

Lady Spartans hammer Illinois, 54-46

By Ernie Boone

Led by Courtney Davidson, Michigan State's women exploded for 33 second half points to walk away from the Fighting Illini and post a 54-46 victory over Illinois in their final regular season Big Ten game.

It was Senior Night at the Breslin Center, and the Spartan's 5-4 senior made the best of it, scoring 13 of her career high 20 points after the intermission.

"It's great when you have a senior who just refuses to lose on Senior Day," said Illinois coach, Jolette Law about Davidson.

"She just put this team on her back and willed the team to win.

Once again the Spartans started ice cold, opening with three turnovers and three missed shots as the Illini grabbed an 11-0 lead.

MSU battled back with Davidson scoring seven and Britney Thomas six to trail by 5, 26-21 at halftime, setting the stage for Davidson's heroics.

The Spartans came out smoking in the second half with a 9-2 run to take a 30-28 lead with 13:10 on the clock and never looked back.

Freshman, Cetera Washington, grabbed 9

rebounds, 7 after halftime, to help MSU post a 46-28 edge in that department.

Thomas was the only other Spartan in double figures with 10 points. Jenna Smith led Illinois with 15 points, followed by Rebecca Harris with 12.

In Big Ten action earlier in the week, Kalisha Keane scored 18 points to lead all scorers, and Allyssa DeHaan added 15, but it wasn't enough as Purdue utilized balanced scoring with four players in double figures to top the Spartans 69-59 in a Big Ten basketball contest in West



Courtney Davidson
Lafayette Ind. Sunday

February 24 and halt MSU's winning streak at four.

The Spartans hit just one of their first 14 shots, and never recovered. The Boilermakers pounded the backboards for a 42-24 rebounding advantage to nail down the victory.

The loss put the Spartans (17-12 and 9-8 Big Ten) back on the NCAA tournament bubble.

All but out of tournament bid contention a few weeks ago, the Spartans put together a pair of home victories over Purdue, 56-54, and Northwestern, 65-40, and road wins over Indiana, 72-68, and Penn State, 66-50, to

bolt back into the tournament picture.

The Purdue loss means that MSU will likely need at least two victories in the Big Ten post season tournament to earn a sixth straight NCAA tournament berth.

First-year head coach, Suzy Merchant would like nothing better than to qualify for the big dance after a roller coaster regular season.

One win in the conference tournament would likely land the Spartans in the WNIT, not a bad consolation prize for a team dominated by underclassmen.

The Spartans have only two seniors on their roster.

What a difference 3-pointers can make

Spartans flop on the road again, downed 57-42 at Wisconsin

MADISON, Wisc. - Every time it looks as though Michigan State University' basketball team is back on

track and ready to make a move toward playing the kind of ball that is necessary to challenge for the Big Ten

Tournament title or make a serious run in the NCAA tourney, the Spartans go on the road and flop.

It happened again here Thursday, February 28. MSU fell flat on its face, losing to Wisconsin, 57-42.

The Spartans were unable cash in on excellent offensive opportunities throughout the contest, shooting just 34.5 percent. On the season the Spartans have shot 48.7 percent.

Goron Sutton was the only Spartan in double figures, scoring 14 points and grabbing 15 rebounds.

The Badgers, on the other hand, had little trouble finding the bottom of the net. Brian Butch hit a career-high four 3-point baskets on his way to a game-high 16 points.

Defensively Wisconsin virtually erased MSU's leading scorers holding Drew Neitzel to just 3 points (one 3-pointer in 10 attempts from the floor) and kept him off the

free throw line.

Raymar Morgan, the Spartans' leading scorer, had just seven points on 3 of 7 shooting.

Wisconsin was exceptional from long range, hitting eight 3-pointers while MSU tallied just one from that range.

The loss dropped MSU to 22-6 overall and 10-5 Big Ten. Wisconsin tightened its grip on a share of the regular season crown, moving to (24-4, 14-2) with games remaining with Penn State and Northwestern.

MSU returns home for a 2 p.m. game against Indiana Sunday, before closing out the regular season with road games at Illinois and Ohio

State.

It doesn't get any easier. After dropping out of contention for the conference regular season title with losses to Purdue and Indiana, MSU bounced back with a pair of impressive revenge victories over Penn State and Iowa. It looked like they were back on track.

The Spartans solved their turnover problem, totaling just 12 miscues in the two victories.

MSU had just seven turnovers while whipping Penn State, 86-49, to avenge its 85-76 loss and a season low five when turning back Iowa, 66-52 to post coach Tom Izzo's 300th victory.

They shot better than 50

per cent in both outings. It looked like they were ready to finally get a victory in Madison.

A close look indicates that the Spartans did everything they set out to do against the Badgers except what they have been doing all season - shoot.

They continued to limit mistakes with the ball, committing just six turnovers, won the battle of the boards, 37-31, played solid post defense and limited the Badger free throws.

In short, they executed their game plan.

They equaled the Badger field goal production with 19. The big difference was those 3-pointers.

Floyd Mayweather gettin' paid \$20 million to wrestle

It's the small confronting the tall for big bucks

The undefeated WBC welterweight champion Floyd Mayweather is set to collect a \$20 million pay check when he takes on the Big Show at the WWE's "WrestleMania XXIV" at the Citrus Bowl in Orlando, Fla., on March 30.

Mayweather stands at 5-foot-8, 150 pounds. The Show measures up at 7-feet, and weights 430 pounds.

"Wrestling takes care of business right on the spot," Mayweather said. "Whatever they say they're going to do, they do it right on the spot. There's no waiting three, four, five months. Quick results, quick money. Quick

big money, too."

His manager Leonard Ellerbee and WWE executive Shane McMahon confirmed Mayweather's eight-figure payday for the outdoor match to be shown on live on pay-per-view.

Mayweather incited the couple hundred of already hyped fans at Staples Center by whipping out a thick wad of cash and repeatedly tossing \$100, \$50 and \$20 bills into the crowd that had nearly as many women as men.

A mad scramble ensued, with a light pole nearly getting knocked over. One lucky man emerged from the pileup clutching six \$100 bills.

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