



## 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 partic-

ipated 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



Serena Benavente (20) Photo Tod Fierner

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.