



Cleveland State saw its season come to an end Friday night in Indianapolis with an 82-75 loss to the Milwaukee Panthers in the second round of the Horizon League Tournament.

The short-handed Vikings played without Horizon League all-Defensive team member D'Aundray Brown, who missed the game after having surgery to repair a detached retina suffered in Tuesday's first round victory over Loyola. CSU was also limited with center Aaron Pogue playing with a splint on his broken left thumb and normal starting shooting guard Trey Harmon playing limited minutes off the bench a week after returning from a concussion.

The new-look lineup featured redshirt freshman Tim Kamczyc making his fifth consecutive start in place of Harmon, redshirt freshman Charlie Woods making his first career start in place of Brown and little used Joe Latas and Lance James playing big minutes off the bench. James, a junior college transfer, played in only 11 games this season and was making just his fourth appearance after missing 21 games with a broken foot.

To put it mildly, Gary Waters and the Vikings were grasping at straws trying to find a lineup that would recapture last year's magic, but as was expected, the new and inexperienced lineup

struggled early against Milwaukee.

The fourth-seeded Panthers feature a lot of size and with Brown, an undersized power forward and defensive specialist, out of the game, the Vikings struggled to match up and compete down low with the big bodies from Milwaukee.

"We were just missing too many pieces tonight and Milwaukee was able to exploit us, especially inside," said Waters. "Any time they needed a basket, they simply took the ball inside to the heart of our defense and we didn't have an answer for it."

The Vikings looked disjointed and out of sync for the entire first half but somehow managed to keep the game within reach, trailing by eight at the half.

After briefly cutting the lead to six in the second half on a pair of Norris Cole free throws, the Panthers raced out to a 27-13 run over the next seven minutes to push the lead up to 20 with just under ten minutes to play.

Already down their emotional leader in Brown, and with Pogue out of the lineup with foul trouble and with Harmon proving to be ineffective, CSU had every reason to quit with the game already out of reach. Instead, the Vikings played with a ton of heart and used their full-court press to make one last run at saving the season.

Kamczyc and Cole put the team on their backs and lead a 9-0 run in the next two minutes to pull the Vikings back within striking distance. CSU eventually cut the lead to seven with just under three minutes to play, but the Vikings would run out of time to complete the comeback.

"I have to commend my kids because despite all of the obstacles that were put in their path, they refused to quit and they played hard for 40 minutes," said Waters.

Kamczyc, a former walk-on out of Strongsville, led all scorers with a career high 20 points on

7-10 shooting, including 3-4 from three point range. The 6-6 freshman also added six rebounds in 38 minutes of play. In the final five games of the season, all starts, Kamczyc averaged 14.4 points and 5.2 rebounds per game.

Cole, a first team all-Horizon pick, chipped in 16 points and six assists for the Vikings while playing all 40 minutes.

Looking ahead:

The Vikings don't have a senior on this year's team and started two juniors and three sophomores for much of the season with freshman Kamczyc, Woods and Anthony Wells all receiving extensive playing time off the bench. With all-conference members Cole and Brown returning next year as senior leaders and with the youngsters gaining valuable experience this year, 2011 could be another exciting season for Waters and the Vikings.

Even with no seniors though, the roster will have some turnover. The Vikings have already signed two high school prospects for next season, Ludovic Ndaye and Devon Long, and will have to clear at least two scholarships for those players and Waters has also talked about bringing in at least one Division One transfer during the off season.

Ndaye and Long should help the Vikings in the interior, where they struggled all season. Ndaye (6-9, 220-pounds) and Long (6-7, 275-pounds) will be counted on to play immediately, but that may not be enough for Waters.

Said a frustrated Waters after a regular season loss to Detroit, "It was men playing against boys today and that's how they treated us, like boys. And you can't win like that. We didn't go after it. They came into our house and beat us and that's disappointing.

"This will never happen here again. We will right this ship and have some players in here physical enough to do things. This was embarrassing."

One possible scholarship may come free from Joe Latas. The redshirt sophomore is scheduled to graduate early and speculation is that he may elect to pass on his final two years of eligibility.

Early in the season, there was also speculation that Kamczyc's stint as a scholarship player could have been a one-year reward, but with the way he finished the season, it's hard to imagine Kamczyc going back to being a walk-on.

The other options to free scholarships come through potential transfers. Waters brought in three junior college transfers this season and none of them made significant contributions. James showed promise after returning from injury, but was never a factor as his intended position of point guard. Jared Cunningham played in 33 games, starting 12, but lost playing time to Kamczyc and Latas down the stretch and only played five minutes against Milwaukee. The other Juco transfer, Kevin Anderson, played sparingly in 11 games and never seemed to be in the plans.

With the disappointing Juco class and with so many returning underclassmen, it is a very real possibility that we see multiple transfers this off season, which according to Waters, may not be such a bad thing.

"We are going to fix things because this is the last time we are going to get to post-season and not have a full team. It isn't going to happen again," Waters promised after Friday's post-season loss. "We will be back and tear things up next year."

One way or the other, this is going to be an interesting off-season and one that promises to lead into an exciting season for next year's Vikings.