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## SMC Basketball Wins Home Opener

By Justine Sgalio



Ben Allen was named WCC Player of the Week  
Photo: Tod Fierner

show him what I could do," Allen said. "I really appreciate that. When your coach is confident in you, you are confident in yourself and everything just goes off."

Allen, who fouled out with 3:43 left to go in the game, said he was unaware of how close he was to the rarely achieved statistic until teammate Phil Benson told him with just under six minutes to go.

"Ben just needed minutes," said Bennett. "He played really well last year early on but just couldn't crack into the line-up with Omar [Samhan] and Diamon [Simpson] in front of him, which I think made him lose a little confidence. We all know Ben's a great offensive player and he proved that to everyone tonight."

The Gaels defeated San Diego State 80-58 on November 16 at McKeon Pavilion as part of ESPN's second annual College Hoops Tip-Off Marathon. Junior guard Mickey McConnell led the team in scoring with 24 points.

Vanderbilt took the 72-70 win over the Gaels November 20 at McKeon Pavilion. Senior center Omar Samhan led the Gaels in scoring and had a double-double-25 points and 18 rebounds.

Saint Mary's took on Cal Poly on Monday night; results can be found online at [www.smcgael.com](http://www.smcgael.com). The Gaels take on Cal Maritime tonight, November 25th, at 7:05 p.m. at McKeon Pavilion.

The Saint Mary's Gaels defeated the New Mexico State Aggies 100-68 in their home opener Friday, November 13, at McKeon Pavilion.

"As a coach this was a little bit of a scary game," said Saint Mary's Head Coach Randy Bennett. "New Mexico State is a team that presses, is athletic, has some really good guys and had a team that was really good last year. Usually you want one [a first game] that is going to be a little bit more traditional and to be honest, one that is not against quite as good of a team...New Mexico State is a really good three point shooting team-you wouldn't have known that tonight, but they are."

The Gaels took an early 11 point lead with 14:40 to go in the half after a layup by freshman forward Mitchell Young. But the Aggies battled back with a six point run led by New Mexico State center Hamidu Rahman, making it 13-8 Gaels with 12:17 to go in the half. The run was countered by a dominant Gaels offense, putting Saint Mary's up by 16 after a three pointer by senior forward Ben Allen, making it 33-17 Saint Mary's with three minutes left in the half. Allen, senior Wayne Hunter and freshman Matthew Dellavedova, all with seven points in the half, led the Gaels charge to the 41-26 halftime lead.

"What this team has more than any other team is balance," said Bennett. "All around, we've got pretty even scoring and willing passers."

The second half brought another commanding offensive effort by the Gaels, shooting 48.6 percent and 50 percent from the three point line, keeping the Aggies from getting within 16 in the half; a foul shot by freshman guard Beau Levesque with 3:05 to go put the Gaels up by 34, their largest lead of the game.

Saint Mary's top scorers Dellavedova and Hunter led the Gaels with 19 points, but it was Allen that stole the show finishing just one assist away from a triple-double, which later earned him the honor of West Coast Conference Co-Player of the Week.

Allen's 30 minutes on the floor produced 17 points, 10 rebounds and 9 assists. But Allen humbly acknowledged Saint Mary's Head Coach Randy Bennett for his success on the court.

"I'm glad Coach had confidence in me and gave me the chance to



Wayne Hunter (24) scored 19 points in the win over New Mexico Photo: Tod Fierner

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