, Totals 5-1-13

3-point goals: Arcola 2 (Wesch 1, Smith 1)

Freshmen

Sullivan-not available at press time

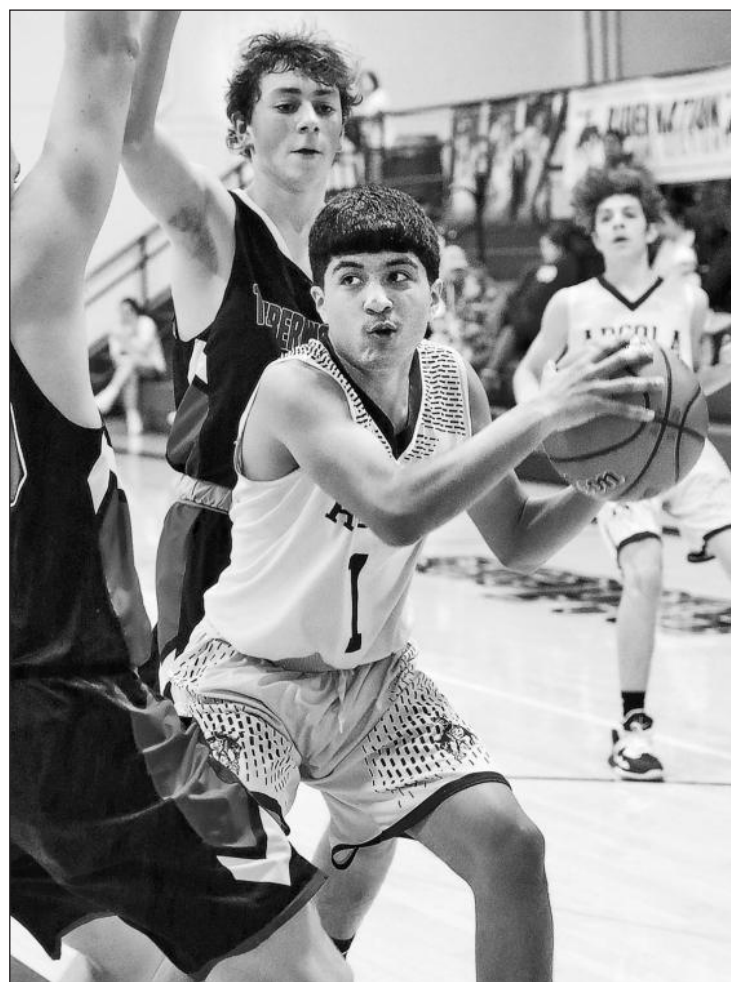
Arcola	5	14	10	6	8-43
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ARCOLA: Guevara 2-1-6, Wesch 3-4-11, Smith 7-7-21, Mayhal 1-0-3, Rardin 0-0-0, Anthony Lira 0-0-0, Myers 1-0-2, Totals 14-12-43

3-point goals: Arcola 3 (Guevara 1, Wesch 1, Mayhall 1)



ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL sophomore Bryan Mendoza (34) goes up for a basket in the JV game with Okaw Valley played Friday, Jan. 13 in Arcola. Arcola's junior varsity lost 42-13. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL sophomore Alan Guevara (1) is shown in the JV game with Okaw Valley played Friday, Jan. 13 in Arcola. Arcola's junior varsity lost 42-13. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL junior Gerardo Alanis (2) brings the ball down the court while being closely guarded in the varsity game with Okaw Valley played Friday, Jan. 13 in Arcola. Arcola's varsity lost 52-29. Also pictured for Arcola are: Braden Phillips (10), Tyson Lewis (5) and Jackson Miller (14). Photo by Nancy Rairden.