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Saint Mary's Wins in Vegas

By Caitlin Graveson



Photo Tod Fierner

heading into the break.

The Toreros stormed back in the second half to tie it up with 14 minutes to play. The game remained close until the final minutes. Freshman forward Danielle Mauldin hit a huge shot and drew a foul with 42.9 seconds to play to give the Gaels a 67-65 lead. Saint Mary's held on from there to win, 71-68.

"We are really excited to get that first win in the WCC tournament. We had confidence and that really got us through the game," said redshirt junior guard Jasmine Smith.

Tomlinson captured the all-time scoring record in the first half of the game off a free-throw. She notched 21 points in the match.

With the win Saint Mary's advanced to the WCC Championship for the first time since 2001. The Gaels faced Gonzaga for a third time this season but yet again, could not outlast the dominant Bulldogs, losing 72-46.

"They are an extremely efficient team. We have to do our best to make it a grinder game. If we keep it in the 60's we have a chance," head coach Paul Thomas said before the game.

The Gaels controlled the tempo and maintained a low-scoring game for the first 15 minutes of play. While the Gaels defense was stellar, their offense was stagnant. SMC shot just 23 percent from the field in the first half. Heading into halftime Saint Mary's was down eight, 20-28.

The second half was dominated by the Bulldogs. They outscored the Gaels, 26 to 44 to win 72-46.

Mauldin again came up big for the Gaels, leading SMC in scoring a career-high 19 points and adding ten rebounds.

The Gaels are guaranteed a spot in the WNIT tournament for the second year in a row. The bracket announcement was made late Monday night after the press deadline.

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Saint Mary's women's basketball experienced some ups-and-downs in the West Coast Conference tournament. On the positive side, the Gaels broke a two-year WCC tournament winless spell, dating back to the 2007-2008 season, and senior forward Louella Tomlinson captured the Saint Mary's all-time scoring record. On the negative side Saint Mary's lost handily to Gonzaga for the third time this season.

Finishing in second place in conference play, the Gaels received a bye until the semi-finals of the tournament. They opened the tournament against the University of San Diego on Sunday, March 6. Saint Mary's just edged out the Toreros in their last regular-season match-up and this game proved to be close as well.

The Gaels got off to a slow start, down 2-8 early. Coming off a career game against Portland just the week before, junior guard Alex Carbonel again proved to be the spark off of the bench Saint Mary's needed. She dropped a three, hit a lay-up and drew a foul to ignite a 7-0 run to get the Gaels back in the game.

Both teams traded points for the rest of the half. In the final minute of the half, Saint Mary's went on a 9-0 run to build a 44-43 lead