

Redhawks Defeat Waves to Advance in College Basketball Invitational

SEATTLE, Wash. – The combination of Isiah Umipig (Federal Way, Wash.) and Jarell Flora (Bremerton, Wash.) led the Seattle University offense, and the rest of the team contributed to a strong defensive effort as the Redhawks defeated Pepperdine University, 62-45, in the first round of the 2015 College Basketball Invitational at the Connolly Center.

It is the first national Division I postseason tournament victory for Seattle U since March 14, 1964, when it defeated Utah State, 88-78, in the third place game of the West Regional in Corvallis, Ore. It is the first postseason win at the Division I level that enables Seattle U to advance to the next round since a 61-57 victory over Oregon State in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in Eugene, Ore., on March 10, 1964.

Umipig hit five three-pointers to lead all players with 24 points, plus he pulled down seven rebounds, while Flora contributed four three-pointers on his way to a 20-point effort to go along with four rebounds, three steals, and a spectacular blocked shot on a Pepperdine fast break layup attempt right before halftime.

“It’s a blessing to be in this position, but it has come as a result of a lot of work,” Seattle U head coach Cameron Dollar said. “Even as they (Isiah and Jarell) are going, they are finding the other guys. It’s a machine of five guys working together that allows those two to knock those shots down. Anytime you try to counter it by going hard at them, the other three guys are getting layups thanks to their unselfish play.”

After Umipig hit a three-pointer in the first minute of the game, Pepperdine scored seven unanswered points to pull ahead by four before Flora hit back-to-back three-pointers to give the Redhawks the lead for good. Umipig would hit another three-pointer, and then make three free throws after being fouled on a long distance attempt, to help Seattle U extend its lead to 15-8 seven minutes into the contest.

A three-pointer by Jett Raines and a jumper from Stacy Davis closed the Pepperdine deficit to two at 18-16 before Flora hit another three-pointer and Emmanuel Chibuogwu (Seattle, Wash.) made a layup to increase the Redhawk lead back to seven. Baskets by Umipig and Chibuogwu in the final minute and a half helped Seattle U take a 29-24 lead into the locker room at halftime.

Flora scored the first seven points of the second half as Seattle U held Pepperdine scoreless for almost seven minutes after halftime. Umipig would then score Seattle U’s next 10 points as part of a 10-4 scoring run that extended Seattle U’s lead to 46-28 with 9:21 remaining in the second half.

Pepperdine (18-14) attempted to work its way back into the game with a 9-2 scoring run, with Atif Russell scoring five of those points, but Jack Crook (Manchester, England) converted on a traditional three-point play to end the Wave scoring spurt. The Redhawks put the game away with eight unanswered points over a three-minute span late in the contest.

Crook finished with nine points, four rebounds, and two assists, while William Powell (Huntsville, Ala.) pulled down a game-high 10 rebounds as Seattle U dominated the boards, 40-22. As a team, the Redhawks shot 45.8 percent (22-of-48) from the field, including 42.9 percent (9-of-21) from behind the three-point line, and 90.0 percent (9-of-10) from the free throw line.

Jeremy Major led Pepperdine with nine points, three assists, and three steals, while Davis finished with just eight points and five rebounds. The Waves were held to 29.6 percent (16-of-54) shooting from the field, including 4-of-13 from behind the three-point line, and 52.9 percent (9-of-17) from the free throw line. Pepperdine did score 14 points off 19 Seattle U turnovers.

Seattle University (17-15) will host the University of Colorado, who defeated Gardner-Webb in its first round game, 87-78, in the quarterfinals of the 2015 College Basketball Invitational Monday, March 23, at 7 p.m. at the Connolly Center on campus.

General admission tickets for \$10 are on sale through Ticketmaster at the following link:

<https://oss.ticketmaster.com/aps/seattleu/EN/link/buy/browse?g%5B0%5D=15503>. The game will also be broadcast on 770 AM KTTH, with Dave Grosby and Gary Hill Jr. calling the action from courtside, starting with the pregame show shortly before tipoff.

