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## Prairie Stars face difficult test on road

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University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars men's basketball coach Ben Wierzba needed just a few words to describe tonight's opponent, the University of Findlay (Ohio) Oilers.

"They're really good," he said.

The Stars face Findlay, which is tied for No. 2 in the National Association of Basketball Coaches Division II poll, at 6:30 CST on the Oilers' home court. It is the first meeting ever between UIS (3-4) and Findlay (6-0).

Findlay has a 94-game home winning streak in regular season games at Croy Gymnasium. The Oilers last lost a regular-season contest at home on Feb. 12, 2004.

Findlay's home record is 127-2 in the last eight years.

Winning is the norm for Findlay, both home and away. The Oilers have enjoyed 25 straight winning seasons and have the best winning percentage in NCAA Division II since 2000 with 268 wins and 53 losses for a 85.3 percentage.

Findlay was undefeated in the 2008-09 season and won the national championship with a three-point victory over Cal Poly Pomona, currently the No. 1 team in the nation. Findlay and Bellarmine are both ranked No. 2.

The Oilers have had blowout wins in every contest with the exception of a 92-87 victory over Malone on Nov. 23.

"They don't beat themselves and they guard you," Wierzba said. "They expect to win after winning a national title two years ago. They have two really good guards that can score. They're sound fundamentally."

Findlay can light up the scoreboard. The Oilers average 86 points per game. In comparison, UIS averages 65.6 ppg.

"We played well in spurts offensively," Wierzba said of the Stars' 75-54 loss to Missouri S&T on Saturday. "Defensively we've got to guard the ball better. We were only down six points with 15 minutes to go. We have not put together 40 minutes."

Tonight's matchup could be the toughest test of the season for the Stars.

"What it boils down to is it's about us taking care of the ball, taking good shots, us guarding the ball and us blocking out," Wierzba said. "It's all about is us staying together and working together to get where we need to get."

### UIS women go to Oakland City

The University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars women's basketball team plays a road game today at 6 p.m. CST against the Oakland City (Ind.) Lady Oaks.

UIS (3-3) and Oakland City (3-3) split a pair of games last season.

Senior Paulina Pogorzelski leads the Stars in scoring and rebounding with 13.8 points per game and 8 rebounds per game.

Marcia Martinez can be reached at 788-1547.

### UIS MEN'S BASKETBALL

**WHO:** University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars (3-4) vs. No. 2 University of Findlay Oilers (6-0)

**WHEN:** Tonight at 6:30 CST

**WHERE:** Croy Gymnasium, Findlay, Ohio

**COACHES:** UIS, Ben Wierzba (1st season, 3-4); Findlay, Ron Niekamp (26th season, 580-181)

**NOTABLE:** This is the Stars' first meeting with Findlay, a member of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, and they have their work cut out for them in the last contest of a four-game road swing. . . . The Oilers have won 94 straight regular-season games on their home court. . . . Findlay has a prolific offense that is fueled by 6-foot-3 senior guard Nathan Hyde (16.2 points per game), 6-2 sophomore guard Aaron Robinson (15.2 ppg) and 5-11 junior guard Kyle Caiola (13 ppg). . . . The Stars' leading scorer and rebounder is junior forward Michael Fakuade with 16.3 points and 13 rebounds per game. Junior guard Lester Hart averages 12.4

points and sophomore forward Chigozie Umeadi is next at 10 points. . . . UIS doesn't play again until Dec. 18 against Eureka at The Recreation and Athletic Center.

— Marcia Martinez

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