

CSU BASKETBALL NOTEBOOK: A team meeting helps CSU get back on track

Written by {ga=tommieskoski}

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The Cleveland State men's basketball team have won three games in a roll since that dreadful weekend in Indiana three weeks ago when the Vikings lost both games at Butler (79-56) and Valparaiso (64-58).

The Vikings credit a team meeting they had after those losses as the reason why they got back on track.

"We were wondering what was going on at the time," said junior guard **Jeremy Montgomery**. "So we had a team meeting and changed our mindsets to defense first."

Entering this week's games, CSU stands at 18-3 and 7-2 in the Horizon League, which is tied for first-place with Valparaiso (15-6, 7-2 Horizon League). Butler and Wright State are a game behind them, both are 6-3 in the conference.

This week CSU is on the road for their annual trip to Chicago at Illinois-Chicago (5-15, 0-8) on Thursday and Loyola-Chicago (12-8, 3-6) on Saturday. While Valpo host Butler (14-7, 6-3) on Saturday in its only game of the week.

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Montgomery ends slump: Montgomery broke out of a 10-for-30 slump in his previous four games, going 5-for-8 from the field for 17 points against Wright State on Saturday.

"I don't really focus on scoring points because on any given day anyone on this team can play well," Montgomery said after the game. "When my shot was not falling I was just trying to lock down my defender."

The Chicago native has been in a season long slump this season. He's shooting 37.4 percent from the field, 29.6 percent from 3-point range and 74.2 percent from the line.

Those numbers are down from last season when he shot 44.2 percent from the field, 40.4 percent from 3-point range and 85.1 percent from the line.

According to CSU coach **Gary Waters**, Montgomery has been dealing with a shoulder injury, but Waters doesn't think that has affected his game.

Hopefully, Montgomery can continue to turn things around in his hometown this week where he has played very well in the past.

In six career games against UIC, Montgomery is averaging 13 points per game, while shooting 53.8 percent (28-for-52) from the field, 42.9 percent (12-for-28) from 3-point range and 71.4 percent (10-for-14) from the line.

"When Jeremy goes on the road to Chicago we need him to feel the same way (he did against Wright State)," said Waters. "And he usually does well there."

Waters criticizes new rule: A new rule in college basketball this year bans any contact above the shoulders. The rule is designed to protect players from blows to the head. The refs have two choices: call either an intentional or a flagrant foul.

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An intentional foul gives the opposition two free throws and possession, and with a flagrant foul, the player could also be ejected from the game.

Last week junior center **Aaron Pogue** was called twice with intentional fouls for having a high elbow after a rebound, once each against Detroit and Wright State.

After the Wright State game, Waters openly criticized the new rule.

"Every program in America is complaining about this issue," said Waters. "They think it's the stupidest thing they ever saw."

Quote of the week: "I think they are making the game of basketball a little soft," said Pogue on the new rule that bans any contact above the shoulders.

Butler tickets now on sale: Single game tickets for CSU's home game against Butler on Feb. 5 went on sale Monday. As a premium game, ticket prices for the Butler game are \$15, \$20 and \$30.

CSU in polls: The CSU men moved up five spots to No. 2 in this week's CollegenInsider.com Mid-Major Top 25 poll. The Vikings also received three votes in the ESPN/USA Today coaches' poll.

ESPN BracketBusters: This Monday ESPN will announce the pairings for the BracketBusters Weekend (Feb. 18-20).

CSU has the second best RPI (33) among road teams and will likely have a national TV game.

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Here are some of the top home teams, according to RPI: Old Dominion (RPI of 32), St. Mary's (40), Wichita State (45), Drexel (60), Northern Iowa (71), James Madison (74), College of Charleston (80), and Indiana State (87).

CSU women update: The CSU women (11-8, 4-4) are fourth in the Horizon League standings, 3.5 games back of first-place teams UW-Green Bay and Butler, both are 7-0 in the conference.

In the women's tournament the top four seeds host a game in the Quarterfinals.

Kate Peterson Abiad's squad is at Youngstown State (3-16, 1-7) on Saturday in its only game of the week.

News and Notes: Senior guard **Norris Cole** was named the Horizon League's Player of the Week for the third time this season. In CSU's two wins last week against Detroit and Wright State, Cole averaged 16.0 points, 7.0 rebounds, 8.5 assists and 2.5 steals per game....

Saturday's victory over Wright State was Waters' 91st at CSU (91-65, .583), moving him past

Rollie Massimino

(90-113, from 1996-2003) for third place on CSU's all-time career wins list.... On Sunday, Waters and his staff will wear sneakers at Loyola as part of the annual Coaches vs. Cancer Suits and Sneakers weekend (Jan. 28-30).... ESPN's

Andy Katz

predicts that CSU will face Indiana State of the Missouri Valley Conference in the BracketBusters game.... CBSSports.com columnist

Jerry Palm

projects CSU as the Horizon League champion and the No. 12 seed (facing No. 5 Cincinnati) in his latest Bracketology.... Senior guard

Shawnita Garland

set a CSU women's single-game record with eight 3-pointers in CSU's 61-51 victory against Detroit last Thursday at the Wolstein Center. She finished with a career-high 33 points.