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## Saint Mary's Women Secure Second Place Finish

By Caitlin Graveson



Leanna Richey (#21), Louella Tomlinson (#2) and Suzie Davis (#12) celebrate Senior Night. Photo Tod Fierner

the 12 points. The run gave SMC the lead which they held onto heading into the locker room up, 42-36.

The Toreros opened the second half much like the first, with a 7-0 run. Again, the Gaels fought back with a 10-2 run. The game remained close until the final minutes when Saint Mary's found themselves up just four points. Tomlinson hit a bucket to extend the lead to six and the win was sealed from there, 77-69.

Smith had a career high 31 points. Tomlinson added 16 points and ten rebounds.

Saint Mary's hoped the momentum from the win would carry them into their rematch against #23 Gonzaga on February, 24. Head Coach Paul Thomas said their strategy against Gonzaga was focused on maintaining control and limiting guard Courtney Vandersloot's influence. "You aren't going to stop Vandersloot, so you have to contain her," Thomas said.

Unfortunately, that goal was not executed and Vandersloot notched 22 points and 13 assists in the Gaels 66-106 loss. Smith had 24 points and Tomlinson had 10 points.

Saint Mary's was able to quickly bounce-back from the loss to defeat the Pilots on Saturday, February 26. The Gaels got off to a slow start, but Portland did not take advantage and SMC was only down 2-7 early. The first half remained close and the Pilots had 27-25 lead at halftime.

The Gaels fought back in the second half with a 10-0 run to reduce the deficit. A layup by junior guard Alex Carbonel gave Saint Mary's the lead with about nine minutes to play. Saint Mary's maintained the lead to win, 62-52.

Carbonel had a career-high 20 points. Smith had 20 points while Tomlinson notched a double-double with 14 points and 13 rebounds.

"We stepped up defensively... Alex did a great job giving us a spark off the bench, while Louella and Jasmine did what they do... a great team win," Thomas said.

Saint Mary's basketball returns to action in Las Vegas in the semi-finals of the WCC Tournament on Sunday, March 6 at approximately 1:30 p.m.

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Saint Mary's women's basketball closed out the final games of the regular season with a 2-1 record to secure a second place finish in the West Coast Conference. The second place finish not only fulfills preseason expectations, but gives the Gaels a bye until the semi-finals of the WCC tournament this weekend. The Gaels also secured an automatic bid to the Women's National Invitational Tournament (WNIT) if they do not qualify for the NCAA tournament. The Gaels closed out the season with wins over the University of San Diego and the University of Portland, and a loss to #23 Gonzaga.

Saint Mary's hosted USD for their final home stand on Saturday, February 19. The Gaels celebrated PinkZone for Breast Cancer Awareness, wearing their pink jerseys, and Senior Night. Saint Mary's said goodbye to Leanna Richey, Courtney Dunn, Suzie Davis and Louella Tomlinson.

"It was pretty awesome. I am satisfied with how with how the last four years went and it was great that everyone came out to support me and the girls," Tomlinson said after the game.

USD put up a tough fight against the Gaels, opening with a 2-13 lead. Saint Mary's redshirt junior guard Jasmine Smith remained unfazed and sparked a 12-0 run for the Gaels. Smith notched 10 of