

Sports

The quest to keep playing

Wyoming and Washington State hope to extend season in CBI tournament

Print Page

By ROBERT GAGLIARDI / rgagliardi@wyosports.net

Published:
Mar 18, 2012

Two teams from two different conferences had vastly different seasons record-wise.

But for the University of Wyoming and Washington State men's basketball teams, the objective is the same — keep winning.

The two squads play at 8 p.m. Monday in the second round of the College Basketball Invitational at Beasley Coliseum in Pullman, Wash.

The Cowboys (21-11) knew they'd play in one of the four postseason tournaments after its quarterfinal loss to UNLV on March 8 in Las Vegas. It was just a matter of which one, and the Cowboys won their first postseason game since 2003 with a 78-75 win over North Dakota State last Wednesday in Laramie.

Washington State (16-16) got a CBI invite despite a losing regular-season record after its first-round loss in the Pac-12 Tournament last week against Oregon State. The Cougars climbed back to .500 with an impressive 89-75 road win over a 20-win San Francisco squad last Tuesday, a game in which they shot 60.4 percent from the field.

"We didn't finish the year off as we would have liked, but I think we got better as the year went on even though the results didn't show that," said Washington State junior forward Brock Motum, who scored 24 points against San Francisco and is the Cougars' leading scorer at a little more than 18 points a game. He also leads the team with 6.5 rebounds a contest and shoots 40 percent from 3-point range.

"I think the CBI is a good measure where we've been at toward the end of the season."

UW was disappointed it didn't get into the NIT, and even though it committed 17 turnovers and allowed a season-high in points against North Dakota State, the Cowboys' focus is to keep playing.

"We're going to come out and compete, I know we are. That's what we've done all year," senior center Adam Waddell said.

The 89 points Washington State scored at San Francisco were the second-most it scored this season. The Cougars averaged about 69 points a game, and Motum said UW poses a different challenge for them defensively.

"Their style of play is unique compared to a lot of others," he said. "They slow it down and limit possessions, and are really good defensively. They're more like USC in our league, but obviously with different results."

USC won only six games this season.

UW coach Larry Shyatt described Washington State as a "very athletic and very dangerous" team. Three other Cougars scored in double figures at San Francisco, and guards Reggie Moore and Marcus Capers combined for 30 points, 14 assists and 13 rebounds.

The Cowboys are 5-8 on the road this season, but have lost six straight games away from Laramie. However, five of those six games were decided by single digits.

"We have our work cut out for us, and Washington State (10-4) is better at home and won all of its nonconference games there," Shyatt said. "But our team has played well when provided those kind of challenges, and I expect they will again."

Free throws

UW leads the series 4-1, but lost the last game 63-47 on Nov. 30, 2005 in Pullman. ... The Cowboys and Cougars were a combined 54-for-69 from the free-throw line in their first CBI games. ... The winner Monday plays the winner of the TCU-Oregon State game in the semifinals Wednesday. If UW wins and Oregon State wins, they'll probably play at Oregon State.

Copyright © 2012 - LaramieBoomerang.com - Laramie, Wyoming

[\[x\] Close Window](#)