



One of the biggest reasons why the Cleveland State men's basketball team is off to its best start in school history (6-0) is because of their much improved defense.

A year ago, teams were scoring at will against CSU's defense - 14 teams shot 50 percent or better from the field against the Vikings.

This season, CSU has kept five of their six opponents to 40 percent or less from the field.

CSU also leads the Horizon League in every defensive category - field goal percentage (36.9 percent), 3-point shooting percentage (24 percent) and scoring defense (57.7 points per game).

"I remember two years ago I made a comment (that) if we can shoot 40 percent (from the field) we can beat anyone in the country," CSU men's basketball coach **Gary Waters** said after CSU's 64-51 victory at Akron on Wednesday. "This team is on a similar line if they can shoot a certain percentage offensively their defense holds people at bay.

"That's what we have been working towards for a whole year to get to this point."

CSU's defense held UA's high-scoring offense, which came into Wednesday's game averaging 82.7 points per game, to season lows in points (51), field goal percentage (36 percent) and 3-point percentage (18.8 percent). The Zips also had a season-high in turnovers (16).

Waters said there are a couple of reasons why CSU's defense is much improved from a year ago.

"We are rebounding the ball better, and I think our guys know our defense now," he said. "You got to remember a year ago that we only returned one starter, **Norris Cole**, and everybody else was brand new to hitting the floor. So it took them awhile to adjust and understand how we play our defense. So I think its now starting to come (along)."

**Waters gets 250:** CSU's victory at UA was Waters' 250th career victory as a head coach. Waters has compiled a career record of 250-197 in 15 seasons as a head coach of Kent State, Rutgers and CSU.

**Waters surprised:** A reporter asked Waters if he was surprised that CSU is 6-0 to start the season.

"At this point I am," said Waters. "Now with **D'Aundray Brown** (in the line-up), I wouldn't be surprised at all."

**Trey for three:** During the preseason, Waters called junior guard **Trevon Harmon** one of the most improved players on the team.

Against the Zips, Harmon showcased his much improved shooting stroke, going 7-for-12 from the field and 4-for-7 from 3-point distance, finishing with 18 points.

As a freshman, Waters said Harmon needed to work on a hitch in his shot.

"It's coming along," said Harmon about if he has corrected the hitch in his shot. "We work on it everyday. Coaches tell me that I need to get a lot of arc on my shots. So I've been going to the gym taking extra shots."

Harmon's shooting percentage has been an improvement from last season. He's shooting a better percentage from the field (41.2 percent, this season; 34.8 percent, last season), and from 3-point distance (35.3 percent, this season; 29 percent, last season). However, his free throw percentage has dropped from a year ago (73.3 percent, this season; 84.7 percent, last season).

**Latas sighting:** Reserve center **Joe Latas** (6-11, 270) played 11 minutes against UA's talented

7-footer

**Zeke Marshall.**

"I thought Joe Latas was tremendous at certain times in the game," said Waters. "We needed a bigger body on (Marshall) to push him and I thought he did a good job on him."

Latas could see action in CSU's next game against St. Bonaventure as the Bonnies have their own talented big man, **Andrew Nicholson**, a 6-foot-9, 225-pound forward, who averages 20.8 points and 8.5 rebounds.

**Mid-Major Top 25:** CSU moved up nine spots to No. 7 in this week's CollegeInsider.com Mid-Major Top 25 coaches' poll.

The CSU women's basketball team received 22 points in the Women's Mid-Major Top 25 poll.

**CSU women update:** **Kate Peterson Abiad's** women's squad are 5-0 after defeating Florida A & M, 67-49, Friday night at the Wolstein Center. It's their best start since 1974-75.

**Winton named POTW:** Sophomore forward **Shalonda Winton** was named the Horizon League's women's basketball Player of the Week. She averaged 17.5 points, 9 rebounds, 5.5 assists and 3.5 steals in two wins last week.

**News and Notes:** Cole leads the Horizon League in scoring at 21.2 points per game.... The HL is 8-4 against teams from the Mid-American Conference this season.

**Next up:** The CSU men host St. Bonaventure (3-1) on Saturday night (6 p.m) at the Wolstein Center. The CSU women travel to Indiana (2-3) on Sunday afternoon (2 p.m.).