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SEMO Alum Plays In 'The Big Game'

JANUARY 26TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

SEMO Alum Plays In 'The Big Game'

By Andrew Cato, ShowMe Times Sports Editor

Super Bowl Sunday is nothing short of a National Holiday in many households across the nation. Family and friends gather around the TV with their favorite tailgate foods and drinks to take in the spectacle of 'the big game', whether that be the commercials, the halftime show, or the game itself.

In Super Bowl XLVI, the New England Patriots and New York Giants are facing off in a rematch of Super Bowl XLII (in my opinion, the best of my lifetime; the pass from Manning to Tyree that Tyree caught on his helmet still amazes me).

If you've watched ESPN, you've heard more than you ever wanted to know about Eli Manning and Tom Brady, comparing the two defenses, etc., but Southeast Missouri football fans have something else to watch for in the game: Dan Connolly.

images/Sports/2012/Misc./20120126_DC2.jpg

Connolly is a 2005 graduate of Southeast Missouri State University.

The 29 year old is New England's starting center, and was a four-time All-Ohio Valley Conference offensive lineman for the Redhawks.

Connolly's path to the NFL was a tumultuous one; after not being picked up in the '05 NFL Draft, Connolly signed by the Jacksonville Jaguars, but was released by the team in

2007. He was signed to the Patriots active roster in February '08, but was released on October 20 and re-signed to the practice squad two days later.

Connolly was promoted to the Patriots active roster for the 2009 season and started four games when veteran Stephen Neal went down with an injury.

When Logan Mankins missed the first seven games of the 2010 season due to contract issues, Connolly filled in at left guard. He was put on the reserve list during Week 9, but came back at right guard after a season-ending injury to Neal.

Connolly's most publicised moment came in a Dec. 19, 2010 contest against the Packers - the 6'4", 314-pounder ran bank a kickoff for 71 yards to set up a Patriots touchdown, and set an NFL Record for the longest kick return by a lineman. The feat earned him AFC Special Teams Player of the Week honors - he was the second lineman to ever earn the award.

Keep an eye out for big No. 63 when the Patriots take the field during the Super Bowl.

Below is Connolly's record-setting kick return during the 2010 season.

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Warren, Lady Raiders' Comeback Bid Falls Short

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Warren, Lady Raiders' Comeback Bid Falls Short

ST. LOUIS – The Three Rivers Lady Raiders waited too long to shift their game into high gear Wednesday night.

The Lady Raiders trailed by as many as 13 points with three and a half minutes left before rallying to cut the gap to one in the final moments before falling 76-74 to the St. Louis Archers in a Midwest Community Collegiate Athletic Conference contest.

“We cannot wait till the last five minutes to start playing,” Three Rivers coach Jeff Walk said. “We need to make more free throws – 10-for-21 will not cut it. Hopefully we will realize that we must come to play every night.”

Three Rivers (8-11) trailed 68-55 after Kirstie Owen’s 3-pointer with 3:51 to go, but came alive shortly after that as Carolyn Overton scored six straight points to cap a 9-0 spurt and make it a 68-64 game with 2:10 remaining.

Four straight points by Cierra Gaines pushed the Archers’ lead back to 72-64, but a pair of baskets by Brooke Godsey sandwiched around an *Abbie Warren* trey made it a one-point game with 24 seconds left on the clock.

Shakaunna “Nene” Futrell made three of four free throws to push the St. Louis lead to 75-71 with 15.1 seconds left, but a Candace Miller 3 made it 75-74 with nine seconds to go.

The Lady Raiders still had a chance after Gaines missed one of two free throws with 2.6 seconds left, but could not get a game-tying shot.

The Lady Archers led 29-26 at the half, but slowly built its lead to open the second half, going up 55-44 on Futrell’s basket with 10:01 left in the contest and led by at least seven until Three Rivers made its late run.

Warren and Whitney Mills paced the Lady Raiders with 12 points apiece, while Tazonda Gibbs added 11 and Overton finished with 10.

Gaines led St. Louis with 21 points.

Three Rivers is back in action Saturday when it hosts Moberly in a Region XVI contest. Tipoff is set for 5 p.m.

For more information on everything Raider Athletics, make sure to visit RaidersAthletics.com!

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'Pards Pick Up Patriot League Win At Colgate

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['Pards Pick Up Patriot League Win At Colgate](#)

HAMILTON, N.Y. - A complete team effort, with four players in double figures, gave Lafayette an 82-76 victory over Colgate on Wednesday night at Cotterell Court. Ryan Willen's 18 points paced the Leopards who shot 56 percent from the field as a team.

With the victory, head coach Fran O'Hanlon became the Patriot League's all-time winningest coach with 235 career wins. O'Hanlon passed former Bucknell head man Pat Flannery and now holds the Patriot League record for wins in addition to owning the overall (489) and league (218) games coached marks. The Leopards are 3-0 in road Patriot League games in 2011-12.

Reigning Patriot League Rookie of the Week Dan Trist tied his career-high with 13 points and Joey Ptasinski also scored 13 in a career-high effort. Point guard Tony Johnson added 10 to go along with a season-high seven assists.

Colgate (6-14, 1-5) opened up a 15-6 advantage six minutes into the game after hitting seven of its first 10 shots. Lafayette then responded with a 9-2 run with three straight treys on consecutive possessions to pull within two at the 12:05 mark after Johnson's triple.

Lafayette (9-12, 4-2) led 32-30 with 5:15 to play in the first half following Ptasinski's jumper but the Raiders put together a 12-2 spurt to take its largest lead of the first half (42-34). During the run, Sterling Melville scored nine of his 13 first-half points to lead the home side. With 1:28 showing, Lafayette answered with a pair of threes from Ptasinski and Johnson at the buzzer to cut the deficit to 42-40 at the break.

The Leopards' scored the first six points of the second half on layups from Jim Mower, Johnson and Trist to take a 46-42 lead 2:10 into the second session. Lafayette never trailed from that point on with the only tie coming at 57 apiece at the 9:45 mark.

Lafayette scored 12 of the next 16 points and led 69-61 with 4:08 to play. Levi Giese started the run with a short turnaround hook shot, followed by a Willen triple off a baseline inbounds play to extend the lead to five with 6:01 showing. A Nick Pascale layup pulled Colgate within three but Willen found Trist in traffic and the freshman converted a three-point play with a reverse lay-in. Melville, who finished with a game-high 19 points, made a basket for the Raiders, but Rob Delaney sank four free throws on two one-and-one situations to end the stretch.

Another Melville layup made it 69-63 but Johnson penetrated the lane and kicked to a wide-open Ptasinski three that gave Lafayette its largest lead of the night at 72-63 with 3:11 on the clock. Brandon James hit back-to-back threes surrounding a Willen bucket to

pull Colgate within five at 2:03. Luke Roh's layup made it 77-73 with 50 seconds to go, but Lafayette sank 5-of-6 free throws to ice the game.

As a team, Lafayette was 18-of-22 from the charity stripe while Colgate made just 7-of-14. The Leopards' won the battle on the glass, 28 25.

Lafayette completes the first half of the Patriot League slate when it hosts American (14-7, 5-1) at 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Notes: Lafayette improved to 6-0 when outshooting its opponents this season (56% to 55.4%) and 3-0 when shooting better than 50 percent. Lafayette is now 4-2 when winning the rebounding battle.

Click here for a full breakdown of the game's stats.

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ShowMe Scoreboard, 1.26.2012

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Games played Wednesday, Jan 25, 2012, 2012

High School Girls

- St. Vincent 51, Chaffee 21

College Women

- Texas 79, Mizzou 72
- Ohio State 78, Pe
- Texas 75, Mizzou 58
- George Washington 68, Saint Louis 58
- South Florida 57, Seton Hall 45
- Holy Cross 62, Army 59
- Lafayette 66, Colgate 58
- Arkansas State 61, Denver 73

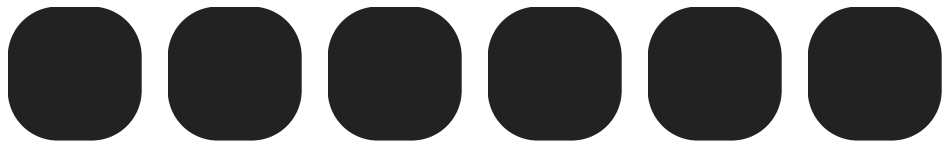
College Men

- Oklahoma State 79, Mizzou 72
- Lafayette 82, Colgate 76
- Duke 74, Maryland 61
- Kansas State 69, Texas Tech 47
- Memphis 74, Rice 51
- Arkansas 56, Auburn 53

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Leopards Look To Win Fourth Straight At Colgate

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Leopards Look To Win Fourth Straight At Colgate

With just two games left in the first time through the Patriot League slate, Lafayette (8-12) heads north to Hamilton, N.Y. for the first meeting of the season with Colgate. Lafayette is 3-2 in Patriot League play and looking to remain in the top half of the Patriot League standings, a place rewarded with a home game in the Patriot League Tournament quarterfinals in March. Colgate (6-13, 1-4) just picked up its first Patriot League victory of the season on Saturday, beating Navy 65-54 in overtime.

Lafayette has beaten Colgate in three straight and in four of the last five. The Leopards swept the season series in 2010-11, using 40 points in two games from Jared Mintz '11.

Nineteen second-half points by Lehigh's C.J. McCollum and a pair of key runs in the final 20 minutes helped Lehigh pull away to a 90-76 decision over Lafayette on Sunday afternoon at Kirby Sports Center.

The Leopards had four players in double figures in Ryan Willen (17), Rob Delaney (16), Dan Trist (13) and Jim Mower (11). Lafayette is 1-5 when four players score in double figures.

Forward Dan Trist has been named the Patriot League Rookie of the Week after scoring in double figures in Lafayette's last two games. Trist contributed a career-high 13 points against Lehigh when he shot 6-of-8 from the floor. At Holy Cross, Trist scored 11 points and grabbed three boards. The Economics major has started 10 games this season and is averaging 5.4 points and 2.3 rebounds per game. Trist leads Lafayette with 13 blocked shots and ranks sixth in the league in that category.

Preseason All-Patriot League selection Tony Johnson has made an impact in the four games in which he has played after returning from his back injury. Johnson is averaging 6.3 points and 3.5 assists per game. He has started the last three games, playing 26 minutes per game.

In the fall semester, Lafayette basketball posted a 3.13 GPA. Neuroscience major Ryan Willen led the way with a 3.77 GPA while freshmen Seth Hinrichs and Joey Ptasinski contributed with 3.65 and 3.53 marks.

Scouting the Raiders

Colgate rests in seventh place in the conference standings, just one game removed from a three-way tie for fifth. The Raiders lost the first four games to open conference play (at American, Bucknell and Army and at home vs. Lehigh), part of a longer, eight-game losing streak. That skid came to an end with Saturday's overtime win over Navy during which the Raiders outscored the Mids 13-2 in the overtime session for a 65-54 victory.

The Raiders are averaging 63.4 points per game and guards Mike Venezia (10.2 ppg), Pat Moore (10.1 ppg) and Mitch Rolls (9.6 ppg) account for 47 percent of the team's scoring. All three are threats from outside, combining for 101 of the team's 127 three-pointers in 2011-12. Colgate shoots 38 percent from the arc.

Up front senior forward Nick Pascale is the team's top rebounder at 5.4 rpg and is one of six players contributing six points or more per game. Junior Brandon James (5.6 ppg, 4.3 rpg) started the Navy game and three others this season. Also in the mix is senior forward Yaw Gyawu (6.9 ppg, 3.3 rpg), a 2009 All-Rookie selection.

Colgate is coached by Matt Langel (Penn '00) who is in his first season.

You can stream the game at GoLeopards.com, as well as listen to the radio broadcast at WJRH.org.

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