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## Saint Mary's Men's Basketball Defeat Portland State, Pacific

By Justine Sgalio



Omar Samhan (#50) led the Gaels with 31 points and 17 rebounds in the win against Portland State

the first half, but the Gaels held onto the 43-39 lead going into halftime. SMC was led by senior forward Ben Allen who had 11 points in the half, and went 3-3 from the three point line.

The two teams came out strong again in the second half, and with 9:38 to go in the game the margin had still not exceeded six points. But with 8:41 to go Saint Mary's freshman guard Matthew Dellavedova hit a foul shot to put the Gaels up by seven. By 8:14, the Gaels were up by 10 after another foul shot, this time by Samhan, who had 18 points in the half and 28 in the game.

"They were tough team," said Samhan. "But fortunately down the stretch I got the ball in good positions."

The Tigers came within four of the Gaels twice in the last seven minutes but it was not enough. The Gaels continued their offensive momentum and came away with the 80-65 win.

"They're [Pacific] a really good team," said Bennett. "Our guys really exceeded my expectations tonight."

The Saint Mary's Gaels secured their eighth and ninth wins of the season last week at McKeon Pavilion, defeating the Portland State Vikings 101-80 on December 15th, and the Pacific Tigers 80-65 on December 18th.

The 5-4 Portland State Vikings held the lead over the Gaels just once in the first half, after an early layup by Vikings senior guard Dominic Waters put the first points of the night on the board. But the Gaels caught up quickly. Almost four minutes into play a basket by senior center Omar Samhan gave the Gaels an eight point lead over the Vikings.

But it didn't stay that way for long. Throughout the next 11 minutes, the Vikings refused to go down without a fight and pulled within just one point four times. A free throw by Waters tied the game at 31 with 5:19 to go in the half. But the Gaels offense stepped up, led by Samhan, who had 13 points in the half, and sophomore forward Clint Steindl, with 12, and by halftime they had a nine point lead.

The Saint Mary's offense came back strong in the second half, and by the 15 minute mark, had a 15 point lead over Portland State. The Vikings fought within 10 points of the dominant Gaels offense, but couldn't recover to take the lead.

Samhan had 31 points on the night, just two shy of his career record. Steindl, who has stepped up in a big way for the Gaels since senior guard Wayne Hunter went down with a torn ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) against Utah State, recorded 15, a noticeable improvement from the start of the season.

"Clint gets better every night," said Saint Mary's Head Coach Randy Bennett. "We've seen him really grow as a player in the last two weeks."

After the home win against Portland State, the Gaels hosted the 7-2 Pacific Tigers on Friday. The lead bounced back and forth, neither team led by more than six points in the first half. Tigers junior forward Sam Willard led the Pacific offense with 10 points in



Clint Steindl (#11) notched 15 and 16 points last week, respectively Photos Tod Fierner

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