

Vikings Advance In Horizon League Tournament

Written by {ga=neoleo}

Monday, March 02 2009 7:00 PM -

Cleveland State advanced to the quarterfinal of the Horizon League tournament with a 56-43 victory over Detroit on Tuesday night. The Vikings looked sluggish in the first half before turning it around behind senior Cedric Jackson's 16 points. CSU advanced to a Friday night game against Illinois-Chicago, and the winner of that game will likely face Butler for an automatic berth to the NCAA Tournament. Ryan Aroney recaps the win.



Cleveland State advanced to the quarterfinal of the Horizon League tournament with a 56-43 victory over Detroit on Tuesday night. The Vikings looked sluggish in the first half before turning it around behind senior Cedric Jackson's 16 points.

Although Detroit entered the tournament as the last place team, the Titans have a track record of making the opposition play a sloppy game. The first half played right into that history as Detroit alternated its defenses to help contain Jackson on the drive and force the Vikings to shoot from outside. The pesky Titans forced CSU to commit 8 turnovers and shoot 31-percent from the field in a surprisingly tight 23-21 first half.

“When you play a team for a third time, it's not as easy,” said CSU head coach Gary Waters. “I thought we weren't clicking on offense and they were doing enough to stay around. When you have a team that doesn't have anything to lose, they just let it all hang out. They were excited and were playing and we were a little tense and tight because we knew the importance of the game.”

Making matters worse for the Vikings, sophomore D'Aundray Brown went down hard with a hyper-extended knee late in the first half and did not return. It could be a big blow for CSU as the hard-nosed guard is the leader of the defense and has energized the team on its late season surge after returning from a stress fracture in his ribcage. The Vikings were 5-3 with Brown out of the lineup.

Vikings Advance In Horizon League Tournament

Written by {ga=neoleo}

Monday, March 02 2009 7:00 PM -

Detroit continued to vary its defense in the second half and the Vikings struggled offensively through the beginning stages of the half. While the offenses misfired, the CSU defense took control and kept the Vikings in front thanks to Jackson's five steals and some great pressure defense of the bench by freshman Tre Harmon.

"Our guys did a great job in the second half defensively. At one point we were holding them to 20-percent in the second half and I thought that was the difference," said Waters. "I thought Tre came in and did a great job. (Tre) put the pressure on their guard and he couldn't run the offense. He was going east and west and I knew we were in control."

The spark from the defense seemed to ignite the offense. With the Vikings up one with 14:34 remaining, Jackson took control of the game with his creativity and passing ability, assisting the Vikings on four straight field goals, including three pointers by Norris Cole and Harmon, to push the CSU lead to 41-31 with 9:17 remaining.

Detroit would never get back into the game and came no closer than 7 in the final minutes of their season.

Jackson's all-around performance was one for the record books as the point guard's eight assists tied him with Mouse McFadden for the school record of 177 assists in a season. In what very well could have been the senior's final game in Cleveland, Jackson finished with 16 points, eight assists, six rebounds, and five steals.

Fellow senior J'Nathan Bullock did not disappoint as well, finishing with 15 points and 13 rebounds for his 17th career double-double.

With the win, the Vikings advance to the quarterfinals at Butler's Hinkle

Vikings Advance In Horizon League Tournament

Written by {ga=neoleo}

Monday, March 02 2009 7:00 PM -

Fieldhouse for a Friday night contest with 7th seeded Illinois-Chicago at 9 p.m. The Flames defeated 6th seeded Youngstown State Tuesday night at YSU by a score of 73-68.

The Vikings swept UIC in the regular season, winning 79-69 at home and 66-63 at the UIC Pavilion. UIC is led by the league's second-leading scorer in Josh Mayo (16.8 ppg) and the league's leading rebounder and shot blocker in Scott VanderMeer (9.0 rpg, 2.5 bpg).

The Vikings had success in containing the duo during the regular season. Mayo averaged 8 points per game in the two contests, shooting 5-18 combined from the floor. VanderMeer had a bit more success, averaging 9.5 and 8.5 in the two contests, but the two seniors are battle-tested and can explode to carry their team at any time.

The winner of the CSU-UIC contest faces second seed Green Bay in the semi-finals Saturday night at 9 p.m. The other half of the bracket has 4th seed Wright State taking on 5th seed Milwaukee for the chance to face top seed Butler Saturday at 6 p.m.