



Weber State 59, Northern Iowa 56

Semifinals: March 30, 2013

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa – Weber State will play for a championship. The Wildcats defeated Northern Iowa 59-56 Saturday night to advance to the championship game of the Collegeinsider.com Tournament Tuesday night. WSU will host East Carolina in the title game at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday at the Dee Events Center.

Three Wildcats scored in double figures Saturday night as the 'Cats won their 30th game of the season.

Weber State got off to a great start as the 'Cats jumped out to an 11-0 lead. UNI missed its first eight shots and made its first basket nearly six minutes into the half. However the Panthers would come back and went on a 10-2 run over the next four minutes to cut the Wildcat lead to 16-12 with 10:00 to play. They cut the lead to two points three times but each time Weber State was able to knock down a shot and maintain the lead. Scott Bamforth made knocked down his fourth three-pointer at the end of the half to give Weber State a 38-31 lead at the break.

The Wildcats led by nine points at 42-33 early in the second half when Northern Iowa responded with an 11-1 run to take their first lead at 44-43 with 14:00 to play. Weber State didn't give up and posted a 6-0 run but the Panthers took the lead again at 55-53 with 5:53 remaining.

Davion Berry knocked down two free throws and then hit a jumper and the 'Cats took the lead for good at 57-55 with 4:12 to play and the 'Cats regained the lead for good. Jordan Richardson, who was playing in his 100th career game, knocked down two free throws with 17 seconds left and the 'Cats were able to hold on for the win.

"This was an extremely tough game against a really physical and talented team in a tough environment," said WSU head coach Randy Rahe who returned to his home state of Iowa and picked up his 150th career win. "We played really tough and really hard and I was so proud of how we fought. We missed some shots but kept fighting and found a way to do it against a really tough opponent. I'm so proud of our team for not giving up. It's been a remarkable run and 30 wins is a phenomenal accomplishment."

For the game the Wildcats shot just 39 percent from the field after coming into the game leading nation in field goal percentage. The 'Cats were just 6-25 for 24 percent in the second half. WSU did hold UNI to 37 percent shooting and outrebounded the Panthers 41-32. Northern Iowa was just 3-18 from three-point range.

Berry led the way with 15 points and had seven rebounds and three assists. Frank Otis finished with 13 points and 11 rebounds for his fourth double-double of the season. Bamforth had 14 points and knocked down four three-pointers, with all of his points coming in the first half.

“It was a really physical game and was a battle until the end,” Otis said. “This is one of the best teams we’ve played all year and we were able to fight through it all. This is a confidence boost for us to beat a talented team like this. We are really excited to be going back home to play for the championship.”

Weber State has now won 17 of its last 18 games and is the first team in Big Sky history to win 30 games in a season.

WSU freshman Joel Bolomboy only played nine minutes and left the game with a separated shoulder. He will be reevaluated for Tuesday’s game.

The ‘Cats will meet the Panthers of East Carolina at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday at the Dee Events Center in a game that will be televised nationally on CBS Sports Network.