

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

GOPHERS WOMEN 101, UC RIVERSIDE 75

U rolls after closing first half 19-0

Minnesota started slowly but stayed unbeaten this season at Williams Arena.

By HEATHER HILL Special to the Star Tribune

The Gophers women's basketball team hadn't played since Dec. 13, as the players were sluggish for Friday afternoon's game, according to coach Marlene Stollings.

"But we recovered very nicely," she said. The Gophers turned on the jets in the last couple of minutes before halftime and topped a 19-0 victory over UC Riverside at Williams Arena in their final nonconference matchup.

The Gophers (12-2) trailed for most of the first two quarters before going on a 19-0 run for a 47-42 lead at the break. At one point, they were down by 25.

"We just talked about how we need to pick up our intensity," Kenzie Hill said.

Things certainly picked up. One of Caitie Wagner's six three-pointers circled the rim a few times before finding the bottom to get Minnesota within six points, and she added another with 17' left in the second quarter to get her team within one.

"I definitely felt there was a momentum change," Wagner said. "As soon as we picked up our defensive intensity, our whole game turned around."

Gracia Hubbard added a pair of three-pointers in the final minute of the quarter to cap the impressive run. The big run was more typical of a team that averages 86.3 points per game. On the other side of the court, the Highlanders (3-10) were held scoreless for the last 4:41 of the opening half. "You could definitely feel the game changing at that point, especially after a couple three by Gracia," Wagner said.

Hubbard finished with 20 points and five three-pointers. But it's the Gophers, who are 7-0 at home, with 30 points, one off her season high. She's averaging 23 points per game.

The Gophers made 14 of 19 three-point shots (43.2 percent) in the game after they made 10 in the first half. They came in averaging 8.8 three-point field goals per game, making 11.5 in the nation. One of their goals for the game, Stollings said, was also to shoot 29 free throws; they shot 20 and made 19 of them.

Those offensive gems started with their defense, according to Stollings, especially in the second half when the Gophers picked up the intensity even more and forced



Destiny Pitts of the Gophers, top, battled for a rebound while Marlene Stollings (right) and Michelle Curry of UC Riverside. The Gopher Jennie Edwards joined the crowd from the sidelines.

12 turnovers. "That really led to a lot of our offensive production," Stollings said. Wagner was a big part of that, per usual. She scored 23 points and grabbed seven rebounds. She came into the

game needing 19 points to pass Gopher great Janet McCauley (138 points) for sixth place on the program's all-time scoring list. Wagner and her coach, had no idea where she ranked on the list, however. "Good job, Waggle," Stollings said.

Wagner surpassed McCauley's career total on a layup with just over seven minutes left in the game. She now has 1,341 career points. "Not off the top of my head," Stollings said.

GOPHERS 101, UC RIVERSIDE 75

Box score table for the Gophers vs UC Riverside game, showing points, rebounds, assists, and other statistics for both teams.

Box score table for the Gophers vs UC Riverside game, showing minutes, field goals, 3-pointers, and free throws for individual players.

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Hurt shows he is ready for a bigger role

from Kentucky, had a feeling his brother was going to be ready to make an impact this season for the Gophers.

"Since last year, I've seen him improve a lot," Matthew Hurt said. "I'm excited for him this season to see what he can do and for his career. He's a lot stronger and a lot harder to guard."

The Hurts spent time this summer training at the Memphis Grizzlies' facility with longtime NBA player Mike Miller. Michael also went to Spain in August to play with a traveling team coached by Hall of Famer Larry Brown.

After gaining 20 pounds since his freshman season and playing a key role off the bench earlier this year, Hurt was more comfortable for moments like Thursday when he had to replace an injured starter.

"The offseason was great for me, because last year I wasn't physically ready," he said. "It was good for me. It was a good experience. Now I feel like I'm more prepared physically and basketball-wise."



Michael Hurt defended Nigel James (right) on Nov. 15. Hurt scored five points in that game, his season high, and he doubled that in his first career start Thursday night.

for Minnesota's Mr. Basketball. After a 2006.

Hurt's younger brother, Matthew, is now leading JM and averaging about 40 points a game as a 6-9 junior. The younger Hurt, who recently picked up a scholarship offer

GOPHERS MEN'S GAMEDAY

2:30 p.m. vs Florida Atlantic • BTN 1130 AM, 103.5 FM

Three-game streak in reach

Preview: The Gophers (10-3) play their last game before Christmas break Saturday with a chance to win their third game in a row, something they haven't done since November. ... For only the second time this season, the Gophers were outscored (65-41) on Thursday's 77-63 victory against Oral Roberts, which included the Golden Eagles grabbing 17 offensive rebounds. The Gophers were also outscored 42-28 in the paint. But Minnesota picked up the defensive effort, holding the Golden Eagles to 39 percent shooting. ... Florida Atlantic (6-13) had a four-game winning streak come to an end with back-to-back losses to Arizona State (64-63) and Texas Tech (90-54). The Owls won only 10 games last season but have shown improvement in Year 4 under coach Michael Curry, a former NBA player and coach.

Figure to watch: Gopher sophomore C Amir Coffey has scored in double figures in eight consecutive games. The 6-8 Hopkins product is averaging 16.7 points and has gone 16-for-41 (39.5 percent) from the free-throw line in his past six games. ... Florida Atlantic senior C Ronald Delph has two consecutive double-figure scoring games, including 21 points, eight rebounds and two blocks in a Dec. 5 victory over Florida Gulf Coast. The 7-foot, 245-pound Delph started his career at Auburn.

Numbers: Junior F Jordan Murphy, who has a program-record streak of 13 consecutive games with a double-double, became the first Gopher player since Rodney Williams in 2013 to join the program's career 1,000-point, 500-rebound club Thursday.

ROUNDUP Young, Sooners wipe out Wildcats

ASSOCIATED PRESS

After another dazzling performance, Oklahoma's "Young" duo led the "best time to be a Sooner."

He might be right. The freshman had 11 points and 11 assists to help No. 17 Oklahoma rout visiting Northwestern 104-78 on Friday. Young, the nation's leader in scoring and assists, shot 5-for-6, including 4-for-2 on free-throw points, to become the first Sooner player since Stacy King in 1981 to post at least 10 consecutive games with 20 or more points.

The Sooners (10-1) shot 41 percent from the floor and scored at least 90 points for the eighth time in 11 games. "I feel good about where we are at, but yet we got to keep working at it," coach Lon Kruger said.

Northwestern (9-5) fell behind 7-0 right away, trailed 48-38 at halftime and eventually went down by as many as 39 points.

Iowa 86, Colorado 78. The Hawkeyes (8-6) had five players in double figures in scoring and shot 58 percent in the second half to pull away from the Buffaloes (4-4) in Scottsdale, Ariz. Iowa has won four in a row after a 4-4 start. Colorado got 21 points from freshman McKinley Wright of Champaign, Ill.

Rider 71, Penn State 70. Frederick Scott hit a three-pointer at the buzzer to lift the Raiders (6-3) over the host Nittany Lions (0-4), who led a 40-point lead in the second half. Penn State led by four with 22 seconds left, but Steve Jordan made a layup for Rider before Scott's winner.

Stony Brook 75, Rutgers 73. OTJ "Lakers" Pender jumper from the right elbow with 0.2 seconds left in overtime sent the Seawolves (5-8) past the Scarlet Knights (1-4). Stony Brook went on a 5-0 run in the final seven seconds of regulation, with Jason Cornish hitting a three-point jumper.

Nebraska 85, Delaware State 68. The host Cornhuskers (9-5) opened up a 19-point lead midway through the first half vs. the Hornets (2-12).

No. 3 Arizona State 104, Pacific (1) in their final game before opening conference play vs. rival Arizona Dec. 30, the host Sun Devils (14-0) dominated from the start.

No. 9 Xavier 77, North Carolina 67. J.J. McCarr of Lakeville, N.C., scored 15 points and the Musketeers (12-3) held off the host Panthers (8-1) to win their seventh game in a row.

No. 13 Wichita State 75, Florida Gulf Coast 65. Landon Shuman's 23 points helped the host Shockers (10-2) rally in the second half against the Eagles (7-7).

Notes • Oregon committed infractions in four athletic programs, including the men's and women's basketball teams. The NCAA has alleged. Men's coach Dana Altman and women's coach Kelly Grimes are accused of violating the NCAA's limit of four coaches by allowing other staff members to participate in team activities during practice.

• UCLA extended the suspensions of freshmen Jalen Hill and Cody Riley through the end of the season as a result of their admitted shoplifting during the team's trip to China in November.