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Saint Mary's Loses to USD, Defeats Portland and #23 Gonzaga

By Brandon Duran

Sophomore forward Danielle Mauldin had 11 points in the upset of #23 Gonzaga. Photo Tod Fierner

After a rocky start to open the season, the Saint Mary's women's basketball team hit its stride. The Gaels started 3-3, but has since won the last 11 of last 12 games to improve to 14-5, 5-1. The stretch included a seven game winning streak, the longest since the 2000-2001 season.

Saint Mary's returned from a recent trip to face Northwest rivals Portland and #23 Gonzaga, going 2-0 for the first time in ten years. Saint Mary's has not won in Spokane since 2002. Gonzaga has not lost in the WCC since 2009.

The Gaels defeated Portland, 75-71 on January 12. They followed up the close victory with another down-to-the-wire, 66-63 win over the Bulldogs on Saturday, January 14. Saint Mary's is now tied for first with newcomers BYU.

The Gaels started the road-trip coming off a disappointing loss to Southern California rival, the University of San Diego (9-3, 0-0) on January 7.

Saint Mary's opened the game feeding the ball into the low post to sophomore forward Danielle Mauldin and freshman forward Carli Rosenthal. The Toreros tried to take advantage of their speed by getting buckets in transition. Five minutes into play the score remained tied, 10-10.

The Gaels' offensive catalyst was junior guard Alex Carbonel, who took control of the game by penetrating the defense and recording an easy layup or a pass out to the perimeter.

Around the nine minute mark the Gaels went cold, missing their next nine shots, and falling behind by 10 points. Saint Mary's went into halftime trailing by 12.

They came out in the second half and scored a few baskets to keep pace with the Toreros but couldn't get the deficit down to less than 11. The Gaels failed to get any semblance of an offense going, and San Diego shot the lights out, getting the lead up to 21 with around twelve minutes left. Ten minutes in, SMC made a 10 point run but couldn't sustain it.

A frustrated SMC head coach Paul Thomas watched as the clock ran out with the score showing 77-60 USD.

After the game, coach Thomas summed up his team's play, "We played out of character today. We simply didn't execute the way we need to, to win. We'll get back onto the floor Monday and practice hard."

When asked how they'll bounce back Carbonel responded, "We come back Monday and practice harder. That's the best thing about college basketball, there's always another opportunity to wash [a loss] off." Carbonel had a career-high 24 points in the loss.

The practice paid off, and the Gaels look to continue their success on Saturday, January 21 when the Pepperdine Waves visit McKeon Pavilion.

Senior guard Alex Carbonel (#5) had a career-high 24 points against USD and team-high 18 points against GU. Photo Tod Fierner

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