



# SMC Men's Basketball Season Review

Gaels conclude season 29-6

By Bryant West



Rob Jones Photo Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary's men's basketball team met a bitter end to a strong season in the first round of the NIT, losing to the Kent State Golden Flash 71-70 on March 14th.

The Gaels, who led by as much as 12 in the second half, couldn't stop Kent State's comeback and a go-ahead layup from Justin Greene ended up the game winner for the Golden Flash. Junior Rob Jones had 21 points and nine boards for the Gaels in the loss.

Senior guard Mickey McConnell, the WCC Conference Player of the Year, had just five points in his final game. "When you're sitting there, it's kind of an emotional time," he said bleary eyed after the game. "You're just sitting at your locker thinking you're not going to be in that situation again with a group of guys you've been together with for so long."

Head coach Randy Bennett said afterward that while the loss was tough, there were "a lot of good things that have happened this year and we have to keep those in mind." When asked about McConnell, Bennett said

he had "been a stud for us all year. We wouldn't be in this situation if he hadn't done what he's done all year... We haven't had a better leader in our program."

The Gaels finished their season with a 29-6 record, the fourth straight season with 25 wins or more. Coach Bennett, the winningest coach in Saint Mary's history, earned his 200th career win in the 67-56 win over San Diego on January 19th. Bennett was also named the WCC Coach of the Year.

McConnell, in addition to his WCC Conference Player of the Year, was named to the Mid-Major All American Team after averaging 16.4 points and 6.1 assists per contest. Sophomore guard Matthew Dellavedova and forward Jones were named to the WCC All Conference Team, with Dellavedova averaging 13.4 points and 5.3 assists and Jones averaging 13.8 points and 7.7 rebounds. Freshman Stephen Holt was named to the All-Freshman team and became increasingly important late in the season for the Gaels as arguably the team's best defender.

The season produced a lot of positives for the Gaels, capped off by a 73-71 win in Gonzaga that propelled the Gaels into the elite of the conference and left the Bulldogs reeling. McConnell hit an acrobatic turnaround jumper for the victory that gave the Gaels a then 6-0 conference record. Gonzaga was 44-1 at the McCarthy Athletic Center before the loss.

The Gaels played a strong non-conference schedule, including a win over 76-71 win over St. John's on November 15th in Moraga and a 94-76 win over Mississippi State in Las Vegas on December 29th.

The Gaels non-conference losses were all against teams that found their way into the NCAA Tournament, including a 74-73 loss to BYU in the 2010 South Padre Classic on November 27th and a 69-55 loss to San Diego State four days later. Both BYU and San Diego State finished with top 10 rankings and made it to the Sweet Six-

teen in the NCAA Tournament.

But some late season losses meant the Gaels had to win the conference tournament in order to secure a NCAA Tournament berth and they did not beat the Zags again.

While the season certainly didn't end as the Gaels would have liked, the future still looks good for Moraga fans. McConnell leaves along with forward Phil Benson, but the Gaels retain the remainder of their team including Dellavedova, Holt and Jones. The Gaels also add some more size - something that was lacking throughout the season - with both 6-foot-9 freshman Brad Waldow coming and 7-foot center Kyle Rowley, a transfer from Northwestern, eligible next season.

Rumors swirled after the NIT loss that Bennett was interviewing with Utah for the open coaching spot left by Jim Boylen, but Bennett has continued to deny the rumors and stresses his optimism for the team's future.



Matthew Dellavedova Photo Tod Fierner

# Saint Mary's Women's Basketball Wrap-Up

Tomlinson ends career with all-time records

By Caitlin Graveson



Tomlinson (2) grabbed the WCC career rebounds record in the WNIT loss Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's women's basketball entered the season with high expectations. The Gaels were predicted to finish West Coast Conference play in second place, which they accomplished, with a 19-13 overall record. With the second place finish the team

received an automatic berth to the Women's National Invitational Tournament for the second year in a row.

Saint Mary's played host to visiting Nevada in the opening round of the WNIT on Thursday, March 17. The Gaels were unable to take advan-

tage of any Irish Luck on St. Patrick's Day and lost a heartbreaker, 62-65.

The teams traded points for most of the game. The tenth and final tie came at 59-all with 8:30 to play. The Gaels built a 62-59 lead with less than four minutes to play but Nevada stormed back to recapture the lead and hold on for the win.

Junior redshirt guard Jasmine Smith, a first team all-WCC selection, had 18 points and junior guard Alex Carbonel added 15 points, ten of which came in the first half on 6-of-8 shooting.

Senior forward Louella Tomlinson notched 19 points and ten rebounds in the win. With those rebounds Tomlinson became the career all-time rebounder for Saint Mary's and for the West Coast Conference; she grabbed 1,122 rebounds. She also had 303 rebounds in the season. Tomlinson is only the second person in school history to record at least 300 rebounds in a season.

"Rebounding wasn't my forte coming in but it was something I wanted to get better at and I think this is a testament at how much I have improved since I have been here," Tomlinson said of her performance.

Tomlinson, a first team all-WCC selection, also leaves with the all-time career scoring record with 1,848 and all-time blocked shots record with 667. The all-time blocked shots record is a NCAA record. Tomlinson started and played in every game of her career.

Head coach Paul Thomas said of Tomlinson, "I don't want to sensationalize this, but with the records she has... if she is not the best player to have played here, she is definitely one of the top two or three."

The Gaels lose Tomlinson, Leanna Richey and Suzie Davis to graduation. They retain WCC all-freshman selection Danielle Mauldin and Smith.

## Fun in the Sun at Sun Valley Swim Club!

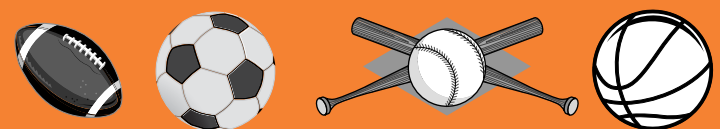
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If you would like to list the registration information for a youth sports club please email wendy@lamorindaweekly.com or call (925) 377-0977.  
B&W listing will cost \$24 (3.75"x1").

## SMC Gaels Home Game Schedule



www.SMCGaels.com

- Fri, Apr 1 MTEN Santa Clara Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 3:00 PM
  - Sat, Apr 2 MTEN Gonzaga Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 12:00 PM
  - Sat, Apr 2 WTEN Santa Clara Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 12:00 PM
  - Sun, Apr 3 SB Boise State Cottrell Field 12:00 PM
  - Sun, Apr 3 WTEN Pacific Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 1:00 PM
  - Sun, Apr 3 WLAX Stanford Saint Mary's Stadium 1:00 PM
  - Tue, Apr 5 MTEN Montana Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 3:00 PM
  - Wed, Apr 6 WLAX UC Davis Saint Mary's Stadium 4:00 p.m.
  - Sat, Apr 9 WTEN Portland Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 12:00 PM
  - Sun, Apr 10 WTEN Denver Timothy Korth Tennis Complex 11:00 AM
  - Sun, Apr 10 WLAX Oregon Saint Mary's Stadium 1:00 PM
- Schedule is subject to change. Confirm at www.SMCGaels.com

**Dexter Honens II**  
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DRE License #01111347  
Lamorinda Resident Since 1995  
Direct: 925-314-5299  
Kyle@Stonecastle-LHF.com

319 Diablo Rd., Ste 103 • Danville • CA DRE Lic. # 01327738, NMLS#280803

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