

Simpson erupts for 43 points in victory

By Scott Miller
SPECIAL TO THE COURIER NEWS

ELGIN — Welcome home, Sherick Simpson!

Playing in his second game with the newly formed Elgin Racers of the International Basketball League, the former Larkin High standout put on a show for his hometown fans.

Simpson had a game-high 43 points, 17 rebounds, six assists and four blocks to lead the Racers to their first win of the season, 143-138 over Lake County in front of another near-capacity crowd at Judson College.

The Racers lost to Lake County in last week's season-opener in a game that Simpson scored 17.

"I was a little passive last week but was just trying to get adjusted," Simpson said. "This week I asserted myself as more of a leader and was a lot more aggressive. To me, actions speak louder than words, so I just went out and played my game."

The Racers trailed by as many as 11 points in the first half, but Simpson led a second-half surge. The 6-foot-6 forward powered his way for 27 second-half points. He consistently took the ball hard to the basket, converting on 7 of 10 shots from the floor and hitting 11 of 12 free throws.

"He was the man tonight," Racers coach Jim Condill said. "He's a natural leader because he exudes so much confidence. It was very enjoyable to watch him tonight."

The Racers battled back to take their first lead of the second half 92-90 on a 3-pointer from Brandon Moore with 7:10 left in the third quarter.

The game teetered in the balance before Simpson gave the Racers the lead for good, 117-115, on a pair of free throws with 8:30 left to play.

Elgin then tightened its defense, holding the Lakers to just five points over the next five-plus minutes. Simpson had a dynamic block during that stretch. The Racers later went on an 8-0 run to extend their lead to 129-120. The Lakers never got closer than four points the rest of the way.

The Lakers' Ryan Edwards lit the Racers up for 36 points through the first three quarters, but was held to just six in the final period. Moore and Corey Brown added 22 points each for the Racers. The Racers visit Lake County tonight. Elgin's next home game is Friday against Waterloo.

Elgin Racers 143, Lake County 138