

Lancers Resume GPAC Play Tonight At Briar Cliff

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After nearly three weeks of non-league games, including respective trips halfway across the country, the Mount Marty College basketball teams now return to a sense of normalcy.

The reward? A trip to Sioux City, Iowa, for a Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) showdown with Briar Cliff tonight (Wednesday), with the women's game at 6 p.m. and the men's to follow.

While the Mount Marty men were splitting a pair of weekend games in Denver, Colo., the Lancer women were down in

Florida for a stint in the sun — they also came away 1-1.

"It was nice to get away like that for a while. We got to do some things we wanted to do," women's coach Tom Schlingen said Tuesday, referring to stops at Disney World and the beach.

Mount Marty let a late lead slip away in a Friday loss to Webber International (Fla.), but responded Saturday with a win over Emmanuel (Ga.).

"We were pretty disappointed in our first game, especially leading the way we did with a few minutes to play," Schlingen said. "But we came back and had one of our best games of the year."

The challenge now for the Lancers (9-6, 4-3) is to return to GPAC action for the first time since Dec. 15 in a positive way.

"We talked (Tuesday) that we're literally at the halfway point of our season," Schlingen said. "We have 13 league games left out of our 15, so we have the easiest half out of the way. Now it's time to walk the walk."

The ultimate goal, Schlingen said, is to put together a resume worthy of a selection to the NAIA Tournament. Of course, doing so would require Mount Marty to pick up a few wins over ranked teams.

"It'll be a matter of who's going to improve the most in our league," he said.

"We show signs of being a really good team, but we still have some lapses. We're still optimistic; we're not far from our goals."

Taylor Forsch leads the Lancers in scoring (15.4) thanks to 52 three-pointers — 15 over the last three games. April Winne averages 11.5 points and Allison De Kam hauls in 6.9 rebounds a game.

Meanwhile for the Lancer men (6-9, 2-6), the bigger issue beyond defensive stats or offensive possessions is consistency, according to head coach Jim Thorson.

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No. 25 K-State Survives USD Scare 70-50

MANHATTAN, Kan. (AP) — With the help of a former Kansas State player, South Dakota made it a decent game against No. 25 Wildcats on the afternoon of New Year's Eve.

The leading scorer for South Dakota after transferring from Kansas State, guard Juevol Myles scored 13 points. Nine of those came in the second half.

With less than eight minutes to play, the Coyotes only trailed Kansas State by five.

Ultimately, though, South Dakota could not keep up with Kansas State, and the Wildcats defeated the Coyotes 70-50.

"Good game for about 30 minutes, and then they really turned it up and turned us over," South Dakota coach Dave Boots said. "I was proud of our kids that we got off to a slow start and they came back and hung in there in the second half and had a good battle."

Nino Williams scored 16 points for the Wildcats, and Rodney McGruder added 15. Karim Rowson led the Coyotes with 14 points, six of which came from free throws.

A significant portion of Myles' scoring also came from getting to the charity stripe. Throughout the game he drew fouls while attacking the rim, and he also caused some trouble for Kansas State ball handlers.

"I thought Juevol played pretty well - not just on the offensive end," Boots said. "He had five steals, so I thought he competed defensively. I'm sure it was fun for him to play against those guys. I thought he had a pretty good game for us."

Though the point guards got their points, South Dakota needed more production from its post players. Outrebounded by 15, the Coyotes (6-9) struggled on the boards and shot 32.7 percent from the floor.

Kansas State (11-2) entered halftime with a 12-point lead, but South Dakota cut that advantage in half before the Wildcats pulled away late.

The Coyotes started the second half with an 11-5 run. They trailed 37-29 when Trevor Gruis went to the free throw line with 15:13 to play and a chance to cut Kansas State's lead to just six points. He made both.

The teams traded baskets as the half continued, and South Dakota stayed close. With fewer than eight minutes to play, the Wildcats led 44-39.

"We screened better," Boots said. "We didn't have very good movement the first half with our four and five and got that going a little bit better the second half. We got better ball reversal off that and opened up the floor a little bit."

"We just tried to adjust a little bit with our four and five in the second half," Boots added, "and I thought that helped us a little bit."

The tide turned, however, when Jordan Henriquez converted a three-point play, beginning a 10-0 run for the Wildcats.

Williams was intentionally fouled on a breakaway layup and sank both free throws. On the Wildcats' ensuing possession Shane Southwell drained a 3-pointer. The next time down the floor, Southwell got a bucket in the lane, and the time after that he scored from the baseline, and Kansas State led 56-39 with 5:23 to play.

The Coyotes could not muster another comeback.

"They just turned it up defen-

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Capital Pain

'Dogs Top Huskers 45-31

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Aaron Murray wanted nothing more this week than to send Georgia's senior class out with a game to remember.

The junior quarterback provided a record-setting performance to make it a reality.

Murray threw five touchdown passes to set a Georgia bowl record, including two in the fourth quarter, as the sixth-ranked Bulldogs beat No. 23 Nebraska 45-31 in the Capital One Bowl on Tuesday.

Murray shook off a pair of first-half interceptions, including one returned for a touchdown, and passed for 427 yards — also a Bulldogs' bowl record — against the nation's top-ranked passing defense. He was the game's most valuable player on the way to earning his first bowl victory at Georgia.

Georgia (12-2) also reached 12 wins for the third time in school history.

"I don't know what it's like to head into an offseason with a win," Murray said. "It's a great feeling to get a win. It's great for the seniors, who have meant so much to this team. They've done a great job of leading this team the whole season."

"To get 12 wins...That's something special."

Nebraska (10-4) lost its third consecutive bowl game, and finished the season with two straight woeful defensive performances. The Cornhuskers lost the Big Ten championship game 70-31.

The Cornhuskers led 24-23 at the half, but committed two of their three turnovers in the final 30 minutes.

Taylor Martinez had two interceptions and two touchdown passes for Nebraska and Rex Burkhead rushed 140 yards in his final college game.

But Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said the efficiency of Murray and Georgia on third down (finished 12 for 17) was too much to overcome.

"I thought the plan was good," Pelini said of his team's defensive scheme. "Third down hurt us, obviously. When were in position, it was man on man down the field. We needed to make some of those plays and we didn't. And, you know, again, that cost us a football game."

Nebraska drops to 12-7 against SEC opponents in bowl games.

Trailed by questions about his team's focus following its narrow loss to Alabama in the SEC championship game, Georgia coach Mark Richt said Tuesday was also about a team that finished 5 yards shy of a BCS title game-berth finding closure.

"We wanted to win this game to prove to ourselves that we are one of the better teams in the country," Richt said. "I think our guys did a good job of sucking it up when they were tired...But when you make a big play here and there, it gives you a little more energy as well...We made enough big



BRANT SANDERLIN/ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/MCT
Georgia Bulldogs wide receiver Tavarres King hauls in a pass for a 75-yard touchdown in front of Nebraska Cornhuskers cornerback Andrew Green during the first quarter of the Capital One Bowl on Tuesday in Orlando, Florida. The Georgia Bulldogs defeated the Nebraska Cornhuskers, 45-31.

No. 21 Northwestern Ends Drought In Gator Bowl

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — The stuffed monkey spent the last year in storage, out of sight but still in everyone's mind.

Coach Pat Fitzgerald dusted it off for the Gator Bowl and even had it on the sideline Tuesday as a reminder of Northwestern's decades-long, bowl losing streak — the ol' monkey on their backs.

Now, it's in pieces.

Behind huge interceptions early and late, No. 21 Northwestern beat Mississippi State 34-20 and snapped college football's longest postseason losing streak. The Wildcats (10-3) hadn't won a bowl game since 1949,

a nine-game skid that was tied with Notre Dame for the longest in NCAA history.

It's history now. And as a reward, Fitzgerald let his players rip the monkey to shreds in the locker room.

"We've never been here before, but now we're here and here to stay with a new streak you can talk about in a positive fashion," Fitzgerald said.

Quentin Williams returned an interception 29 yards for a touchdown on the third play of the game and Nick VanHoose set up another touchdown with a 39-yard interception return in the fourth. Those plays were the

difference in a back-and-forth game that featured more interceptions (seven) than touchdowns (six).

In between, Northwestern's two-quarterback system kept the Bulldogs (8-5) off balance most of the day.

Scrambler Kain Colter ran for 71 yards, making up for his two interceptions. Backup Trevor Siemian threw for 120 yards and an interception, and also ran for a score.

Even with the turnovers, they were more efficient than Mississippi State's Tyler Russell.

Russell completed 12 of 28 passes for 106 yards, with two

touchdowns and four interceptions. He had only thrown six picks in the first 11 games this season.

He threw interceptions on Mississippi State's first two possessions and tossed another one early in the second quarter. After falling behind 13-0, Russell settled down and got the Bulldogs back in the game.

"I talked to him going into the locker room after the third pick, said 'Go into the locker room, splash some water on your face, readjust your pads

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Peterson vs. Pack Has Been Boon For Vikings Running Back

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Adrian Peterson rushed for 210 yards at Green Bay the first time. He was, uh, limited to 199 yards for Minnesota in the most recent meeting.

So how much more can this man do? Will the Packers be able to finally stop him with their third try?

That's an issue for this Saturday at Lambeau Field in a playoff game full of intriguing story lines, when the Vikings and Packers will renew their rivalry in the wild-card round. Peterson carried the Vikings into the postseason with another standout performance in Sunday's 37-34 victory, even though the Packers continually sent a safety up to the line to crowd his running lanes as if he was on a blitz.

"They were a lot more physical in that game than they had been before," Vikings fullback Jerome Felton said. "I think they were trying to box everything and keep it

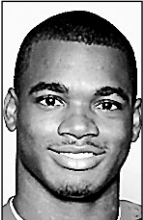
in the middle. I just remember thinking, 'Man, they're coming downhill.' But I think we're just such a physical team that it wears on people. So he didn't have the 80-yard run, and he still had 200 yards rushing."

Peterson had an 82-yard touchdown sprint on Dec. 2 during the 23-14 defeat in Green Bay, but his longest run on Sunday was 28 yards.

"I look forward to us having a better performance on defense," Packers coach Mike McCarthy said.

The Vikings, naturally, were anticipating more adjustments.

"I'm sure they'll come up with another wrinkle when we play them again," coach Leslie Frazier said.



Peterson

One year ago on New Year's Eve, Peterson was lying in a hospital bed, hooked up to tubes and wires with a glazed look on his face, a carton of ice cream clutched in his hand, in the first hours after reconstructive surgery on his left knee. He sent that photo of that scene on Twitter, a stark contrast to the raucous stadium he helped ignite Sunday by spinning around, racing past and running through the Packers.

He needed a franchise-record 34 carries to get to those 199 yards, but five of those attempts went for no gain and five more lost yards. That proved again just how difficult it is to stop him, given the ferocity and determination he's running with, and the confidence with which the Vikings are blocking for him. Peterson finished 9 yards short of becoming the NFL's all-time leading single-season rusher, but even though the total resets

next season he vowed to pass Eric Dickerson someday.

"God willing, I'll get it next year, or at least make it close," Peterson said.

Felton, picked for the Pro Bowl for his blocking prowess after signing a one-year contract, told Peterson after Sunday's game he'd break the record in 2013 if Felton is brought back.

All those individual accolades will be put in the background until next season, though. The playoffs are here.

"Once you get in, anything can happen. It's been done before. There's a precedent set for teams like this getting on a roll. Hopefully we can keep it going and become one of those teams," left guard Charlie Johnson said.

The Vikings haven't won an outdoor game this year, but their formula for winning is designed to work in winter: pounding Peterson into the line and rely-

ing on the defense to rack up sacks and force a turnover or two.

"When your players have an identity and they know what that identity is, they tend to think a little bit less about what some of the other implications or ramifications can be with the weather," Frazier said. "They know mentally that this is what we are going to focus on no matter the condition. I think it has to be an advantage for you."

Christian Ponder can't escape responsibility, though. Coming off a three-touchdown, no-turnover game, he'll need to complete enough third-down throws and medium-to-long-range passes to supplement Peterson's work on the ground.

"Green Bay had to play honest. They had to respect the pass game and when we're doing that, we're playing balanced football, we're a tough team to beat," Peterson said on Sunday.