

No. 25 Saint Mary's Handles USF, Improves Record to 21-3

By David Anderson

McKeon Pavilion was completely sold out and packed to capacity Friday, Feb. 8, with fans seeking a glimpse of the WCC's first place Saint Mary's Gaels as they took on the University of San Francisco Dons. The Gaels continued their march to the head of the WCC with an impressive showing that left USF in its wake. Even with legendary Head Coach Eddie Sutton at the helm for USF, the Gaels were still able to finish off the Dons by a lopsided 25 point margin in their 76-51 victory.

The Gaels wasted no time Friday evening scoring three quick baskets to open the game forcing Sutton to call the Dons first timeout just a minute into the first half. Led by Freshman Guard Patrick Mills (Averaging 14.4 Pts/game) and Junior Forward Yusef Smith, Saint Mary's did not stop there as they kept control of the game throughout the first half. Mills added most of the intensity and energy on the court while Smith did most of the first half scoring. Smith contributed 12 of his 15 points in the game to the 44-29 halftime lead.

The second half started out much like the first with a 7-0 Saint Mary's run that forced Sutton to call another early timeout. The struggling Dons could not get much to go their way at any point during the game. In fact, USF was unable to score a point during the second half until just over six minutes in.

Perhaps the one bright spot for the Dons during the game was the play of Sophomore Forward Dior Lowhorn, who was able to score 22 points on the Gaels despite the team's considerable deficit. The play of Lowhorn, however, was not enough to keep the game close. Five Gaels finished the game with double digits in scoring. Yusef Smith led the way with 15 points, while Tron Smith and Omar Samhan added 12 points each, followed by Patrick Mills and Diamon Simpson with 10 points apiece.

Playing one of their best seasons since they won the WCC Championship in 1996-97, the Gaels are now tied with Gonzaga for the lead in the WCC. (Saint Mary's overtook Gonzaga in overtime on Feb. 4, 89-85.) Saint Mary's is currently ranked 25th in the AP top 25 poll and 21st in the ESPN/USA Today Poll and are riding a wave that could take them back to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since the 2004-05 season. Saint Mary's next home game is against Kent State on Feb. 23 at McKeon Pavilion.



Carlin Hughes (3)

Photo Tod Fierner



Patrick Mills (13)

Photo Tod Fierner