



Idaho runs past Stephen F. Austin

The Vandals defense led the way

MOSCOW, Idaho – If defense wins championships then this Vandal squad has as good a shot as any. Idaho (19-13) dominated on the defensive side of the ball to take down Stephen F. Austin (18-15), 73-50, in the opening round of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament on Wednesday night in Memorial Gym.

Idaho jumped out to an early 7-0 lead but SFA stayed close overall, cutting the deficit to a single bucket on multiple occasions. But the Vandals closed the half strong and took a 37-30 advantage into the break behind eight points apiece from Nate Sherwood and Chad Sherwood.

Neither team shot particularly well in the second half, but Idaho made the most of its opportunities by knocking down six 3's in the frame. Chad Sherwood had three of his own, including back-to-back 3's early in the half to expand Idaho's lead to double-digits. Yet again the pesky 'Jacks stayed close for the first 10 minutes of the half, but then the Vandals turned up the defense.

Stephen F. Austin's Samuli Nieminen knocked down a pair of free throws with 13:31 to play to cut Idaho's lead to 49-42. After a series of misses on both end, Pat Ingram sank his first triple of the night to give Idaho 52 points with about 11 minutes to play. That would be enough.

The Idaho defense was red-hot in the final 13:31, holding SFA to just three field goals and eight total points. Idaho forced seven of SFA's 18 turnovers during that stretch, while the offense expanded the lead to the 20's.

Chad Sherwood led the way on the night, scoring a game-high 17. Nate Sherwood added 10. Victor Sanders had a quiet night by his standards, scoring 10 points in the win, but he also chipped in in a number of other ways. Sanders finished the night with three boards, five dimes, two steals and a block, playing just 25 minutes.

Idaho's defense was exceptional all night, holding SFA to 37.3 percent (19-of-51) shooting from the floor and 26.7 percent (4-of-15) from beyond the arc. Idaho won the rebound battle, 34-30. Both teams were perfect at the line, with SFA going 8-of-8 and Idaho finishing 15-of-15.