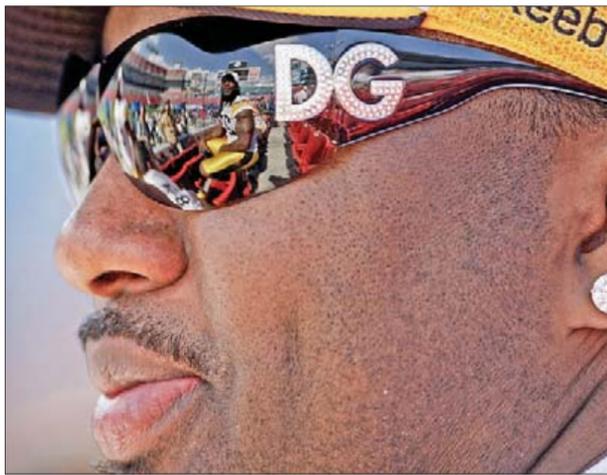


## Cavs unbeaten at home

Mo Williams scored a career-high 43 points and LeBron James recorded his 20th career triple-double as the Cleveland Cavaliers improved to 21-0 at home, beating the Sacramento Kings. **C3**



Associated Press

**FUN IN THE SUN:** Steelers defensive end Orpheus Roye listens to his teammate Tyrone Carter (reflected in glasses) during the team's media day for Super Bowl XLIII Tuesday in Tampa, Fla. The Steelers will play the Arizona Cardinals on Sunday in the Super Bowl.

# Media day antics get a few laughs

Most of the players were agreeable to the pre-Super Bowl silliness.

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — The bride didn't bother showing up Tuesday. It's a good thing, too. She might have been upstaged by the dude in the dress.

The oddballs once again crashed Super Bowl media day, mingling among real journalists and shocking some players with the absurdity of their questions and the audacity of their antics.

This year's crowd at the annual rite seemed a bit tamer — did the weakened economy take a bite out of this, too? — and the bride who so persistently pursued New England's Tom Brady and Bill Belichick

*"They told me it was going to be crazy, but I just thought it was going to be a lot of media."*

Aaron Francisco  
Arizona safety

last year was a no-show.

No worries, gentlemen, a "fairy godmother" picked up a lot of the slack.

Only she was really a he, and there was nothing magical about him. Under the red evening gown, long blonde wig and layers of thick makeup was Joel Bengoa, a reporter from Telemundo Sports Network, the NBC-owned U.S. Spanish language network, looking for

a laugh.

Doing his best — and we use that term lightly — Scarlett Johansson imitation, Bengoa teetered in his heels en route to present several players with boxes of chocolates.

"I'm from 'fairy godmother land' and you need me to win the big game," he purred to Arizona safety Aaron Francisco.

Francisco was a good sport.

"They told me it was going to be crazy, but I just thought it was going to be a lot of media," Francisco said. "Then that he-she gave me candy and I figured out what they were talking about. I think it was some Mexican dude in a dress, and he tried to get me to talk Spanish. But I'm from Hawaii, so I just

See Media Day on Page C3

**INSIDE | On C3**

Some teams win a Super Bowl because of their quarterback, the Pittsburgh Steelers managed not to lose one in Detroit three years ago despite Big Ben's self-described bad game.

Four years ago, Kurt Warner was having a hard time finding a job. The perception was that he was washed up, finished, that his storybook career was approaching an ignominious end.

## PREP BASKETBALL

# GYMS HEAT UP IN JANUARY

## Jenkins has key point at line

East High's Jarelle Burt had 13 of his 26 points at the foul line in the one-point win over Youngstown Christian.

By GREG GULAS  
VINDICATOR CORRESPONDENT

YOUNGSTOWN — Trumane Jenkins' free throw with two seconds remaining lifted the East High boys basketball team to a 59-58 decision over Youngstown Christian Tuesday.

The Panthers' win ended the Eagles' 10-game winning streak while extending their win streak to three.

Jenkins, whose only two free throw attempts came with the game on the line, was certain that he would convert if given the opportunity.

"I just knew that if I was given the chance with the game on the line that I would hit my free throw," Jenkins said. I was practicing from the free throw line prior to the game and at halftime so I would be ready."

If there was any part of the game that stood out for either team, it was at the free throw line. The Panthers canned 19 of 31 attempts compared to the Eagles, who struggled with just four of 12 charity tosses.

Panthers leading scorer Jarelle Burt, who had a 26 points, canned 13 of his 16 free throw chances, making one more than the Eagles attempted in the game.

"This was a total team effort with each player contributing something tonight," Burt said. "We encouraged each other and didn't let anyone get down when we fell behind."

"Everyone from starter to those coming off the bench knows his role," Burt said. "That is what made

See East on Page C4



The Vindicator/William D. Lewis

**GOING FOR TWO:** East High's Jarelle Burt jumps to take a shot against Youngstown Christian's Donte Yanno during Tuesday's game at East.

## Spartans turn to defense, win

Chase Hammond came up with a steal to help seal Boardman's 52-46 victory against visiting Mooney.

By RYAN JONES  
VINDICATOR CORRESPONDENT

BOARDMAN — Boardman High boys basketball coach Jim Goske said his players went with a half-court trap in the second half to attempt to slow down Mooney's dribble drive offense.

"We were hoping to force some turnovers, but that wasn't the first reason we decided to trap," Goske said. "We were looking for a way to help out our defense. We were trying to get them away from driving the ball into the paint."

Ahead 47-46 with 1:26 remaining, the Spartans' halfcourt trap did more than contain the Cardinal offense; it harassed Mooney into two consecutive turnovers en route to a 52-46 triumph.

After Mooney's Chuck Gruber drained two free throws to cut the lead to 47-46, the Spartans' defense turned up the heat.

Chase Hammond came up with a steal and was fouled trying to dunk the ball in transition.

The 6-foot-4 junior missed both free throws, but atoned for his shortcomings at the line as teammate Eric Soller stole the ball on Mooney's next possession and passed ahead to Hammond who finished the layup while being fouled.

Hammond, who netted a game-high 16 points, hit the ensuing free throw to give Boardman (5-9) a 50-46 lead with 45 seconds left.

Goske said his team did a better job attacking the basket than it had for most of the season.

"At times we've been aggressive going to the rim," Goske said. "Tonight, we did a good job of finishing at the rim while being fouled. We've struggled this season finishing plays close to the hoop."

Mooney (5-6) had two more chances to cut into the 50-46 lead, but Ronnie Martino missed a contested layup and Eddie Reese misfired from downtown.

Mooney Coach Chris Kohl said his has to learn how to finish games. "You have to bear down and



The Vindicator/Geoffrey Hauschild

**HOLD ON THERE:** Boardman's Chase Hammond (5) draws a foul from Mooney's Donald D'Alesio (5) during the fourth quarter of Tuesday's game at Boardman High School. Boardman won, 52-46.

## INSIDE | More preps

Columbiana High's Kevin Blinsky scored 25 points Tuesday as the Clippers avenged an early season loss to the United Eagles with a 75-66 victory. **C4**

play your best basketball when the game is on the line," Kohl said. "And we're not doing that right now."

"I told the kids we have to do the little things — like throwing a bounce pass against their trap, or boxing out on a free throw attempt — to win these tight games."

See Spartans on Page C5

# Thunder sinks feet in Foundation for youth

The root objective is to promote activities that will cultivate developmental skills.

By JOHN KOVACH  
VINDICATOR SPORTS STAFF

YOUNGSTOWN — The Mahoning Valley Thunder of the af2 is getting more involved in the community.

The arena football team, entering its third season, has created the Thunder Foundation to seek financial contributions from the community and conduct fund-raisers to help area youth and their families to develop and achieve healthy lifestyles.

The foundation, which will seek to establish programs that emphasize positive life choices, education and physical health, was an-



## INSIDE | On C3

Jerry Kurz, president of the af2, said that the Thunder Foundation created by the Mahoning Valley Thunder is a first for the arena football league and should serve as a model for other teams to emulate.

nounced Tuesday at the Chevrolet Centre where the Thunder plays its home games.

The Thunder, owned by Dr. Michael Slyk, Timothy Chesney and Dr. Jon Saadey, will open the season on March 27 at home against the Albany Conquest.

Bill Wittman of Canfield and LS

Strapping Inc. is president of the eight-member Thunder Foundation Board.

Wittman says that the Thunder Foundation will start with providing funds for flag football — specifically the Youngstown Youth Flag Football Association directed by Elliott Giles — because the pro-

gram already is established and successful.

He said other beneficial programs will be added as the foundation raises more funds and grows.

Wittman said he was contacted by Thunder general manager Adam Tokash last fall about starting the foundation.

"He was calling to tell me about his plan to form a group to set out and help kids," Wittman said. "He called each and every board member. Adam gave them the same pitch."

"It was an easy sell to this caring group," Wittman said. "We discovered quickly that we all share the same belief that the youth of the Mahoning Valley are a very impor-

See Thunder on Page C3



The Vindicator/Robert K. Yosay

**THUNDER FOUNDATION:** The owners of the Youngstown Thunder pose with af2 commissioner Jerry Kurz (second from left) Tuesday at the Chevrolet Centre. In the center is Elliott Giles of Youngstown Youth Flag Football Association that will benefit from a new team foundation. The owners, from left, are Dr. Michael Slyk, Dr. John Saadey and Timothy Chesney.