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Taylor, Owls In Fourth Straight AMC Title Game

MARCH 05TH 2012 BY UNKNOWN

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COLUMBIA - Monday night finds the William Woods University women's basketball team returning to the AMC Postseason Tournament championship game for the fourth time in as many years. For the third straight season, the Owls will battle Columbia College for the AMC's automatic berth to the NAIA National Tournament, with tipoff set for 7 p.m. from the Arena at Southwell Complex. "Voice of the Owls" Darren Munns and Craig McAndrews will bring the game to Owls fans, with the link available via wwuowls.com at gametime.

Earlier This Season

The teams have split the series this season, with the road team picking up the win in each contest. William Woods picked up the first ever road win at Columbia in the modern era, with a 69-64 victory. Sharron Andrews scored 17 points, while Ashlee Taylor and Megan Aubuchon each added 11.

In the return contest, the Owls ran into a near-perfect free throw shooting performance (27-of-28) from the Cougars, falling 66-76 on the night. Andrews again led the scoring for WWU with 18, with Blake French adding 11.

Quick Look - William Woods

William Woods is coming off a pair of convincing opening-round wins in the AMC Tournament, having dispatched Missouri Baptist in the opening round by a 63-41 count

and running away from Williams Baptist in the semifinal to come out 80-55 victors.

The Owls used a balanced team performance in the quarterfinal win, with Megan Aubuchon having the most outstanding performance of the night. The senior finished with a career-high eight blocks on the night, one block shy of a 23-year-old single-game record, and nearly missed a triple-double as she added eight points and eight rebounds to her game line for the night. Ashlee Taylor also saw a near-miss on the night, as the junior finished with nine points and 10 rebounds for WWU.

On the season, Sharron Andrews leads the Owls offense, averaging 12.7 pts/gm on the year. Aubuchon and Taylor sit just shy of the 10-point plateau, with 9.9 pts/gm and 9.6 pts/gm respectively, with Aubuchon leading the rebounding battle for WWU with 7.2 per game. Andrews has steadily improved on the glass on the year and currently averages 6.2 boards per contest, good for second on the team. Miranda Loesch adds 4.7 per game and Taylor grabs 4.6 per contest to round out the glass crew.

As a team, the Owls are strong defensively, ranked in the top 25 in four defensive categories on the year. WWU holds its opponents to 56.258 pts/gm on the year, the 15th-best mark among NAIA Division I teams. The Owls also allow a stingy opponents shooting percentage of .360 (20th) and give up just 35.548 rebounds per game (21st) through 31 games on the year. The Owls are also ranked 22nd in total blocks, with 102 on the season.

On the offensive side of the ledger, the Owls are also among the top teams, with the 32nd-best 3-pt FG percentage in the country at .314 and the 35th-best rebounding margin (6.710). WWU holds top-50 marks in all shooting categories, adding a 44th-best .401 overall shooting pace to a 49th-best FT percentage of .674 and the aforementioned success from beyond the arc.

Individually, William Woods grabs four top-50 marks, with Andrews claiming the 31st-best mark for total steals and steals per game with 75 and 2.419/gm respectively. Blake French boasts an assist/turnover ratio of 1.618, the 42nd-best among NAIA Division I players and Aubuchon sits at 50th with 31 total blocks on the year.

Quick Look - Columbia College

The Lady Cougars enter today's game also having won their first two tournament games, but having seen a bit tougher semifinal matchup against Park University. Columbia easily handled Stephens College in the quarterfinals, winning by a 96-51 margin before

outlasting the Pirates 83-67.

Columbia has five players who have averaged double figures on the season, although only four are active on the current roster. Heather English leads the team with 14.8 pts/gm, with Airelle Eldridge adding 13.3 on the year. Ashley Fisher and Julie Teeple round out the scoring with 12.4 and 10.6 respectively. Teeple is also strong on the glass, as she's the active leader for Columbia with 8.3 rebounds per game.

CC has struggled through the AMC slate with a short roster, with only seven players having seen action through January and February for the Lady Cougars. Despite being shorthanded, Columbia is ranked in the top-10 nationally in a number of categories, highlighted by a .791 FT shooting percentage - the second-best among NAIA Division I schools. 3-pt shooting is a strength for Columbia as well, with the Lady Cougars boasting a .344 shooting pace (sixth-best) and a pace of 7.34 3FG per game, ninth best in the country.

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Lady Raiders Thumped By Iowa Western

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COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa – Over 500 miles from home, the regular season came to an unmerciful end for the Three Rivers Lady Raiders.

Beset by injuries that prematurely ended the year for two starters and sidelined players for over 100 games this year, the Lady Raiders got in an early hole and never recovered, losing 90-51 to the Iowa Western Lady Reivers here Saturday in a Region XVI contest.

Three Rivers (9-21, 2-10 XVI) trailed just 9-8 after Candace Miller's bucket five minutes into the game, but the Lady Reivers (19-11, 6-6) ran off 14 straight points and never looked back, taking a 23-8 lead on Lanita Calloway's basket with 9:18 left in the first half.

Calloway's field goal with 48 seconds left in the first half extended the Iowa Western lead to 44-23 and her field goal with 13:32 left in the game made it 63-31. The Lady Raiders never came any closer than 20 points after halftime not got within 30 the final 13 minutes.

Taylor Turgeon paced the Lady Reivers with 21 points, while Calloway and Amber McCann added 12 apiece and Shaw-nee Winningham tossed in 10.

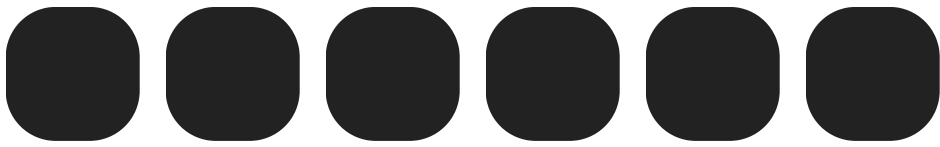
Abbie Warren led Three Rivers with 12 points, while Tazonda Gibbs added 11.

The Lady Raiders begin play in the Region XVI Tournament Thursday at Jefferson City when they take on Crowder. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m. at Lincoln University.

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Valdosta State Sweeps Sailfish

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LANTANA, Fla.- After a dominating 11-5 win on Friday night to open their weekend series versus Valdosta State University at the Santaluces Complex, the Palm Beach Atlantic University baseball team came back on Saturday hoping for another pair of key regional wins. With the Fish leading 6-3 into the seventh inning of game one it appeared they would be on their way to at minimum a series win. That all changed however when VSU scored 11 runs in the final three innings to earn a 14-8 win in game one while jumping out early on the Fish in game two for a 7-3 win and series victory.

Palm Beach Atlantic drops to 7-5 on the season while Valdosta State improves to 7-6 with the two-game sweep on Saturday.

Game One

Sailfish junior starter Nic Kovacs did his part to help position himself for his third victory of the season. He would toss the first six innings while allowing only three runs. Things changed however in the top of the seventh as Kovacs was able to retire one batter before the Blazers would load the bases.

Sailfish head coach Kent Bottenfield would opt to make a move to his bullpen and call on left-hander Alejandro De Moya.

Unfortunately for the Fish, De Moya would be greeted by a two-run double from Ryan Noelte followed by a two-run double by Christian Glisson as VSU quickly pushed ahead 7-6.

After the Sailfish tied the game back up at 7-7 behind a RBI single from Justin Sizemore in the bottom of the seventh, the Fish would once again see their bullpen struggle as a pair of PBA arms would allow five runs to come home to score as VSU opened up a 12-7 lead.

Noelte produced a two-run single while Marc Overstreet added a long solo homerun in the inning.

Valdosta added on two more insurance runs in the top of the ninth inning to earn the 14-8 win.

Travis Murray continued his great work with the bat from game one of the series with a 3-for-3 showing in Saturday's opener as he scored three runs out of the cleanup spot. Sizemore also continued his torrid hitting with a 3-for-5 showing while Brooks Fleming posted three singles with a run driven home.

Valdosta connected for a total of four solo homeruns in the game by Overstreet, Glisson, Bryant Hayman and Chaz Bagwell.

Game Two

Perhaps riding the momentum of their big comeback in the opener, the Blazers jumped all over Sailfish starter Kenny Frosch (0-1) in the first inning as the PBA left-hander allowed a walk, hit-by-pitch and then a long 3-run homer by Glisson as the Blazers led 3-0 after three batters.

A single run in the second inning added on to the lead for VSU before an inside-the-park homer by Perkowski cut into the lead at 4-1 after three innings.

Valdosta added three more runs in the fifth as Noelte smashed a two-run shot while Overstreet scored later in the frame on a pickoff play.

PBA scored twice in the sixth inning on a 2-run single by senior Matt Civetti but the Fish would leave the bases-loaded as pinch-hitter Nick Natale was retired on a strikeout to end the threat. VSU starter Jarod Carlton (2-0) went the distance for VSU as he scattered eight hits while allowing three runs while striking out nine batters and walking four.

Peter Graffeo and Robbie Pettet followed Frosch out of the bullpen for PBA with Pettet tossing two scoreless frames with three strikeouts.

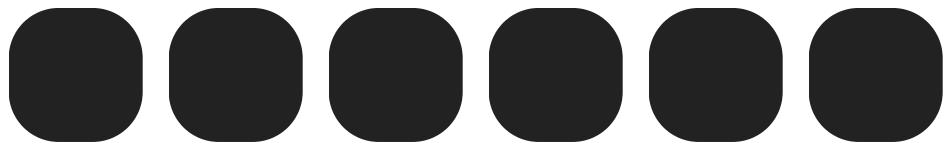
PBA produced eight hits in the game with two each by Perkowski and Luis Mejia while freshman catcher Christian Correa finished 2-for-2 with a double, single and walk in his first collegiate start. The Sailfish will have the early portion of their spring break off from game action and will return next weekend.

Click here for the game's full box score.

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Lady Bearcats Fall To Miller Career Academy

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FARMINGTON - A pair of free throws from Zhanesha Dickerson gave the Miller Career Academy Phoenix the lead just over a minute into the second quarter of Friday night's Class 4 Quarterfinal game.

The Lady Bearcats would never get it back.

Less than 200 yards from where the Phoenix handed LBB their first loss of the season, Miller Career Academy again defeated the Lady Bearcats by a 17 point margin, with a 51-34 final score (the December contest, held three months to the day earlier, ended with a 50-33 final).

The Phoenix were fashionably late to the game; tip was originally scheduled for 6:00 p.m., but had to be pushed back due to 'transportation difficulties', according to Farmington Civic Center staff. Despite the late start, the Phoenix shut down the usually potent Lady Bearcat offense with outstanding high-pressure defense.

"Offensively, we didn't really get things going, but you've got to give credit to Miller, they played really excellent defense," head coach Chad Allen said after the game. "I thought we played really well defensively. We battled hard, and we drew three or four charges. That's one thing we talked about a lot, and I thought we really battled hard."

/images/Sports/2012/LBB/20120303_IMG_5155.jpg

"We had talked a lot about their physicality," he continued. "I thought, for the most part, we played really aggressive and physical along with them. We wore down there toward the end because of it, having to push and shove around so much inside.

Dickerson led the Phoenix with 21 points, and Coach Allen was quick to compliment the lone senior for her shooting ability.

"She's a very good jump-shooter. There's not a lot of jump-shooters in basketball like there were back in the day," Allen said of Dickerson. "She's a great shooter, and she can take you off the dribble and knock them down. She had an excellent game tonight."

The game got off to a slow start, but the Lady 'Cats were able to squeak out a 6-5 lead after the first quarter. Dickerson's free throws sparked a 10-2 run for the Phoenix in the second quarter that helped Miller Career to a 21-14 halftime cushion.

A long jumper from Paige Patterson and layup from Brittany Harris pulled LBB within three at the 6:00 mark of the third. The Phoenix were able to capitalize on a few Lady Bearcat turnovers late in the frame to take a 10 point lead into the fourth quarter.

A trey from Erika Cobb pulled the Bearcats within seven at the 5:40 mark in the fourth quarter, but it would be as close as LBB would get to a lead for the rest of the game. The Phoenix ran off another 10-2 run and utilized their delay game late to take the 51-34 victory and advance to the Show Me Showdown.

Despite the disappointing finale, Allen was proud of his team's 23-5 effort this season. It was a big improvement over the previous year, especially considering their short bench and sophomore-laden lineup.

"These girls had a great year; we made it one step further than we did last year, and we'll have everybody back next season," he said. "I want to motivate them to keep working hard over the summer; these girls want to go to the final four, and I think they'll get in there and get the work done."

/images/Sports/2012/LBB/20120303_LBB_Stats.jpg

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Taylor Leads Owls To Blowout Win

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FULTON - Behind a perfect 9-for-9 shooting effort from Ashlee Taylor (Dexter, Mo.) the William Woods University women's basketball team rolled to an easy 80-55 win over Williams Baptist to advance to the championship game of the AMC Postseason Tournament for the fourth time in as many years.

Both teams came out firing, posting a dozen points apiece over the opening five minutes of the contest. Williams Baptist opened the scoring with a 3-pointer with just 17 seconds gone, with Taylor answering for the Owls just 19 seconds later.

With the score level at 14-14 with 13:59 on the clock, William Woods jumped all over the Lady Eagles, hanging 10 unanswered points on WBC before the clock rolled to 10:00. Kala Tyus hit a jumper with 9:45 to go in the half to pull WBC within eight, but WWU kept its foot on the accelerator and pulled out to a 44-22 lead with 3:52 left.

WBC finally managed to stem the bleeding a bit, but a buzzer-beating 3-pointer from Destani Stensrud (Exeter, Mo.) off a broken play sent the Owls into the half with a 50-27 advantage.

William Woods continued to roll coming out of the break, with Taylor hitting her career high 25th point at the 15:40 mark to put the Owls up 60-30. The Lady Eagles were able to muster a few consolation buckets against the WWU bench to close the deficit down the stretch, but Dan Chapla's squad easily finished off the game 25-point winners.

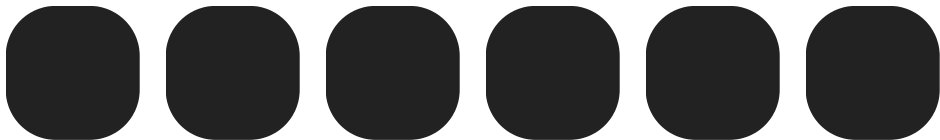
The Owls finished with four scorers in double figures on the night, with Megan Aubuchon (Old Monroe, Mo.) posting a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds. Stensrud and Miranda Loesch (Lohman, Mo.) each added 10. WWU controlled the boards as well, posting a 44-30 advantage in the contest. Kimberly Wise racked 16 points for WBC, with Tyus adding 14 before fouling out with 3 minutes to go.

With the win, WWU moves to 22-9 on the year and will face top seeded Columbia College for the AMC Tournament Championship. Monday's game is set for a 7 p.m. tipoff from the Arena at Southwell Complex.

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