

GAY WOODHOUSE Law Office

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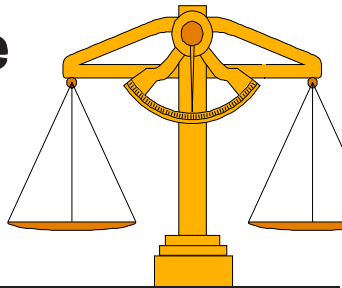
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Just how good are the Cowgirls? And how bad are the Cowboys?

This issue went to press
before the
January 30th games
against Utah

Winning at the Double-A **and** on the road - winning by impressive margins over teams with decent won-loss records - having different girls step up in various ways in each game - playing a smothering defense that never wilts or folds - winning conference games by nearly 50 points - having a squadron of 3-point bombers ... the Wyoming Cowgirls have been a welcome inclusion for otherwise sports-deprived Wyoming sports fans.

Fifty-first in population in the U.S. (Washington D.C. is included in population figures along with the 50 states and has surpassed Wyoming in population), the Cowgirls consistently outdraw the UW men's team - almost unheard of in college basketball. Don't buy into the announced attendance figures for the men's games - the girls count only those actually at games, the men exaggerate by including season ticket holders not in attendance.

The WNIT championship game attendance, based on Wyoming's population, was comparable to Wisconsin (their vanquished opponent) drawing 165,000+ had the game been played in Madison.

The announced attendance for recent women's games (4,000 - 5,000+) actually exceeds those actually attending most men's games by probably 50%.

Only Utah, in the Mountain West Conference, is near the Cowgirls in quality and they were nearly defeated by New Mexico (a team beaten by UW girl's at "The Pit") on the same night the 'Girls defeated UNLV by 48 points.

The final score of the UNLV games was 87-39 but the Cowgirls could have easily hit 100 if a few more of the missed layups had been made, all free throws were made - or if the starters had played more minutes. This game saw seldom-used reserves Paula Elum and Hillary Carlson contribute 20 points between them and the almost never used Megan Mordecai, Jade Kennedy and Gemma Koehler score and Irena Vankova, Elizabeth Dissen and Mallory Cline play but none of them scored this night.

All 14 players in uniform played against UNLV. Megan McGuffey was in street clothes on the bench as the result of being knocked to the floor in last Saturday's game against San Diego State.

On a night when one of the best female basketball players in the nation went 0-7 from the field, only Justyna Podziemska of the starters had a productive scoring night, and the minutes were spread to the point that Jodi Bolerjack, who seldom rests, played only 22 minutes and Zavec,

who never wants to come out of a game, sat much of the game - yet it still was no contest. Bench players (it's hard to consider Aubrey Vandiver a reserve, she's the second most talented player on the team but does come off the bench) scored 44 points. And it wasn't because UNLV threw in the towel. Their starters played most of the game and they scrapped 'til the end.

Teams have tried to match-up against the now 15th ranked Cowgirls team in different ways. Sometimes, they try to press them for 94 feet. Sometimes, they try to run with them. Sometimes, outmuscle them. Shoot threes with them? Drive on 'em? They must not have cable in some of the MWC cities - the 'Girls blocked 20 shots in their last two home games.

A weakness? One that hasn't hurt them too badly so far - but they do turn over the ball a lot. Podziemska's passing is often telegraphed and soft. Rebecca Vanderjagt is very slender and has to match up against the bulkiest opponent. Zavec, Vandiver and McGuffey are strong - the others not so much so.

Will they lose the rest of the way? The prediction here would be not more than twice. They still have Utah and BYU twice and New Mexico, Air Force, UNLV, San Diego State, CSU and TCU once.

Four of the remaining games are at home - six on the road. Based on results to this point, the toughest games should come from Utah and possibly BYU. Air Force (there) and CSU should be walkovers - TCU (there), UNLV (there), New Mexico and SDSU (there) may be a bit tougher but very winnable. Losses, if there are to be any, might come at Utah and at BYU.

A 26-3 season is very much in the cards.

Now, the boys --

With James Johnson (Wake Forest) and Jaycee Carroll (Utah State) having such stellar seasons, and Tom Parks is second leading scorer for the perennially strong Sheridan Community College, it is easy to see why the UW men's team isn't what it could be. The Cowgirls have Wyoming products Megan McGuffey, Aubrey Vandiver, Hillary Carlson and Megan Mordecai and only one transfer (from Casper College). The UW men's team has seven transfers and four American-born players directly from high school.

While the Brylcream Boy thinks his men's team is "getting better," they aren't. To play a game close but lose by more than a basket has led to a 1-5 conference record. And there are powder kegs on this team. Stand by for the explosion.