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## Saint Mary's Men's Basketball Season Tips Off Friday

By Michael Sakoda



Front row from left: Paul McCoy, Beau Levesque, Dane Pineau, Brad Waldow, Matt Hodgson, Garrett Jackson, Treaven Duffy; back row from left: Kerry Carter, Jordan Giusti, James Walker III, Eividas Petrulis, Calvin Hermanson, Stephen Holt, Joe Coleman, Emmett Naar Photo Tod Fierner

Both Holt (11.6 ppg, 5.4 reb, 1.2 stl, All-WCC Honorable Mention) and Waldow (10.2 ppg, 6.0 reb, 61.8 field goal percentage) were named to the Pre-Season All-WCC Team.

"Holt's basically been an All-Conference guy the last two years ... for whatever reason, they only put one guy from our team on (the All-WCC Team) last season," said Bennett. "But I expect (them) to get better. Delly got better every year, so did Mickey and Omar. I think they will too."

In addition to the standouts, the Gaels add depth in forwards Dane Pineau, Jackson, Calvin Hermanson and in guard Kerry Carter.

"The way (the new guys) push everyone to get better is amazing," said redshirt sophomore Jordan Giusti. "Their attitudes are great...all just really excited to be here."

The WCC hasn't gotten any easier. Pre-season polls have the Gaels third in the conference behind BYU and Gonzaga.

The Gaels are facing more than just adversity on the court as they continue to deal with the fallout from the NCAA sanctions imposed last season.

Bennett is suspended for the first five WCC games of the season and has been prohibited from off-campus recruiting for a 1-year period. The school's scholarships have been reduced (from 13 to 11) for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons.

While Bennett is away, the Gaels face Gonzaga on the road and host league rivals San Francisco and Santa Clara.

"I have to sit out the first five conference games, and that will be a tricky one," said Bennett. "We'll (also) have to be more efficient with our scholarships ... we can do it with 11, but it will be harder."

At the end of the day, though, Bennett has faith in his team.

"I like our team, but to do what the other teams have done, we have to do things about perfect," he said.

"Every team has its own story ... every team is different ... this team has the pieces, whether we can get them to fit right, and fast enough, remains to be seen."

Saint Mary's Sports Round-Up

After getting swept in straight sets to No. 9 San Diego at home, the Gaels volleyball team (13-7, 9-3 in WCC) defeated No. 19 BYU in a come-from-behind thriller. Dropping the first two games, the Gaels won the next three to upset the Cougars on Oct. 26. In third place in the WCC, SMC traveled to Stockton and beat Pacific on Halloween. They face Pepperdine and Loyola Marymount next week, before returning home on Nov. 14 to take on Santa Clara.

With three top-20 teams in the WCC, the women's soccer team (6-12, 2-5 in WCC) has faced some tough competition. The Gaels dropped two games against their Northwest rivals, No. 11 Portland and Gonzaga this past weekend. SMC closes out its season on the road. The Gaels travel to take on USD (3-4 in WCC) on Thursday, before heading to Utah to face No. 20 BYU on Nov. 9.

Despite a great end to the last season, the Saint Mary's men's basketball team is in for a tough season this year. The Gaels open their 2013-2014 campaign on Friday, Nov. 8 at home against Louisiana Tech.

Last year, the team finished with a 28-7 record (16-1 at home, 14-2 in WCC), the sixth straight year the Gaels have won 25 or more games. SMC also earned its third NCAA Tournament bid in the last four years, where they defeated Middle Tennessee State 67-54 as part of the First Four, before falling 54-52 to No. 6 Memphis in the second round.

"We've had a nice run of teams, of guys and good leaders ... but there's no way to top that team in terms of how much they achieved with what they had," said head coach Randy Bennett. "Everyone talks about (Dellavedova), but there was a whole group of them that did it and they all were important."

Matthew Dellavedova, now a reserve with the Cleveland Cavaliers, was one of four seniors lost to graduation along with center Kyle Rowley and forwards Tim Williams and Mitchell Young, but they have a new group of leaders ready to step up.

"Holt will fill Dellavedova's position in terms of running the point," said Bennett. "Matt Hodgson will play more... (Brad) Waldow will play more, and Garrett Jackson and Beau (Levesque) will play the four."

After a tough season, the men's soccer team (3-3-2 in WCC) celebrated Senior Day in dramatic fashion, winning in overtime 2-1 against USD on Nov. 3. Junior Michael Semenza scored in the 98th minute off an assist from senior Justin Howard. The Gaels have another home game against USF today, Nov. 6 before they close out their season on the road against Santa Clara and their Northwest rivals.

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