IRON RIVER—West Iron's girls team split a pair of games last week, defeating Ewen-Trout Creek at home 56-45 on Jan. 14 before losing to West Pac Conference power Houghton 64-45 on Jan. 18.

West Iron now has a 4-6 record overall and is 1-3 in West Pac play. __PUBLIC__

Lately, the Wykons' success has hinged on their shooting accuracy from the floor—and they have been anything but consistent, making 35% of their shots in some games, 20% in others.

"We're halfway through the season," noted Coach Mike Dallavalle. "These girls have got to find a way to finish around the hoop and score. Because they're getting good looks."

Vs. ETC: The Panthers imposed a slow pace during the first quarter, but West Iron picked up the tempo in the second quarter. "We figured if we could get them out of their comfort zone and move the ball upcourt a little quicker," Dallavalle explained, "we could pull away a little bit."

Kylee Erickson and Alexis Golfis powered WIC's offense in the second quarter with 11 and 7 points, respectively. "We did a really good job on the inside-out game," the coach said.

Kick-outs: "We got the ball in to Sierra [Rasmussen] and Megan [Miatech]. They worked well, kicking the ball out if they didn't have an open shot, finding our guards. We moved the ball well."

He also noted Emilie Christensen's work on Zoe McGeshick, holding her to four points in the first half, and Cassilyn Pellizzer's rebounding. "A solid game defensively."

Erickson finished with 24 points to lead her team, and the rest of the team pitched in: Miatech scored 10 points, and Golfis and Rasmussen both had eight.

Numbers: WIC team: 21-60 (35%) FT, 7-17 (41%) 3's, 7-13 54%) FT, 50 rebs, 11 fouls. ETC team: 18-57 (32%) FG, 3-12 (25%) 3's, 6-9 (67%) FT; 30 rebs, 9 fouls.

WIC stats: Kylee Erickson, 24 points, 6x3, 5 assists; Megan Miatech, 10 pts, 10 rebs; Alexis Golfis, 8 pts; Sierra Rasmussen, 8 pts; Cassilyn Pellizzer, 10 rebs. ETC scoring: M. Niemi, 11 pts; Z. McGeshick, 11 pts, 8 rebs; B. Suomumaki, 10 pts, 8 rebs; S. Robl, 9 pts.

Panthers	11	13	6	15	--	45
Wykons	12	24	7	13	--	56

At Houghton: The Gremlins won by 22 on their home floor, but "It didn't feel like a 20-point loss," Dallavalle said. "They didn't have any huge runs. They just chipped away at us, a little bit at a time."

Fouls played a big role: Miatech had to sit for much of the first half and was joined by Pellizzer in the second quarter. Houghton took advantage and built up a 36-24 halftime lead.

"I thought we held our own pretty good," Dallavalle said. The big difference was Houghton's speed against the Wykons' substitutes: The Gremlins took advantage with some transition baskets.

"Can't miss": Close to the net, West Iron's size gave Houghton some problems: The Wykons had a 51-35 rebounding edge. "But a lot of those were offensive rebounds that we've got to put back in," Dallavalle pointed out. "We can't miss second, third and fourth chances and shoot 20% and expect to win games."

"We just didn't do much against their defense. They didn't press us, but they play solid man-to-man defense, and we weren't setting good screens."

Dallavalle was happy with how his team attacked the basket and drew fouls—WIC attempted 23 free throws. But they had a hard time finishing.

The coach also liked Christensen's work on the Gremlins' Elisa Jurmu. "She was on Jurmu most of the night and held her to 3 for 11 shooting in the first half."

Jurmu got much of her scoring late in the game and led Houghton with 18 points. The Wykons' Kylee Erickson led both teams with 19 points, and Christensen added 13 for WIC.

Numbers: WIC team: 12-58 (21%) FG, 3-16 (19%) 3's, 15-23 (65%) FT, 51 rebs. Houghton team: 24-60 (40%) FG, 6-12 (50%) 3's, 10-18 (56%), 30 rebs.

WIC stats: Erickson, 19 pts; Christensen, 13 pts, 12 rebs; Miatech, 10 rebs. Houghton stats: Elisa Jurmu, 18 pts, Kelsey Richards, 11 pts, 5 asts; Sydney Dillinger, 10 pts, 9 rebs.

Wykons	11	9	7	15	--	42
Gremlins	15	17	12	20	--	64

Coming up: The Wykons' road trip continues with back-to-back games at North Dickinson (Jan. 24) and Norway (Jan. 25; postponed from Jan. 21 due to the cold). Early next week, they play consecutive home games: Kingsford (Jan. 28) and Stephenson (Jan. 29).