

Monday, March 10, 2008

Men's basketball team heads to tournament semifinals

Junior Erik Kangas scored a game-high 26 points, making 6-of-13 from behind the arc, and junior Derick Nelson scored 17 points and grabbed nine rebounds, to lead the Oakland University men's basketball team (17-13) past Western Illinois (12-18), 80-66, in quarterfinal action at The Summit League Tournament on Sunday night in the UMAC at John Q. Hammons Arena. The Golden Grizzlies broke a school and tournament record with 55 free throw attempts, making 35 in the game.

"That is a staple of our team," said head coach Greg Kampe about Oakland getting to the free throw line. "We have guys that can get to the basket and cause problems."

Sophomore Johnathon Jones added 14 points for the Grizzlies, going 10-for-12 from the free throw line. Redshirt junior Dan Waterstradt scored 10 points and grabbed seven rebounds, while senior Patrick McCloskey grabbed nine boards for OU.

OU's Nelson capped a 9-0 run over four minutes with a 3-pointer at the top of the key to give the Golden Grizzlies a 13-point lead, 21-8, with just under eight minutes remaining until halftime. Oakland extended its lead all the way to 17 points, 27-10, over the next two minutes before WIU's David Jackson hit a rainbow 3-pointer from the corner as the lead was 14, 27-13 (3:52).

The pace would slow up a little bit as the Grizzlies scored just 10 points over the final four minutes, allowing the Leathernecks to get within 12 points, but OU took a 14-point lead in to the break, 37-23.

The Leathernecks crept within single digits for the first time in almost 15 minutes on a pair of free throws by David DuBois to get WIU within nine, 48-39, with 10:45 remaining in the game. After freshman Will Hudson missed two free throws for the Grizzlies, Kangas drilled a big three-pointer as OU grabbed the rebound to push the lead back to 12, 51-39.

The Leathernecks continued to pressure Oakland and scored six points in under two minutes to cut the deficit to six, 51-45, with 8:35 on the clock. Kangas continued to be the hot hand for OU with back-to-back three-pointers to extend the lead back to double digits, 57-47 (7:25).

Kangas knocked down a pair of three-pointers for the Golden Grizzlies, drilling his fifth trey of the half at the 3:24 mark to push the lead back to 10 points once again, 66-56. The margin would continue to be just that as the Grizzlies began to make free throws, closing the game out 8-for-10 to advance to the semifinals on Monday night.

"That's Kangas," said Kampe. "He is back to 100 percent and when he starts to feel it, he will continue to shoot it out there."

The Golden Grizzlies will now take on number two seed IUPUI on Monday, March 10 at 9:30 p.m. EST. The semifinal game will be regionally televised on FSN Plus. It can also be heard on OU's student radio station WXOU (88.3 FM). FSN Plus is available locally on Comcast channel 900 (requires digital service), WOW! channel 14, Bright House channel 77, Charter channel 88 (requires digital service), DirecTV channel 669 and Dish Network on channel 446.

"They have won 25 games this year and that is a heck of a season," said Kampe. "They are a very good basketball team and we will have to play well to have a chance to beat them tomorrow night."

Oakland University's women's team takes on Oral Roberts at noon Central Time (1 p.m. EST) on Monday, March 10 in the women's semifinals contest.

A first place finish in the tournament for either team will secure the teams a berth in the 2008 NCAA Division I Tournament. There are a number of ways to support the Grizzlies in their drive toward the "Big Dance."

The tournament will be broadcast online for those who wish to take in all of the action. The Summit League is offering a full tournament package for \$19.95. The package includes every men's and women's tournament contest, minus the televised championship games. The women's championship game will be broadcast on ESPNU and the men's on ESPN.

The Webcasts, available from the Summit League Web site, require a high speed Internet connection and Microsoft Media Player 9 or greater, Macromedia Flash software, sound card, speakers, a screen resolution of 800x600 or 1024x768, and a Pentium 600Mhz or greater for a Windows user or 800Mhz with OS X Version 10.1 or higher for Macs to view. For more information on the Webcast of the tournament, visit the Summit League Web site Live. For those with slower Internet connections, audio access is available for all Summit League games. Free audio broadcasts are available for OU's Summit League tournament games are available from the **OU Athletics** Web site.

Download Oakland University's **fight song** "OU Fight" and play it as you cheer on the Grizzlies in the tournament. The song can be played from the Web site, downloaded and saved to be loaded on a cell phone. Not sure of the lyrics? They are available, too.

Should the Grizzlies advance to the championship round of the tournament, watch **The News at OU** for information on watch parties. If either team moves on to a post-season tournament, that information also will be available from **The News at OU**. Alumni can follow OU Alumni Association sponsored events by visiting the **OCAA** Web site.

For more information on OU's basketball teams, visit the **Oakland University Athletics** Web site.



Derick Nelson helps put OU's men out in front of Western Illinois University.



Dan Waterstradt helps OU advance in the Summit League tournament.

SUMMARY

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