

Men's basketball sweeps Jon Wallace Tourney

By **KYLE NORDEEN**
Sports editor

Anxious to move on from a disappointing 2010 campaign, the men's basketball team got off to a perfect start this weekend, winning both contests during the 8th annual Jonathan Wallace Tournament.

The Renegades defeated Shasta College Friday night 57-56 and Delta College Saturday night 63-50.

"It's a great start to the season," said head coach John Peterson. "I was really pleased with the way we played."

The tournament, held in honor of the late Jonathan Wallace who played at Ohlone from 2002-04, hosted only four teams this year — the contest regularly includes eight teams.

The team had some tense final moments in their opening game against Shasta, but escaped with the one-point victory.

Mikhael McKinney turned the ball over with 24 seconds left and the team up by one,



Photo by Kyle Nordeen

Mikhael McKinney drives the lane against Shasta College en route to Ohlone's 57-56 victory Friday.

but a moving screen by Shasta gave possession back to Ohlone, who managed to hold the ball and run the clock out.

It was a hard-fought game in every aspect, but the team did exhibit a little bit of rust in their first game back in ac-

tion. Turnovers were an issue and the team had a hard time converting their free throws.

"Offensively, we were pretty sloppy Friday night, but Saturday was much better in all facets of the game," said Peterson.

"It's something you kind of expect when playing your first game of the season."

While the offense was lacking on Friday, the team's performance on defense is ahead of schedule.

Peterson, who wanted to bring back more of a press-defense, has been taken back with the way his team has been pressuring their opponents.

"I was extremely impressed with how we have been playing on the defensive side of the ball," said Peterson.

"We've been extremely physical, forcing turnovers and have been playing really, really hard. We really like to dictate the tempo of the game and play at our pace."

The Renegades have consistently ranked in the top four in the state in points allowed per game in the Peterson era and they look to continue that trend this season.

The increased exertion from playing a press-defense requires more frequent substitutions and having a deep bench with which you can rotate players will be essential to the scheme's success.

But staying healthy has

been an issue so far — something especially disconcerting just two games into a long season.

McKinney saw limited action in the game against Delta due to swelling around his knee, Jarrad Jackson broke his nose on Friday but returned to play on Saturday and Nick Clarke missed time with a groin injury.

The Renegades also suffered a huge blow with the loss of Anel Bucuk who is out for the season with a torn ACL.

He is the biggest player on the Ohlone roster, measuring 6'8" and weighing in at 220 lbs.

"As long as we can stay healthy, which has been a problem thus far, we should be alright," said Peterson.

With high expectations every season and stiff competition — three teams in the Coast Conference, including Ohlone, are ranked in the top 20 in state — staying healthy will be integral to the team's success.

The team will be off to Redding to participate in the Shasta College Tournament that begins on Friday.

Women's basketball rallies in season opener

By **KEVIN YIN**
Contributor

Fueled by sophomore guard Tina Dang's 23 points, the Ohlone Renegades women's basketball team tipped their season off in dramatic fashion, erasing a 17-point second half deficit to defeat Fresno City College, 69-67, on Tuesday.

The game marked the debut for five Ohlone freshmen, including two starters in point guard Nikki Bechman and forward Josephine Vieira, leading to what Ohlone head coach Julia Allender charitably termed "first game jitters."

Initially, it seemed integrating the new elements into the team would be too cumber-

some to produce a victory against a highly respected Fresno squad. The Renegades turned the ball over 19 times in the face of Fresno's intense pressure defense, including 11 turnovers by the starting guard tandem of Bechman and sophomore Chereese Thomas.

"We just looked like we didn't know what to do against pressure," Allender said. "I think we were trying to do too much rather than just being patient. We were way too much in a hurry."

Trailing 37-27 at halftime, the Renegades seemed to fall completely out of the game early in the second half, allowing an 8-0 Fresno run in the first 2:15 after intermission.

It wasn't until midway through the second that the Renegades seemed to become completely engaged, eschewing passive perimeter passing in favor of more aggressive movement towards the rim, particularly by Thomas. The sophomore guard hit all of her eight free-throws in the second half and repeatedly broke the defense down to create opportunities for teammates.

When Ohlone finally did catch a spark, the contest changed quickly. Three 3's by Dang, along with three baskets by Vieira, ignited a furious 29-13 run for Ohlone that saw the Renegades pull to within three points at 60-57 with 5:55 remaining in the game.

Dang would later make the key basket of the game, hitting a driving layup in the key over the Fresno defense that finally



Photo by Kyle Nordeen

The Renegades' grit and toughness propels them to victory over Fresno City College Tuesday.

put the Renegades on top, 68-67 with only 20 seconds left to play. Dang finished the game with 23 points on 8/12 shooting—including 5/9 from beyond the arc, four rebounds, three assists and four steals.

"I just had to make the play," Dang said of her go-ahead shot. "I saw the defender coming up. I had the shot—you gotta take it. You got an open shot, go for it."

The game also marked an unexpectedly potent debut for Vieira, who tallied 19 points on 9/13 shooting and seven rebounds. The freshman forward's contributions were especially critical for an Ohlone squad that is otherwise bereft of an interior presence.

"I was really nervous and didn't expect to be so good, but as the game went on, I got the nerves down and was able to start playing my game," Vieira said.

Thomas logged a balanced

stat line, finishing the game with 10 points, seven rebounds, eight assists, three steals and a blocked shot. Though she did finish with seven turnovers, Allender credited her aggressiveness with getting the Renegades on track in the second half.

Although the Renegades did not exhibit particularly impressive coordination or systemic proficiency, in rallying from a 17-point deficit and managing to execute well down the stretch they displayed something perhaps more valuable for a team still forming its identity: mental fortitude.

"Especially in the first half, there were some first game jitters — which is to be expected. We didn't win this game because we executed the gameplan well, I think we won this game because we were just a little bit tougher," Allender said.

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