

Published March 28th, 2012

Saint Mary's Men Fall in Opening Round

By Caitlin Graveson



Matthew Dellavedova Photo Tod Fierner

The Gaels finished an impressive season with a loss in the opening round of the NCAA tournament. The Friday, March 16 match-up against the #10 Purdue Boilermakers proved to be too tough for #7 Saint Mary's as they fell, 69-72.

"It wasn't lack of competitiveness or effort, just didn't go our way down the stretch," said head coach Randy Bennett. Bennett's NCAA tournament record falls to 4-6.

Saint Mary's shot the season's second worst percentage from the three point line at 16 percent. They only notched four threes.

"They played good defense, but we didn't knock down our shots either," said junior guard Matthew Dellavedova. With eight assists in the game, Dellavedova claimed the school's second highest single season assist record at 212, passing Mickey McConnell.

The Gaels took their only lead of the game at 69-68 with 44.2 seconds to play, but Saint Mary's could not hold on to win it.

"Everyone cares and puts time in on the floor, off the floor, so when you lose one like that, when you're up with a couple of seconds left, it really hurts," senior forward Rob Jones said of the loss. Jones, ranked fourth in the NCAA for double-doubles, recorded his 20th of the season with 23 points and 14 boards.

"I'm just glad Coach Bennett gave me a chance to be a part of Saint Mary's and everyone on this team, that I got to know them so well," Jones transferred to SMC from the

University of San Diego.

"If it didn't sting, it wouldn't be any fun," Bennett said. "Some guys get to return, but those three seniors don't. We were good because our three seniors gave us tremendous leadership this year."

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA