



IWU freshman Jordan Reid lays it in in IWU's victory over Huntington. *Photo by Sean Douglas*

# IWU women win 6th straight

By Sean Douglas

The IWU Wildcats faced their fair share of adversity in their Crossroads League matchup with the Huntington Foresters on Wednesday evening.

After IWU’s stout defense in the first half helped them build a commanding double-digit lead, struggles on both ends of the floor after halftime, particularly in the third quarter, allowed the Foresters to get back into the game.

However, a strong fourth quarter by point guard Gabby Suarez, some key plays down the stretch from Anne Secrest, and steadfastness in the face of adversity proved to be the difference in a 74-66 win.

With the victory, the Wildcats ran their winning streak to a season-high six games.

“There are some things that we need to clean up, but the thing I take away was...once again, we got into a close game, the other team made a run, we took their best shot, we stopped it, [and] made a run of our own to finish the game,” IWU Head Coach Ethan Whaley said. “Over the course of the season, that builds character. That builds resolve. And it gives you confidence the next time you are in that game knowing you’ve been there before.”

Suarez scored 11 of IWU’s 23 points in the fourth quarter, knocking down crucial shots at key moments and keeping IWU calm and collected in the midst of Huntington’s comeback effort.

“Gabby, ever since she’s been here, doesn’t get rattled,” Whaley said. “She’s our leader from a competitive perspective. We knew

we could count on her in big moments. She’s done that all season, so it’s not a surprise. That’s what Gabby does. When the moment is the biggest, she shines the brightest.”

While the game came down to the wire at the end, it did not start out that way.

After the two teams played to a 14-14 tie over the first seven minutes of the opening frame, the Wildcats used an 8-3 run to take a 22-17 lead into the first quarter break.

The Wildcats then dominated the second quarter, outscoring the Foresters 22-9 and executing perfectly on both ends of the floor.

Offensively, after shooting 10-of-14 in the first quarter, the Wildcats continued to hit their shots in the second, making eight of their 16 attempts from the floor and four of eight from beyond the arc. Ten Wildcats saw the floor in the second quarter, nine of whom scored.

“I felt we really moved the ball well,” Whaley said. “The ball was getting in the paint, and we were making the right rim reads and our shot portfolio was layups and rhythm threes, which is exactly what you want.”

Defensively, IWU buckled down, holding the Foresters to just three-of-16 shooting from the field and forcing seven turnovers.

Heading into the contest, the Wildcats’ main goal was to make Huntington uncomfortable with their pressure, and they did just that in the opening 20 minutes.

“Turnovers in the press are great, but what we really want to do...we want to make them play offense for 20 seconds, not 30,” Whaley said. “We sped them up, and that was huge for us early on.”

However, in the third quarter, the Foresters began to make their push.

The Wildcats, who scored seemingly at will in the first two quarters, could not buy a basket in the third quarter, making just one of their 11 field goal attempts and scoring just seven points. Conversely, the Foresters began to find their rhythm, eventually trimming a 44-26 half-time deficit to seven points, 51-44, heading into the final period.

Despite the Foresters’ push, the Wildcats never lost their focus.

And when it seemed that the Foresters would firmly grab the momentum, the Wildcats responded.

With 7:26 to play, Huntington cut the IWU advantage to 58-54, but freshman Jordan Reid, who has made tremendous strides in her first year under Whaley, answered with a field goal of her own to put the Wildcats back up by six.

Six minutes later, Anne Secrest, in the guts of the game, made two of the biggest plays.

After the Foresters cut the IWU lead to 65-63 with 1:07 to play, Secrest scored a critical basket in the post, putting the Wildcats back up by four. Moments later, she took a charge on the defensive end, and ultimately, helped secure the win for IWU.

Suarez led the Wildcats with 18 points on six-of-11 shooting and three-of-six from beyond the arc, while Reid finished as the Wildcats’ second-leading scorer, collecting 12 points to go along with six rebounds.

Fellow freshman Maddie Lawrence collected 9 points off the bench, while Dayton Groninger put together a solid, all-around performance with 8 points.

# ‘The Touchback’ plagues Browns

The year 1964 was a long time ago. Fifty-six years, to be precise. That’s the last time the city of Cleveland was able to celebrate a true major sports championship.

Don’t give me that garbage about LeBron winning an NBA title. I said a true major sports championship.

Yes, it was 1964, and Jim Brown and the Cleveland Browns were the kings of the NFL. And this wasn’t a fluke. The Browns were professional football royalty. Contenders every year and NFL champions from 1945 to 1964 five times in 20 years. Sounds like the kind of run that the G.O.A.T. Tom Brady has been on.

Then came the “close, but no cigar” years. From 1951 to 1969, the Browns were NFL runners-up seven times. So, adding up the numbers from 1945-1969, a quarter of a century, the guys in the orange and brown helmets were NFL champions or runners-up 12 times. That’s every other year. Let me say that again Tom Brady haters. The Cleveland Browns played for the NFL title a dozen times in two and a half decades.

Then, over 60 years without one trip to the NFL championship game or, dare I mention it, the Super Bowl.

So Sunday, when you watched the Browns give away another chance to play

for a title, they would have been facing Buffalo for the AFC title and the right to play in their first Super Bowl ever.

So what was it this time? The Drive? The Fumble? The Blowout?

No, this time, it was The Touchback.

How many times do you see a player stretch out to score a huge touchdown, fumble the ball one inch from the goal line, and then see the ball slide into and out of the endzone, causing a seldom called touchback?

It happened to the Browns on Sunday, and again, no trip to the Promised Land.

I had hundreds of calls this season during the Cleveland run to the playoffs. “JB, are you still on board?” The answer, no. I gave up years ago. Burnt my season tickets, bought the NFL package, and enjoy every Sunday watching real NFL football.

I hate to admit it, but I’m a Tom Brady fan, and think he might be the greatest QB of all time. So, Brady moves on and the Browns go home. If the Browns wake up from a half century long sleep and

make a true run next year, am I in?

Troy says he still has my two season tickets that he uses every Sunday. Maybe its time to give the Browns one more try. I still have my No.19 Bernie Kosar jersey. And I can still bark like a dog, “Woof Woof.”



## SPORTS TALK

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