



Defending NCAA champion NKU keeps on rolling



Kendra Caldwell (35) looks for an open teammate during the second half of NKU's 75-51 win over Wayne State on Thursday night. Caldwell finished with 13 points, seven rebounds and three blocks. At the right, Jessie Slack launches a 3-pointer in the first half.

Winning ways continue for NKU, 75-51 over Wayne State (Mich.)

HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, Ky. - Different season, new arena and same result for the Northern Kentucky University women's basketball team.

NKU's defending NCAA Division II national champions began the regular season Thursday night by cruising past Wayne State (Mich.), 75-51, in The Bank of Kentucky Center. The Norse used a 20-5 run early in the first half to take control and were never threatened by the visiting Warriors.

Jessie Slack led NKU with 19 points on 8-for-11 shooting from the field. The senior guard also made all three of her 3-point attempts, including a trey at the 19:15 mark that was the first-ever Norse field goal in the new arena.

"We have a brand new facility, and we had won a lot of games in Regents Hall, but we had never won in The Bank of Kentucky Center until tonight," NKU head coach Nancy Winstel said. "I'll be honest with you, that has kept me up a few

nights, which I don't like. Now I am glad that it is over and I'm glad we got our first win here."



Nancy Winstel

Slack netted 11 points during the early part of the game as NKU built a 20-7 lead. The Mt. Perry, Ohio, native knocked down a trio of 3-pointers to key the spurt.

"It was nice to get a good win, and the first one in The Bank," said Slack, who also grabbed nine rebounds. "We have some things that we need to work on, but hopefully it was just nerves and little things like that."

NKU freshman guard Casse Mogan showed no signs



NKU's Cassie Brannen (31) defends against Chastidy Miller of Wayne State.

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of nervousness and scored 10 of her 14 points in the first half as the Norse took a 44-24 lead into the locker room. Mogan, a native of Circleville, Ohio, made all five of her field-goal attempts in the first half.



Danyelle Echoles scored nine points against Wayne State.

“To be honest, it is pretty sweet to be able to put on a Northern Kentucky jersey,” said Mogan, who enjoyed an outstanding prep career at Circleville High School. “I think we did well as a team. There are obviously things that we need to work on, but I believe that everybody did a good job, and it is nice to win our first game in this arena.”

NKU limited Wayne State to 28.3 percent from the field and won the rebounding battle by a 49-27 margin. Norse sophomore center Kendra Caldwell finished with a career-high 13 points, seven rebounds and three blocked shots.

The NKU bench, led by Caldwell and Mogan, contributed 33 points and 22 rebounds Thursday night. Rachel Lantry grabbed a career-high eight rebounds for the Norse off the bench.

Cassie Brannen scored 12 points before fouling out after playing just 13 minutes. Karen Brackman dished out a team-leading four assists and grabbed five rebounds for the Norse, who shot 45.2 percent from the field.

“Kendra Caldwell played a great game, and I thought she and Casse Mogan were the difference-makers,” Winstel said. “Slack did a great job before the foul trouble, and she was hitting everything. Casse came into the game and really sparked us with her offense. She didn’t miss a shot in the first half and did a lot of good things out there. We expect a great deal out of Casse, and she is going to be an outstanding basketball player for us.”



NKU's Rachel Lantry (5) plays defense against Jasmine McCall.

Danyelle Echoles added nine points for NKU, which posted a 28-

8 record last season. The Norse are ranked No. 1 nationally in the NCAA Division II poll.

Wayne State, which knocked off Division I Detroit Mercy in an exhibition game in the preseason, was led by Chastidy Miller’s 16 points. The Warriors are now 0-9 all-time against the Norse.

“I thought we had some moments where we did some really good things defensively, which was nice, particularly in the second half,” Winstel said. “I think we’re better defensively than what we showed in the first half when we sent them to the free-throw line 15 times.”

NKU returns to action next Monday at 5:30 p.m. when Mercyhurst (Pa.) visits The Bank of Kentucky Center.



Casse Mogan goes up for a short jumper in the first half Thursday night. Mogan scored 14 points, grabbed six rebounds and dished out three assists in her collegiate debut as NKU posted a 75-51 win.



Kendra Caldwell powers over Chastidy Miller for a basket Thursday night. Caldwell was part of an NKU bench that contributed 33 points during a 75-51 win over Wayne State.