

Published January 20th, 2010

Gaels Fall to #14 Gonzaga, Defeat Pilots

By Justine Sgalio



Omar Samhan led the Gaels with an impressive 24 point second half against the Pilots Photo Tod Fierner

Dellavedova and junior guard Mickey McConnell.

The Pilots and the Gaels battled for the lead throughout the half, keeping the margin under just four points. After 12 lead changes, the Pilots went into halftime with a 31-30 lead over the Gaels.

The second half brought another explosive offensive effort by Saint Mary's Samhan, who had 24 of his 28 points in the second half. The Gaels took the lead at the 18 minute marker. A 3-pointer by Portland senior guard T.J. Campbell with 17:37 to go in the half gave the Pilots the lead but Saint Mary's regained it on the next possession. The Gaels held the lead the remainder of the game, and despite a run by the Pilots which pulled them within two with 1:51 left to play, Saint Mary's came away with the 77-72 win.

Senior forward Ben Allen, who had 16 points for the Gaels, was glad for the win but focused on the road ahead. "We held our own on our own court," said Allen. "Now that we've got this win, we can focus on San Diego."

Bennett is also glad for the win, but admits that defensive improvements are still necessary. "It was a good win for us," said Bennett. "But we still have to improve defensively...we've got to be more disciplined defensively. We have to compete better."

The Gaels take on the San Diego Toreros at McKeon Pavilion on Thursday, January 21 at 8 p.m.

The Saint Mary's Gaels lost a heartbreaker to the Gonzaga Bulldogs 89-82 at McKeon Pavilion on Thursday, January 14th, but bounced back Saturday, January 16th at home with a 77-72 win over the Portland Pilots.

The Bulldogs took the lead early and kept it Thursday night, dominating the Gaels offensively.

The Gaels kept the margin within six until the 13 minute mark, with the help of freshman guard Matthew Dellavedova who had 15 points in the first half and went 4-for-4 from the three point line. But it wasn't enough hold off the athleticism of the Bulldogs offense.

Gonzaga freshman forward Elias Harris scored 16 points in the first half, and the Bulldogs held Saint Mary's senior center Omar Samhan to just six points. An easy layup by senior guard Matt Bouldin, with just under two minutes to go in the half, put the Bulldogs up by 12- their largest lead. Heading into the locker room it was 45-33, Gonzaga.

The Gaels matched the Bulldogs point for point for five minutes early in the second half, but again the Zags pulled ahead and with 11:28 left to play the Gaels found themselves in a 15 point hole.

Saint Mary's refused to give in and with a tenacious effort the Gaels pulled within four points with just under a minute left in the game. Samhan led the effort with an explosive 25 point second half, but it wasn't enough to pull off the win. Two missed three pointers by the Gaels in the last minute of the game sealed the victory for the Bulldogs' 89-82.

"I'm disappointed in how we played defensively," said Saint Mary's head coach Randy Bennett. "We have to learn to compete defensively against good teams...it's a weakness of ours right now and that's something we really need to improve on going forward."

Coming off the loss against Gonzaga, the Gaels hosted the Portland Pilots (1-1). The Gaels took a 9-8 lead with just over 14 minutes to go in the half after 3-pointers by senior forward Ben Allen,



Matthew Dellavedova kept the Gaels alive in the first half against Gonzaga with a 15 point effort going 4-for-4 from behind the line. Photo Tod Fierner



Following last week's games, Randy Bennett noted the Gaels need to improve defensively. Photo Tod Fierner

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