West Iron's Brock Hopkins takes it to net, bowling over Forest Park's Lee Graff in the process Jan. 17. Trailing the action are FP's Raymond Tomasik (25), Austin Snell (3), Derek Aberly (35) and West Iron's Austin Waara.

IRON RIVER—That Thursday night fiasco at Forest Park didn't do West Iron's basketball team any good, but 24 hours later they rallied from behind in the fourth quarter, earning a 63-58 win at L'Anse Jan. 18. __PUBLIC__

That ended a long, rough three-game week on an up note. It started with a 64-52 loss at Houghton Jan. 14 and that 83-52 battering at Forest Park Jan. 17.

"They flat came out and outplayed us," Coach Dan Schive said about the Trojans game. "They outrebounded us, outhustled us, they beat us up and down the floor, inside, outside." The Forest Park story has the details.

Still, the Wykons ended their five-game road trip with a 3-2 record. For the season, West Iron is now 7-3 overall and 3-1 in the West Pac Conference.

At Houghton: The score by quarters tells the story: very close game except for the third quarter, when Houghton clamped on a press, forced turnovers and blasted the Wykons 17-5.

"We did not handle the pressure at all," said Schive. He blamed himself—that he hadn't worked his team on the press break as they prepared for the game.

The Wykons defeated Houghton 69-59 at home on Dec. 17. With the Gremlins winning the rematch, both teams have one loss in West Pac play.

The press-break wasn't WIC's only problem. "We were playing them really well man-to-man," Schive said. "Then I switched to zone, and it kind of got away from us." That was also in the third quarter.

"Between the pressure and getting out of man, we got into a hole we couldn't get out of."

Slipping away: The Wykons trailed by 18 but cut the gap to about six. Then Austin Waara picked up a foul, went to the bench, "and it went from six to 14 right away."

The first half was close, with Houghton up by just two, 32-30, at halftime. Waara scored seven for West Iron in the first quarter, and Ryan Rogers followed with six in the second.

Waara finished with 14 to lead the Wykons; nobody else had more than eight.

Numbers: WIC team: 10-15 FTs, 2x3, 20 fouls. Houghton team: 17-27 FT, 5x3, 15 fouls.

WIC stats: Austin Waara, 14 points, 2 assists; Tyler Stafford, 8 pts, 11 rebounds, 3 steals; Adam Newby, 7 pts; Ryan Rogers, 6 pts. Houghton stats: Ryan LaBerge, 21, 2x3, 5 stls; Trent Keteri, 16 pts, 3x3, 7 stls; Cody Goodreau, 12 pts, 5 stls.

Wykons	17	13	5	17	--	52
Gremlins	15	15	17	15	--	62

At L'Anse: The first quarter at L'Anse must have seemed like a replay of the Forest Park game from the night before. The Purple Hornets dominated early and led 19-4.

"I knew they had tired legs," Schive said. "It's been a long week and a long road trip." The Wykons fought back in the second quarter: Tyler Stafford scored seven as WIC cut the Purple

Hornets' lead to 29-23 at halftime.

By then, Schive said, "You could tell the tempo was getting back up, and they were getting back into a rhythm."

Momentum turned in the third quarter. During a time-out, Waara told Schive, "Give me the ball—the offense is running through me."

"And he flat took over," Schive continued. Waara scored 10 points in the third quarter, 12 more in the fourth. The Wykons also got six from Adam Newby, outscoring L'Anse 22-10 in the fourth quarter.

The last word: "I asked him after the game, and he said one of the kids from L'Anse was talking trash to him. That's when he said, 'Give me the ball.'

"I've had him for four years. I trust him, and I said OK."

West Iron went ahead midway through the fourth quarter and stayed there, helped by 16-of-18 free throw shooting while shutting down the Hornets' offense, holding them to one basket plus free throws.

"Newby started attacking the rim, [Brock] Hopkins started attacking the rim. And I don't know if Jimmer [Waara] missed a shot in the second half. He flat took over." Waara ended up with 25 points, and Newby added 12.

James Veker powered the Purple Hornets with 30 points, 14 of them in the third quarter. "He's tough," conceded Schive.

Numbers: WIC team: 16-19 (84%) FT; 19 fouls. L'Anse team: 12-15 (80%) FT, 18 fouls.

WIC stats: Waara, 25 pts; Adam Newby, 12 pts, Stafford, 9 pts, 17 rebs, 2 asts, 3 blocks; Brock Hopkins, 9 pts. L'Anse scoring: James Veker, 30 pts; Daniel Perrault, 11 pts; Jacob Ostermeyer, 6 pts.

Wykons	6	17	18	22	--	63
P.Hornets	19	10	19	10	--	58

Coming up: A wise man once said the best part of any long journey is getting home again. The Wykons finally get some home cooking this week, facing Hancock on Jan. 22 and Norway on Jan. 25. They visit Iron Mountain Jan. 29.