Austin Waara leaps up to fire a pass to a teammate during the Wykons' game against Escanaba Feb. 12.

IRON RIVER—His West Iron boys basketball team took Coach Dan Schive to the movies last week. As they won all three games, the Wykons reminded him of a classic Bill Murray film.

"It's like 'Groundhog Day'," he said. "We get behind, we dig out, we win by two. We get behind, we dig out, we win by two. __PUBLIC__

"We can't get behind right away!"

The week started with a 62-27 win at Norway Feb. 11, but nothing came easy after that. The Wykons went to overtime against Escanaba in a 67-64 win Feb. 12 and battled from far back to get past L'Anse 50-48 on Feb. 15.

The Wykons are now 12-5 overall and 5-2 in West Pac play.

At Norway: When the Knights visited Jan. 25, West Iron won 52-45. This time, the running clock rule took effect in the fourth quarter.

The Wykons broke out with a 19-8 first quarter, with Brock Hopkins scoring seven. In the second frame, Austin Waara was zoned in, hitting four triples for 12 of WIC's 21 points, as the Wykons took a 40-15 halftime lead. Norway struggled from the floor all night.

"Everything I called, they ran, and everything we ran, we scored on," Schive said.

Numbers: WIC team: 10-14 FT, 8x3, 10 fouls. Norway, 7-12 FT, 2x3, 13 fouls.

WIC stats: Austin Waara, 21 points, 12 in 2Q, 5x3; Brock Hopkins, 7 pts; Alex Ralston, 6 pts; Tyler Stafford, 6 pts; Andy Ridolphi, 6 pts. Norway scoring: John Grayvold, 12 pts.

Wykons	19	21	18	4	--	62
Knights	8	7	3	9	--	27

Vs. Escanaba: The Eskymos flattened WIC by 30 points on Dec. 27. In the rematch, fans saw 10 lead changes and 12 ties. Neither team had a three-possession lead all night.

West Iron led most of the time but never could shake the Eskymos. Joe Pisoni's three put WIC ahead midway through the second quarter, and the Wykons stayed in front (never by more than six) until Esky tied it on Ben Kleiman's three with 2:02 left.

With 2.5 seconds left in regulation and a 57-57 tie, an Esky player was fouled, went to the free throw line to win the game—and missed twice! On to OT.

Baskets by Hopkins and Waara were offset by Brandon Robinette's three-point play and his reverse basket. Sam Molnar's free throws put Esky ahead 64-63 with 52 seconds left.

Last ticks: With 30 seconds left, Waara passed to Andy Ridolphi for the go-ahead bucket, Tyler Stafford blocked Robinette's shot seconds later, and a steal and Adam Newby's basket ended it.

Schive said his team rebounded well and went hard after loose balls. "I think one of the bigger keys to us playing better recently is that we're rebounding the ball better.

"The offense is in a pretty good flow right now—as long as we don't force anything. We're playing hard."

Numbers: WIC team: 27-59 (46%) FG, 4x3, 9-16 FT, 16 fouls, 38 rebs. Escanaba team: 6x3, 10-16 FT, 18 fouls.

WIC stats: Newby, 15 pts; Waara, 13 pts, 2x3, 9 asts; Ridolphi, 12 pts, 8 rebs; Pisoni, 10 pts, 7 rebs., Stafford, 9 rebs; Ralston, 5 rebs; 7 asts. Escanaba stats: Brandon Robinette, 23 pts; Ben Kleiman, 12 pts, 4x3.

Eskymos	15	11	14	17	7	--	64
Wykons	13	15	16	13	10	--	67

Vs. L'Anse. They had to play hard again when L'Anse visited three nights later. The Purple Hornets knocked in four three-pointers and led 23-9 after one—Keith Denomie and Daniel Perrow both struck for 10 in the first quarter. L'Anse led by 19 (35-16) halfway through the second quarter.

It's a preview of the district tournament, Schive said. "People are going to want to lock down Waara, so we have to have other guys who are going to step up and score."

Threes by Ralston and Pisoni got the WIC offense going; the big lead was down to 36-22 at halftime. Next, Ridolphi hit three quick buckets to start the second half.

Deep freeze: L'Anse led 41-30 halfway through the third, but West Iron's defense put them in the deep freeze as the Wykons went on a 17-0 run to take a 47-41 lead.

The Hornets finally got going with a 7-0 rally. Joey Hansen's three put L'Anse back in front 48-47 with 1:50 left.

The Wykons got the lead back on free throws (Hopkins and Waara) and led 50-48 when Jacob Ostermeyer was fouled with 3.2 seconds left. Replay of the Esky game! He missed the front end and also a shot at the horn. Another dramatic win. WIC finished on a 34-13 run.

Plenty of wild plays and thrills down the stretch, but the big concern was Stafford, who hurt a knee with four minutes left. Two Wykons will be gone on family trips this week, and time will tell whether Stafford misses action, too.

Numbers: WIC team: 16-50 (32%) FG, 3x3, 15-24 (63%) FT, 17 fouls. L'Anse team: 8x3, 8-14 (57%) FT, 22 fouls.

WIC team: Ridolphi, 12 pts, Stafford, 9 pts, 10 rebs; Ralston, 8 pts; Newby, 7 pts; Waara, 6 pts, 6 rebs; Hopkins, 7 rebs. L'Anse stats: Keith Denomie, 19 pts, 4x3; Dan Perrow, 14 pts, 2x3; Jacob Ostermeyer, 6 pts.

P.Hornets	23	13	5	7	--	48
Wykons	9	13	10	18	--	50

• Coming up: The Wykons finally play Iron Mountain on Feb. 19—WIC's first round opponent at the District 95 tourney in Norway on March 4. WIC visits Hancock Feb. 22 and hosts Ishpeming Feb. 26 to end the regular season.