



Capture #2 seed in SPVA

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Junior Kelton Fisher did it again Tuesday night.

Trailing by one with 6 seconds left, Fisher got the pass, drove the length of the court, and kissed a lay-up off the glass with 0.3 seconds left for a 37-36 upset of the Southern Valley Eagles.

Coach Zuege and his players flew off the bench when the buzzer sounded, celebrating their upset of the 3rd and 4th ranked team in Class C2. (Lincoln Journal-Star has them ranked 3rd, the Omaha World Herald 4th.)

This marked the second time for Fisher's heroics this season. He pulled off the same feat for the win at the buzzer against Yuma early in mid-December.

Crucial win for SPVA seeding

Not only was the upset sweet for Coach Carl Zuege's squad, it also locked them in as the #2 seed in next week's SPVA conference tournament ahead of Kimball.

Prior to last weekend's games, it looked like SPVA newcomer Kimball would be the #2 seed. However, 3rd and 4th ranked C2 Kimball suffered their first loss.

That, combined with Tuesday's upset over SV and Maxwell losing to Maywood, proved enough to move the Longhorns ahead of Kimball in wildcard points.

Following Tuesday night's upset, Zuege said it wasn't a pretty win. "But I'll take it."

He's hoping the win will give the Longhorns some much-needed momentum. They face Perkins County tonight (Thursday) and Gothenburg Friday and open SPVA play Tuesday against Hershey.

Defense the difference

Coach Zuege said the Longhorns really struggled offensively against the eagles' zone defense, especially in the first half.

The Longhorns had trouble getting off shots and scored just seven in the first half.

They offset their lack of offense with a strong defensive effort, allowing SV just 19 to trail at half 7-19.

At halftime, Zuege told his kids they were still in it and challenged them to go out and take control of the game.

That's exactly what they did, dominating the defending C2 state champions in the second half.

The Longhorns' defensive pressure kept the Eagles off balance to open the second half. In fact, they didn't give up a point until 1:31 left in the third while going on a 11-0 run.

Longhorns upset Southern Valley

By the time the third quarter ended, the Longhorns had pulled to within a pair, 21-23.

The Eagles rebuilt an eight-point lead with five minutes left, 22-30.

The Longhorns hadn't been able to break down the Eagles' zone defense until point guard Dan Sullivan started penetrating the middle midway in the fourth.

That opened the defense just enough, allowing the Longhorns to get off some quality shots and attack the offensive boards.

The Longhorns took advantage of the break-down, with Fisher and Isaac Sorensen getting baskets while Jeff Dickey and Travis Luhrs knocked down 3-pointers.

Luhrs' trey with 1:38 left gave the Longhorns their first lead of the game, 32-30.

The Eagles began fouling, sending Luhrs to the line where he made his first two for a 34-30 lead.

Southern Valley answered with a three-point bomb from at least 24 feet out to pull within one.

They sent Luhrs to the line again, where he made the first of two for a 35-33 lead with :52 left.

The Eagles launched another 3-pointer to go ahead 35-36 with:40 left.

The Longhorns managed to survive three turnovers in the final 30 seconds after Southern Valley went 0-4 at the line.

After the Eagles missed a pair of free throws with :06.2 left, then Luhrs grabbed the rebound and got it out Fisher on the bench side.

With pressure on him all the way, Fisher was undaunted as he released the shot. It went through the hoop with :0.3 left, giving the Eagle no time to call a time-out.

Dickey and Luhrs led the Longhorns in scoring with 8 each.

From the line, the Longhorns went 8-12 while the Eagles were just 5 of 16, and just 1 of 6 in the final minute.

Imperial 37

	2 PT.	3 PT.	FT/		
	FG	FG	FTA	F	TP
Travis Luhrs	1	1	3-4	1	8
Ryan Moline	0	0	0-0	0	0
Kevin German	1	0	1-1	0	3
Dan Sullivan	0	0	0-0	2	0
Jeff Dickey	1	2	0-0	3	8
Kelton Fisher	3	0	0-1	2	6
Justus Wallin	0	0	0-0	1	0
Trey Milner	1	0	3-4	3	5
Isaac Sorensen	3	0	1-2	3	7
TOTALS	10	3	8-12	15	37

Southern Valley 36

Alan Varela 2, Alex Kaup 12, Seth Miller 3, Dalton Best 3, Hunter Quinn 14, Dylan Brooks 2.

Southern Valley totals: 2 pt. FG—8; 3 pt. FG—5; FT/FTA—5-16; Fouls—12; TP—36.

Points by quarters:

Imperial	3	4	14	16—37
Southern Valley	12	7	4	13—36

