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UIS will try to build off its first GLVC victory

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Spring semester classes got under way Tuesday at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Getting back in the swing of things for the UIS Prairie Stars men's basketball team was made easier thanks to Monday night's 56-49 win at Maryville, the team's first Great Lakes Valley Conference victory of the season. The win ended a six-game losing streak.

"Everybody felt good, and they should have," UIS coach Ben Wierzba said. "They played hard and competed for the whole 40 minutes and found a way to win. Our guys grinded it out. Our defense for the most part was really good. We had some guys make shots.

"We've got to come back (today) with the same approach. Missouri-St. Louis is going to be aggressive definitely. We've got to be able to execute and do what we do best."

The Stars (5-11 overall, 1-8 in the Great Lakes Valley Conference) host the Missouri-St. Louis Tritons (11-5, 5-3) at 7:30 tonight.

UIS got key contributions from the bench against 3-12 Maryville, starting with senior guard Kendall Burrage, who led the Stars in scoring with a season-high 15 points.

"Kendall came in and gave us a great lift off the bench," Wierzba said. "Lester (Hart) and Ryan (Thornton) hit two big 3s in the second half, and it went from six points to 12 points."

The starters did their par as well.

Leading scorer and rebounder Michael Fakuade blocked five shots for UIS. Brandon Farmer, who is second in scoring and rebounding, grabbed 11 rebounds.

"It was a bunch of guys stepping up and making plays," Wierzba said. "It's got to be different guys stepping up. We need 11 guys to get it done."

UIS will attempt to win back-to-back games for the first time since the opening weekend of the season.

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UIS men's basketball

WHO: The University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars (5-11 overall, 1-8 in the Great Lakes Valley Conference) vs. Missouri-St. Louis Tritons (11-5, 5-3)

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. today

WHERE: The Recreation and Athletic Center, UIS campus

COACHES: UIS, Ben Wierzba (1st season, 5-11); UMSL, Steve Tappmeyer (1st season, 11-5)

LAST MEETING: UIS 70, UMSL 68

NOTABLE: The Tritons are in first place in the West Division of the GLVC, while UIS is last in the North Division. ... Monday's win over Maryville ended the Stars' six-game losing streak. UIS is attempting to win back-to-back contests for the first time since opening the season with a pair of victories. ... Junior forward Michael Fakuade is the leading scorer and rebounder for UIS at 12.3 points and 9.5 rebounds per game. Senior guard Brandon Farmer follows at 9.6 points and 5.1 rebounds. ... Junior guard Gerald Fulton is doing a little of everything for the Tritons. He has the team's best scoring average at 22.9, he has 50 3-pointers, he's a 90-percent free-throw shooter and he's averaging 3.3 rebounds and 1.4 steals per game. Junior Justyn Watkins averages 15.3 points and 4.1 rebounds for the Tritons. ... A women's game between UIS (4-12, 0-9) and UMSL (6-10, 1-7) starts at 5:30 p.m. Chatham Glenwood High School graduate Caitlyn Moody, a junior guard, is the Tritons' leading scorer at 14.6 points and leads the team in 3-pointers with 34. Nokomis native Kelcy Hulbert, a senior forward, is UMSL's third leading scorer at 7.4 points and averages 4.3 rebounds. UMSL sophomore forward Allie Hogan, also a Glenwood graduate, averages 2.8 points.

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