

Win worth the wait for UIS women

Prairie Stars rip Robert Morris in basketball opener

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The University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars waited and then waited some more for their first women's basketball game of the season.

UIS was scheduled to play an exhibition game on Nov. 7 against Eastern Illinois University, but it was canceled due to the death of EIU assistant coach Jackie Moore.

After practicing and scrimmaging against each other for more than 34 days, the Stars had their urge to play quenched Wednesday. UIS welcomed the Robert Morris University Eagles to The Recreation and Athletic Center. The end result was a 78-58 non-conference victory for the Stars.

"It felt good to finally get on the floor," UIS sophomore guard Alex Blair said. "It was a long preseason, but it just gave us time to work harder and prepare."

Freshman Latoya Gipson drained the first basket for a 2-0 RMU lead. The Eagles (3-2) missed their next nine field goal attempts and a pair of free throws.

UIS capitalized on the slow start and built a 27-12 lead. RMU used a 14-6 run over the final 6 ½ minutes to get within 33-26 at halftime.

"We finished possessions a little better," RMU first-year coach Matt Mead said. "We were rebounding, and getting rebounds on the defensive end was big."

"We tried to carry that momentum into halftime, but any time you lose a player at the half like Tanesha (Parker) that hurts a little bit. That really shortens our bench and we're not very deep right now to begin with."

Parker, a starting sophomore forward, sat out after suffering an asthma attack at halftime.

"(Against UIS), we weren't able to run the floor," RMU sophomore guard Tiara Perry said. "That's our game. They took us out of our game."

The Stars pulled away in the second half as their size advantage, Blair's 3-point shooting and a deeper bench took over.

Blair hit three straight treys that gave UIS a 42-30 lead with 16 minutes 24 seconds to go. She poured in four 3-pointers in the second half and finished with 12 points.

"We came out with really good energy to start both halves," UIS first-year coach Marne Fauser said. "That's a positive."

"Just being able to break down the defense, seeing our teammates wide open and really sharing the ball were positives. I think we worked hard. I think we got better."

Sophomore forward Erin Glogovsky led the Stars with 18 points and 10 rebounds. Junior center Paulina Pogorzelski, a transfer from Kankakee Community College and the Stars' sole newcomer, added 15 points and nine rebounds. Guard Emmarie Snyder had 10 points.

The Eagles' Perry led all scorers with 21 points. RMU senior guard Jasmine Mack contributed 17 points and Gipson chipped in with 10 points.

"We put them at the line too many times," Fauser said. "We fouled too many times, but those are learning experiences. I think the more experience they get on the floor, the better we'll get at being smarter in game situations."

Their first game behind them, the Stars can now focus on the rest of the season.

"They were excited to get a win on their home court and start off on a positive note," Fauser said.

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