

2018 State Farm MVC Tournament – Game Notes

Game 2 ... 8:30 p.m., Thursday, March 1 ... St. Louis, Mo. (Scottrade Center) ... #7 Missouri State (83), #10 Valparaiso (79)

Tonight's opening night tournament attendance is 4,852.

The Missouri State Bears snapped a four-game losing streak and climbed to 18-14 with their third win of the season over Valparaiso. The Bears are 31-26 in MVC tourney play and advance to the quarterfinals for the third year in a row. According to basketball reference.com, Johnson is the first player in college basketball this season to have at least 22 points and 19 rebounds and 6 assists in a game. Johnson also was bidding to be only the second player in tourney history with a 20-20 game after Xavier McDaniel of Wichita State (25 and 21 vs. SIU in 1985). With Johnson scoring 22 and Rhodes 20, it was the Bears' second game this season with two players scoring 20 or more. A first-half dunk by Obediah Church was the 100th slam of his MSU career. All-MVC forward Alize Johnson averaged 14.5 points in two earlier meetings vs. VU and reached double digit points in the opening minute of the second half tonight for his 37th MSU career double-double. The leading MVC rebounder with 11.4 a game, Johnson had 11 caroms in the first half tonight, his 43rd career double-figure rebound game. Johnson finished with 19 rebounds, his seventh game this season with more than 15 boards, and breaking his own MSU tourney rebound mark of 17 set last year and one away from his season high of 20. Jarrid Rhodes was 6 of 13 shooting from three-point range in two earlier meetings with Valpo and had 13 early points for the Bears tonight on 5-of-7 shooting the first half. At 3 of 3 beyond the arc in the first half, Jarrid Rhodes is 9/16 in threes vs. Valpo this season. It was the Bears' third game this season with 40 or more boards vs. VU.

The Valparaiso Crusaders closed their season 15-17 and 0-3 this year vs. MSU. Valpo's all-time record vs. Missouri State is 8-16 as the teams were formerly members of the Association of Mid-Continent Universities together from 1982-83 through 1989-90. Valpo entered the second half having hit three of its last four shots, including back-to-back treys by Micah Bradford. Bradford had had two treys in his previous five combined games. Valpo hit 5 of 8 threes in the first half. Tevonn Walker had 10 and 11 points in two previous meetings vs. MSU and had 25 tonight. It was Walker's 22nd double-figure point game as he got 17 in the second half. Markus Golder had his 19th double figure scoring game with 13 points and Bakari Evelyn has had double digits in 22 games with 13 tonight. Valpo was outrebounded 45-29; their biggest deficit on the boards in a game this year. Valpo finished 10/18 from long range, just the fifth time this season the Crusaders have had 10 or more treys in a game. Valpo had a season-low six turnovers.

First Half: MSU jumped into an 11-4 lead before VU's Bakari Evelyn hit a long trey with 14:38 left in the half. Senior Jarrid Rhodes hit his first two three-point tries in the first half as MSU built a 20-13 lead. Valpo closed within 23-22 with nine minutes left in the half on a trey by Tevonn Walker. Last in the MVC in FG% at .414, the Bears hit .469 (15 of 32) in the first half tonight. In the first 16 minutes of the game, each team had one turnover and combined for just five TO's the first half. Valpo scored the last three points of the half to close within 39-33 at intermission. MSU is 15-3 when leading at halftime and Valpo is 1-10 when trailing at halftime.

Second Half: The Bears pushed their lead into double digits on a trey by Ryan Kreklow at 15-minute mark to make it 52-38 and stayed in front by nine or more until the third media timeout of the half. Valpo closed to within 66-58 with 6:25 to play and Markus Golder sank three free throws with six minutes left to close VU within 68-61 and Golder made it 75-69 with 3:30 left. A three-point play by Jaume Sorolla made it 75-72 with 1:20 left and VU missed three straight long range cracks before Jarrid Rhodes got two FT's at the 50-second mark to make it 77-72. Bradford scored for Valpo but Rhodes added two more charities with 18 seconds left for a 79-74 lead. Walker scored for Valpo but Ryan Kreklow tossed in two more FT's with 11 seconds left. Walker hit a trey with 5 seconds left but Kreklow added two more FT's with 3.6 seconds left for the final score.