

# SPORTS

## LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

### Gaels Suffer Setback Versus Kent State

By Kevin D. Shallat



Carlin Hughes (3), Patrick Mills (13)

Photo Tod Fierner

The Gaels were riding a high from both their success on the court, and from all of the national and international media coverage this season. That high would quickly fade, as Kent State came into town to play in the ESPN Bracketbuster game on Saturday, Feb. 23. The Golden Flashes flexed their muscles and powered their way to an impressive 65-57 win over Saint Mary's in a raucous McKeon Pavilion.

Kent State held on to their first place standing in the Mid-American Conference, but needed the win against the Gaels to solidify their chances of making the NCAA tournament. With the win, the Golden Flashes were able to

make it to the top 25, with the Gaels holding the 23rd spot in the ESPN/USA Today poll, and the 25th spot in the AP poll.

Kent State won their last five games before coming to Moraga, and they are just one of five teams to win 20 games in each of the past 10 seasons. However, the Golden Flashes have a couple of bad losses this year as well. They lost to a Detroit Titans squad that is struggling, and also lost to Ohio, a team the Gaels beat in Hawaii.

Samhan and Ian O'Leary had the first few points of the game, as the Gaels tried to force the ball down low, due to a strong perimeter defense by Kent State. Diamon Simpson was a beast for Saint Mary's,

as he and O'Leary single handedly kept the Gaels in the game. Simpson had a double-double in the first half alone, but the wheels appeared to come off for the Gaels after Samhan dislocated his shoulder with 6:16 to go in the first half. Despite Kent State's lockdown perimeter defense, Saint Mary's would hang on to a two-point lead at half, leading the Golden Flashes 28-26.

The Gaels led the Flashes in second chance points in the first half, but Saint Mary's would run out of second chances in this contest, as injuries, turnovers, and poor free-throw shooting would eventually doom the Gaels. Lucas Walker came into the game to replace Samhan, but as luck would have it, Walker would also suffer a shoulder injury. Simpson recorded a monster game with 24 points, 15 rebounds, four assists, three steals, and three blocks, but was the only Gael to finish in double figures. O'Leary was the only other player to come close, as he finished with eight points and nine rebounds. Kent State was able to boast a nine point second half comeback, thanks to their defense, which gave up only five points to Patrick Mills on the night. Saint Mary's was able to cling to a one-point lead with four minutes to go, but Kent State's defense proved too much for the Gaels down the stretch, as the Golden Flashes secured an 8-point victory.



Diamon Simpson

Photo Tod Fierner

### Saint Mary's Falls To Gonzaga: Prepares For WCC Tournament

By Kevin D. Shallat



Players left to right: Serena Benavente (20) and Lauren Shaughnessy (11)

Photo Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary's women's basketball team hosted the Gonzaga Bulldogs for their final game of the season Saturday, March 1. After falling behind Gonzaga big in the first half, the Gaels were able to put together an impressive second half to give Gonzaga a scare, but ultimately lost this game, 79-63.

Gonzaga claimed the regular season WCC title, with a 13-1 record, and the Gaels finished fourth, with a record of 6-8. However, the season is not over for the Gaels, as they have a good shot to do some damage in the West Coast Conference tournament.

Saturday marked the annual senior day, which honors the players who compete in the last home game of their collegiate careers. Saint Mary's honored Lauren Shaughnessy and Serena Benavente in a pre-game ceremony.

The two guards will be missed next year, but the Gaels received some good news in regards to one of their veteran players. Maija Lahde has decided to return next year to play another year for the Gaels, as she only participated in 23 percent of the games this year. The NCAA allows players to play another year by taking a medical red-shirt if a player participates in less than 30 percent of the total games in a season, due to injury.

It was fitting that the two seniors recorded the first two

points of the game for the Gaels. Unfortunately, shots would be hard to come by for the Gaels. Saint Mary's shot 20 percent from the field, and 16 percent from three-point range in the first half. Benavente did all she could in the first half, scoring 10 points in 13 minutes, but Gonzaga would always answer right back. The Bulldogs seemed to score on every possession, and the Gaels looked to merely survive, as they trailed the Bulldogs 51-23 at halftime.

The Gaels came out in the second half looking like a different team. Saint Mary's improved their shooting and their defense in the second half. Their field goal percentage shot up to 37 percent, and their three-point shooting soared to 38 percent. On defense, the Gaels blocked three shots and recorded five steals in the second period as well. They also allowed 23 points less in the second half, as the Bulldogs only scored 28 total points in the second half. Benavente was the game high scorer for the Gaels, finishing with 16 points in 24 minutes. Shaughnessy finished the game

with six assists and four steals. Saint Mary's went on to lose this match, but not before a few records were set by the Gaels.

Louella Tomlinson added to her block total, as she finished with four blocks in 18 minutes. Tomlinson has broken every Saint Mary's block record in one season. Jontelle Smith also set a record in this game, as she tied the record for three-pointers in a season for Saint Mary's, finishing the season with 91. The Gaels will play Loyola Marymount next in the WCC tournament, which begins on March 6.



Serena Benavente (20)

Photo Tod Fierner



**Go Gaels!**  
Upcoming Sports Events at Saint Mary's College

Baseball vs. Stanford  
Wednesday, March 5 at 2 p.m.  
Louis Guisto Field

Softball vs. North Dakota State  
Wednesday, March 5 at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.  
SMC

Women's Lacrosse vs. Fairfield  
Wednesday, March 5 at 3:30 p.m.  
Saint Mary's Stadium

Men's Tennis vs. Sacramento State  
Saturday, March 8 at noon  
SMC

Men's Tennis vs. Penn  
Monday, March 10 at 3 p.m.  
SMC

Women's Lacrosse vs. Temple  
Tuesday, March 11 at 3:30 p.m.  
Saint Mary's Stadium

Men's Tennis vs. Texas-San Antonio  
Friday, March 14 at 3 p.m.  
SMC

For information about upcoming season schedules, visit the official Saint Mary's athletics website at www.SMCGaels.com.

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