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LIVE SCOREBOARD

Tue, Mar 15

CBI - Round 1 (Omaha)

7:00 PM CT

San Jose St.

Creighton

SCHEDULES

Men's Basketball

- Nov. 4, CU 79, Northern State 67 (Ex.) Global Sports Challenge
- Nov. 12, CU 71, Alabama State 57
- Nov. 14, CU 74, Northern Arizona 70
- Nov. 17, CU 63, Louisiana 58
- Nov. 21, Iowa State 91, CU 88
- Nov. 26, CU 75, Kennesaw St. 57
- Nov. 28, Northwestern 65, CU 52 Mountain West/MVC Challenge
- Dec. 1, BYU 77, Creighton 65
- Dec. 5, Nebraska 59, Creighton 54
- Dec. 11, CU 82, Saint Joseph's 75
- Dec. 18, CU 66, Idaho State 60
- Dec. 20, CU 60, Western Illinois 47
- Dec. 22, CU 58, Samford 40
- Dec. 29, CU 64, Illinois State 53
- Jan. 1, CU 73, Drake 57
- Jan. 4, Missouri State 67, CU 55
- Jan. 7, CU 72, Southern Illinois 66, OT
- Jan. 9, CU 74, Evansville 69
- Jan. 12, Wichita State 68, CU 54
- Jan. 16, Indiana State 61, CU 59
- Jan. 19, CU 81, Bradley 68
- Jan. 22, Missouri State 67, CU 66
- Jan. 26, Northern Iowa 71, CU 66
- Jan. 29, CU 83, Indiana State 69
- Feb. 1, Bradley 69, Creighton 61
- Feb. 5, CU 75, Evansville 69
- Feb. 8, Drake 67, CU 64
- Feb. 13, CU 69, Southern Illinois 50
- Feb. 16, CU 75, Illinois State 59
- Feb. 19, Akron 76, CU 67
- Feb. 23, Wichita State 67, CU 65
- Feb. 26, CU 63, Northern Iowa 55
- POSTSEASON
- MVC Tournament
- Mar. 4, CU 70, Northern Iowa 67
- Mar. 5, Missouri State 60, CU 50
- CBI Tournament
- Mar. 15, San Jose State at CU, 7 p.m.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Jose State's Justin Graham, right, is part of a high-scoring perimeter attack. "It's going to test us defensively," CU coach Greg McDermott said.

Published Monday March 14, 2011

BASKETBALL

For San Jose State, CBI berth is A-OK

By Steven Pivovar
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER
« Bluejays Today

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Attitude sometimes plays as big a role as athleticism when teams head into a postseason basketball tournament that does not include the letters N-C-A-A.

Given that, San Jose State could find itself with an advantage Tuesday night when it takes on Creighton in a College Basketball Invitational game at Qwest Center Omaha.

Neither team set out in November with the goal of being a participant in the game. At the same time, when the Spartans say they are excited to be in this tournament, it's not lip service. The CBI is San Jose State's first taste of the postseason since 1996 and just the fifth overall.

"Every program in America aspires to be in the NCAA tournament, but you have to keep things in context," San Jose State coach George Nessman said. "San Jose State basketball has been bad since the early '80s. Playing in this tournament is a huge step for our program and for our younger players."

"And it's important that our seniors get a chance to experience some success. They've been here when times were a lot thinner and tougher. I'm very happy that they're getting a chance to end their careers in the postseason."

The Spartans will bring a 17-15 record into the 7:05 p.m. first-round game. Creighton, playing for the first time since March 5, is 19-14 as it opens its 14th straight postseason.

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LATEST IN THE BLOGS



Bluejays determined to keep season going

Any Creighton basketball fans wondering if the Bluejays will be motivated for their College Basketball Invitational game on Tuesday night can rest easy. Just ask Kenny Lawson.

The senior center, coming off a Missouri Valley Conference tournament where he averaged 15 points per game, said he doesn't want his career to end quite yet. Especially on Creighton's home court at the Qwest Center. Plus there's another factor when the Bluejays face San Jose State at...

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Huskers-Hawkeyes has a home The Turkey Leg trophy?

The trophy can wait. At least we have a date now for Nebraska vs. Iowa. The schools announced on Monday that the annual Huskers-Hawkeyes throw down will be on the Friday afternoon after Thanksgiving the next two years.

Bravo. The Big Ten cares about tradition and backs it up. This was a bone thrown to Nebraska tradition — a turkey bone, if you will — and it makes all the sense...

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Most of those have come on grander stages, although this is the second straight year the Bluejays are ending their season in one of the two lower-level tournaments. They played in the Collegen Insider.com Tournament last March, reaching the semifinals before losing to Missouri State.

Creighton's players and coaches have said all the right things, about how playing in the CBI is a chance to get the seniors more games as well as furthering the development of the team's younger players. But human nature suggests the Bluejays might not embrace the CBI with the same fervor as the Spartans.

Senior center Kenny Lawson says that's not the case.

"Any time you get a chance to play, we look at it as a blessing," Lawson said. "We didn't make it to where we wanted to go, but this is a chance for guys to get better for next year and for the seniors to get a chance to play again."

Lawson and his fellow seniors had hoped the Feb. 26 game against Northern Iowa would be their last at home.

"I didn't want to come back here and play again," said Lawson, who was hoping that any postseason play would come at a neutral site in the NCAA tournament. "But I am back here, and I'm proud of getting the opportunity to play here again."

"I want to keep winning."

To do that, the Bluejays will have to find a way Tuesday to stall San Jose State's backcourt firepower. The Spartans have the country's No. 3 scorer in senior Adrian Oliver, who is averaging 24.3 points and has seven games of 30 points or more.

He teams with point guard Justin Graham, a 6-foot-4 senior who averages 14.3 points and 4.4 assists, and 5-11 Keith Shamburger, one of four SJSU freshmen since 1972 to average double-figure scoring (12.0).

"Their guard court alone is averaging 50 points a game," Creighton coach Greg McDermott said. "It's going to test us defensively to try to keep their guards in front of us and defend the 3-point line, because it's obvious their guards are playing at a very high level right now."

Oliver, the first Spartan to earn two first-team All-Western Athletic Conference honors since San Jose State joined the league in 1996, has had just one game this season with fewer than 10 points. He had 29 in San Jose State's first-round win over Hawaii in the WAC tournament, then added 28 in a second-round victory over Idaho.

Utah State held him to 16 in a 58-54 win that knocked the Spartans out of the tournament.

"He's the most talented player in our league," Nessman said. "He's on the NBA's radar and will be a guy that gets a chance to play professionally. He's just a real complete offensive player, and a great kid that has really been devoted to our program. He's raised our level of play."

McDermott said Oliver reminds him of Bradley's Andrew Warren, a 6-6 wing who led the Missouri Valley in scoring. Oliver, two inches shorter, can get to the rim and the free-throw line. He's made 82.6 percent of his 219 free throws.

"He can shoot the 3-point shot," McDermott said, "and then beat you off the dribble."

San Jose State's 17 wins this season are the school's most since 1981, when the Spartans won 21 games and played in the National Invitation Tournament. Just six San Jose State teams since 1950 have won as many as 17 games.

"Our guys were disappointed when they lost in the WAC semifinals, but we came back to practice with a bounce in our step," Nessman said. "Our guys are excited about this opportunity, and sometimes at this time of the year, the teams that advance are the ones that want it the most."

»NOTES: Creighton sold about 2,000 tickets Monday. Season ticketholders have from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday to purchase their same seats, with sales to the general public beginning at 1:15 p.m. on Ticketmaster. ... The winner of Tuesday's game will play the James Madison-Davidson winner in Monday's quarterfinals. Asked if Creighton has been assured that it would play at home again in the second round, McDermott said, "That is our hope and that is our expectation, but things can change. We're happy to be at home for the first one, and hopefully we can get a good crowd out here to support our guys." ... Creighton is 3-0 against San Jose State, with the victories coming in 1969, 1971 and 1988. ... A victory would be McDermott's 300th of his coaching career. ... Creighton and Austin Peay are the only teams to have participated in each of the four postseason tournaments (NCAA, NIT, CIT and CBI) over the past five seasons. Lawson and teammate Casey Harriman were redshirts on the 2007 NCAA team, then played in two NITs and one CIT. Harriman won't play in the CBI — he underwent career-ending shoulder surgery in January.

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