



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Going just 30 percent from the free throw line can be costly, especially in a close ball game.

That reality proved painfully true for the Chase County Longhorns in their bid to upset the North Platte St. Pat's Irish Friday night.

While the upset was within reach, St. Pat's squeaked by the Longhorns 41-38. The 'Horns finished the night making just 4-13 at the line.

The Longhorns were coming off a 67-30 win over Wray, Colo., just three days earlier—a game where the Longhorns scored double figures in every quarter and held Wray to single digits in every quarter.

The Longhorns and the Irish both had trouble scoring in the first quarter.

The problem for St. Pat's proved to be the aggressive man-to-man defense by the Longhorns. For the Longhorns, they simply couldn't get the ball to fall, whether from the field, on a put-back or a breakaway lay-up.



Coach Carl Zuege raved about his team's defensive effort against the Irish.

He said they shut down a really good team and have made great strides defensively over the last three weeks.

The second quarter may well have been the best quarter of basketball the Longhorns have played this year.

Trailing 7-8 after one period, the Longhorns doubled up the Irish, holding them to nine while putting up 18.

Aided by a pair of treys from Travis Luhrs and one by Kale Gockley just before the buzzer, the Longhorns took a 25-17 lead into the locker room at half.

The third quarter has proved to be the Longhorns' nemesis this year and it proved true again Friday.

They shot just 2-12 from the field and missed all four free throws attempted after going just 1-5 in the first half.

St. Pat's pounded the boards in the third quarter, allowing them to put up 18 to Chase

Missed free throws costly in three-point loss to St. Pat's

County's four.

Zuege said St. Pat's opened up their perimeter shooting, which created longer rebounds. "We were too concerned with keeping them off the boards inside," he said.

However, if the Longhorns could have just gotten some more shots to fall, that would have changed things, Zuege said.

The offense continued to sputter in the fourth. After trailing 29-37, Isaac Sorensen finally got the Longhorns going with a bucket at the 4:33 mark.

In less than two minutes, the Longhorns rallied back to within one, 36-37, on a jumper and pair of free throws from Jeff Dickey and a free throw from Sorensen.

A St. Pat's bucket was answered by Kelton Fisher with a reverse lay-up underneath to keep the score within one, 38-39, with 1:10 left.

With 39 seconds left, St. Pat's missed two attempts from the line but managed to get the rebound on the second one, forcing the Longhorns to foul.

St. Pat's missed the front end of a 1&1 and the Longhorns came down with the rebound, only to lose it, forcing them to foul again.

St. Pat's hit one of two to give them a 38-40 lead with :14.9 left.

Zuege called time-out with :10.5 left to talk to his team.

St. Pat's gave Fisher an opening to the basket underneath but he was whistled for stepping on the end line while driving to the hoop.

The Longhorns were forced to foul again, with St. Pat's converting one of two.

Dickey got a half-court shot just before the buzzer but couldn't get it to fall, sealing the Longhorns' fate, 38-41.

After gaining some perspective over the weekend, which took away some of the sting of losing, Zuege said his kids played well against one of the top-rated teams in the state.

"You'd like to win those games but a lot of positives can come out of it," he said.

Gockley led the team in scoring with 9, followed by Fisher with 8. Fisher also led the team in rebounds with 11.

Imperial 38

	2 PT.	3 PT.	FT/			
	FG	FG	FTA	F	TP	
Travis Luhrs	0	2	0-0	0	6	
Ryan Moline	0	0	0-0	0	0	
Freddie Kasselmann	0	0	0-0	0	0	0
Kevin German	0	0	0-0	0	0	
Dan Sullivan	0	0	0-0	2	0	
Jeffrey Dickey	2	0	2-2	4	6	
Kale Gockley	3	1	0-0	2	9	
Kelton Fisher	4	0	0-5	3	8	
Justus Wallin	1	0	0-0	1	2	
Hunter Spady	0	0	0-0	0	0	
Trey Milner	0	0	1-4	2	1	
Isaac Sorensen	1	1	1-2	3	6	
Calin Griffin	0	0	0-0	0	0	
Darrin Knobbe	0	0	0-0	0	0	
Brian Bell	0	0	0-0	0	0	
TOTALS	11	3	4-13	17	38	

North Platte St. Pat's 41

B. Niesen 5, M. Buhrman 3, J. Clinch 18, A. Harms 3, M, Mayfield 12.

NP St. Pat's team totals: 2 pt. FG—15; 3 pt. FG—2; FT/FTA—5-12; Fouls—9; TP—41.

Points by quarters:

Imperial 7 18 4 9—38

NP St. Pat's 8 9 18 6—41

Longhorns pound Wray

The Longhorns had little trouble with the Wray Eagles on Tuesday, Jan. 29.

The Longhorns put up 37 first half points while holding Wray to just 12. In the second half, the Longhorns allowed just 18 while posting another 30 en route to the win.

Dickey led the team with 14 followed by Luhrs with 11.

The 'Horns shot 48 percent from the field and 60 percent from the line with all 15 players suited up seeing action.

Imperial 67

	2 PT.	3 PT.	FT/		
	FG	FG	FTA	F	TP
Travis Luhrs	1	3	0-0	1	11
Ryan Moline	0	0	0-0	2	0
Freddie Kasselmann	1	0	0-0	0	2
Kevin German	2	0	3-7	3	7
Dan Sullivan	0	0	0-0	0	0
Jeffrey Dickey	4	2	0-0	1	14
Kale Gockley	0	0	0-0	2	0
Kelton Fisher	3	0	3-3	1	9
Justus Wallin	3	0	1-1	0	7
Hunter Spady	1	0	0-0	0	2
Trey Milner	2	0	1-2	2	5
Isaac Sorensen	1	1	0-0	3	5
Calin Griffin	0	0	0-0	1	0
Darrin Knobbe	1	0	0-0	0	2
Brian Bell	1	0	1-2	1	3
TOTALS	20	6	9-15	17	67

Wray, Colo. 30

A. Clapper 3, Z. Spencer 6, R. Centa 11, A. Ellis 3, K. Arkulari 5, T. Combs 2.

Wray's team totals: 2 pt. FG—3; 3 pt. FG—3; FT/FTA—15-20; Fouls—19; TP—30.

Points by quarters:

Imperial 15 22 16 14—67

Wray 7 5 9 9—30

Bayard, Hershey this week

The Longhorns will play host to a 7-14 Bayard team Friday night and will travel to Hershey, 7-13, Saturday night.

Zuege said Hershey is always a tough place to play. The Longhorns have won two previous meetings this year.

The Longhorns will be on the rebound again after losing to Wauneta-Palisade in action Tuesday night, Feb. 5. Coverage of that game will appear next week.

Action here against Bayard will begin at 4 p.m. with jayvee games in both gyms.

Action at Hershey will kick off with both jayvee games beginning at 3:30 p.m. MT.