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## Saint Mary's Wins Big At Home

By Mikaela Cowles



Jontelle Smith (#22) went 5-of-8 from behind the arc in the win

Saint Mary's women's basketball beat Cal State Bakersfield 94-80 on Wednesday, December 16th at home.

Ashlee Smith led the Gaels with a season high 19 points, as Saint Mary's shot a staggering 50.8 percent from field goal range and 44 percent from behind the arc.

The Gaels opened the season 4-4. While on the road against Washington State, head coach Paul Thomas changed the starting line-up, replacing freshman guard Kate Gaze and sophomore guard Katie Batlin for redshirt sophomore guard Jasmine Smith and sophomore guard Alex Carbonel. The change was just what Saint Mary's needed as they went on a five game win streak, running their record to 9-4.

In the first minute against Bakersfield, Jontelle Smith hit two 3-pointers, and the Gaels jumped out to a 6-1 lead. She would go on to finish the game five-of-eight from behind the arc, combining with her sister Jasmine (2-4) for a sister three-point duo of seven-of-12.

With quick ball movement and the looming 3-point threat from Jontelle, Saint Mary's drew Bakersfield out of its zone and worked the ball inside utilizing the high-low. In response Bakersfield switched to man-to-man defense and forced the Gaels into turnovers. Changing turnovers into fast break points, the Roadrunners brought the score to 15-11 at the 15:08 mark in the first half.

Less than nine minutes into the half, Bakersfield's Tamiko Davis picked up her third foul forcing her to the bench for the remainder of the first. Bakersfield crept to within four points, the closest the game would get, but SMC held them off with help from points in the paint. Sophomore forward Ashlee Smith and junior forward Louella Tomlinson combined for 27 first half points, pushing the Gaels' lead to 59-31 at half.

In the second half Saint Mary's held onto its lead and cleared the bench, playing all 13 players. The Gaels totaled 22 assists for the game, which Coach Thomas described as, "unselfish play."

The turnover-plagued Gaels have suffered this season, averaging just over 25 turnovers a game. Against the Roadrunners, Saint Mary's recorded 34 turnovers. Thomas said of the turnovers, "We have to stop turning the ball over. I don't want my team to be afraid to make a pass. That's what makes our team shoot 60 percent. We have a great chemistry within our offense; we just are too careless sometimes."

Pleased with the first 30 minutes of the game, Thomas said the message after this game "will be loud and clear. If we'd played all 40 minutes the way we would like to have, I wouldn't have anything to build on. Now I have something to build on."

The Gaels will be on the road for their next three games. They return to McKeon Pavilion on Friday, January 8 against San Francisco for a 7:00 p.m. tip-off for their first West Coast Conference game.



Jasmine Smith (#32) was 5-for-7 from the floor (2-for-4 from the three point line), recording 14 points for the Gaels Photos Tod Fierner

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