

Tough way to finish

The Olmsted Falls volleyball team gives the state's top-ranked team a battle before falling in the regional final. **Page C2**



SPORTS

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Section

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BOBCATS 92, CAVS

Effort, shots missing

LeBron, Cavs turn in an ugly performance in season's first loss

Brian Windhorst
McClatchy Newspapers

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — This weekend the Cavaliers got an "A" for poise, but an "F" for focus.

A night after scoring a major victory by keeping their emotions under control in San Antonio, the Cavs gave it right back after a hapless and lackadaisical effort led to a humbling 92-88 loss to the Charlotte Bobcats on Saturday night.

Surely it was a back-to-back and a rough one, the long flight and time change meant the Cavs (2-1) didn't arrive at their hotel in Charlotte until nearly 4 a.m. Saturday. So physical fatigue was understandable, but the Cavs' effort had so many more flaws than that excuse could cover.

The blame for this one starts where the credit usually goes, to LeBron James. The Cavs' star was lethargic from the start and played perhaps one of the most detached games of his four-year career.

He was just 3-of-13 from the field and had 16 points — though he did have nine rebounds and seven assists — but it wasn't that it was just a bad shooting night. It appeared to be a poor effort night.

James went huge sections of the game without even showing a hint of aggression. At one point, he went 20 minutes between baskets.

See **CAVS**, C3



NEXT UP

WHO: Cleveland vs. Atlanta
WHEN: Tuesday, 7 p.m.
WHERE: The Q
TV/RADIO: FSN Ohio;
WEOL 930-AM, WTAM 1100-AM

NO. 1 OHIO STATE 17, ILLINOIS



Ohio State receiver Anthony Gonzalez fails to reel in a pass during Saturday's game at Illinois. The Illini's Dorone Edwards is at right.

OSU flat, not flattened

Chris Assenheimer
The Chronicle-Telegram

CHAMPAIGN, ILL. — Ohio State has crafted so many masterpieces this season that surely the Buckeyes can be excused for breaking out the finger paints every once in a while — even if it nearly ruined their perfect body of art work thus far.

Looking less like the top-ranked team in the nation than it has all year, Ohio State built a substantial lead then had to hang on for dear life in a lackluster 17-10 victory Saturday over an inspired Illinois team that had designs of shocking the college football world.

In the end, it was a close call, but one that still went in the win column for the Buckeyes, who remained unbeaten at 10-0

Buckeyes struggle, but take solace in staying undefeated

(6-0 Big Ten) and extended the nation's longest winning streak to 17 games.

"I'm a realist," said Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith, who mirrored OSU's inefficient offense, experiencing his worst day of the year. "Today's performance was not what we wanted but we got through it."

"A win is a win, whether you score 35 points or whatever. It's not the way we wanted it, but who cares? We won."

Barely.

After storming to a 17-0 halftime advantage, the game took on a decidedly different tone in the game's second 30 minutes.

Though Illinois' offense remained in low gear, its defense began to pick up steam in a second half that saw the Illini (2-8, 1-5 Big Ten) hold Ohio State to a miniscule 29 yards and nearly propel a major upset.

"I thought we had the tempo of the game pretty well in hand the first couple possessions in the third quarter," Ohio State coach Jim Tressel said. "From that point on we lost the grasp of the momentum of the game."

"So what does it say that we got taken to the wall? Nobody can get taken to the wall."

See **OSU**, C5

INSIDE

GET A GRIP: No one is questioning Ohio State

freshman running back Chris Wells' talent, but if he doesn't stop fumbling he could end up on the Buckeye bench — permanently. **C5**
MICHIGAN, TOO? The Wolverines struggle as well, barely beating Ball State, 34-26, at home. **C4**



BROWNS

Defense gets a shot to prove it's for real

Scott Petrak
The Chronicle-Telegram

SAN DIEGO — The Browns defense has been an afterthought this season due to the drama that's engulfed the offense.

That will change today, as the defense will be thrust onto center stage, for better or worse. The Chargers boast the second-highest scoring offense in the NFL (30.9 points a game) and two of the premier playmakers in running back LaDainian Tomlinson and tight end Antonio Gates.

"I think if we go out and do good against this offense this week, people will really start noticing," linebacker Andra Davis said. "This is a huge challenge for us."

Despite a rash of injuries to the secondary and two rookies starting at linebacker, the defense has put together a solid if unspectacular season through seven games. It ranks 17th overall (316.4 yards) and 10th in scoring (19.9 points).

See **BROWNS**, C6



DAVE SCHNEIDER / CHRONICLE

John Hronek (front) celebrates with a teammate after scoring the lone goal in Bay's win over Lima Shawnee.

BOYS REGIONAL

Rockets returning to state Final Four

Bob Daniels
The Chronicle-Telegram

LEXINGTON — With the dicey specter of overtime and — worse — a shootout taking shape in the Saturday night chill, John Hronek began to play like a forward possessed.

Something must have clicked in Hronek's mind, because the slight senior took charge in the last 11 minutes of Bay's scoreless regional championship match with Lima Shawnee, the hottest team in Division II.

It paid off for Hronek and the Rockets in the 77th minute. Hronek, Bay's top goal-scorer, gathered up the rebound of a shot by sophomore teammate Aaron Adkins and kicked the ball into the Indians net.

Hronek's 13th goal of the sea-

son stunned the crowd in Lexington High's jam-packed soccer stadium, propelling the Rockets to a 1-0 victory and the ninth regional title in the history of the program.

It also earned the third-ranked Rockets (20-1) a Final Four berth for the second year in a row. They'll meet No. 1 Walsh Jesuit (19-2) in a state semifinal at 7 p.m. Tuesday, probably at Brush High in Lyndhurst. Walsh waxed Orange 8-1 on Saturday afternoon.

It was the 10th shutout of the season for Ben Huntley, Bay's senior goalkeeper. He was forced to make just three saves against a team which had won 18 straight matches after losing its first three of the season.

See **ROCKETS**, C2

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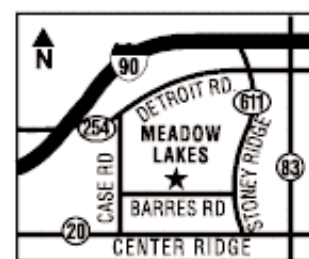
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