

Wolverines winning when it counts

Men's basketball moves to 3-0 in the Western Athletic Conference

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After securing its first road win of

the season at Bakersfield, UVU won its first home Western Athletic Conference game against Grand Canyon University 65-58, before defeating Idaho 71-66 on the road.

"Grand Canyon has a good collection of players," UVU head coach Dick Hunsaker said after the first win. "They're athletic and have an inside presence and really stretch the court with their 3-point shooting. But we hustled and stuck together and made some timely shots throughout the game."

The atmosphere in the UCCU Center was lively, and the play-

ers seemed to be feeding off the excitement of the crowd. The game proved to be hard fought and physical.

It was clear from the start that Grand Canyon played physically – getting to the free throw line and hitting 86.4 percent (19-of-22) of its attempts while UVU shot just 47.8 percent (11-of-23) from the stripe.

Hunsaker said the difficulties at the stripe were just a hiccup, citing that the team percentage is still best in the WAC and that the Wolverines are among the best in the nation.

What UVU lacked in free throws

was more than made up for with its outstanding execution. The Wolverines shot 40.4 percent from the field, compared to the visiting Antelopes' 33.3 percent.

Senior Ben Aird showed off his skills by finishing with a team-high 21 points and 15 rebounds. Aird was hit above his eye in the second half; reopening stitches he had received against Bakersfield, which caused him to wear a turban-like patch around his head. Aird said he didn't think it would affect him moving forward.

Senior Holton Hunsaker demonstrated his shooting range behind the

3-point arc, draining four 3-pointers, ending with 15 points. His shooting kept pressure on the 'Lopes, who struggled to prevent to his sharp-shooting.

Junior Mitch Bruneel said that it was an honor to play against a coach with the professional playing experience like Coach Dan Majerle, who was once a 3-point specialist for the Phoenix Suns.

Less than a week later, the Wolverines were in Moscow, Idaho for a matchup with the Idaho Vandals. UVU held on to a late advantage to top the hosts 71-66, to move to 9-7

overall and 3-0 in the WAC.

Bruneel led the team with 18 points and eight rebounds in the win, and the Wolverines got 23 points off the bench, which was paced by sophomore Hayes Garrity's 14.

Freshman Zach Nelson had 12 points, seven rebounds, four assists and three blocks. Aird was the other UVU player in double figures with 11 and added four rebounds, three assists and four blocks.

The team finished its two-game road trip Jan. 19 against WAC-leading scorer Isaiah Umpig and the Seattle Redhawks.