

# 2018 State Farm MVC Tournament – Game Notes

Game 1 ... 6 p.m., Thursday, March 1 ... St. Louis, Mo. (Scottrade Center) ... #9 UNI (60), #8 Evansville (50)

**The UNI Panthers**, winning their third straight game, improve to 16-15. UNI improves its all-time MVC Tournament record to 23-20, including a 4-0 mark against Evansville. The Panthers also improved their record to 3-4 in MVC Tournament opening round games including 1-1 as 9 seed. UNI has made at least one three-point basket in 592 straight games - the longest active streak in the MVC. Hunter Rhodes had career best 6 rebound and tied a career-best with 4 assists. **UNI tied its season high in blocked shots with seven.**

**UNI:** The Panthers had a season-low 6 turnovers in regular season finale vs. Missouri State and didn't commit their first TO tonight until the game was 11 minutes old and had just one TO the first half. UNI entered tonight last in MVC in blocked shots with 2.3 a game and had four by halftime, and had tied its season high of seven by midway in the second half. With just four turnovers in the game, UNI ties an MVC season low (SIU vs. Duquesne). Wyatt Lohaus had 15 points, 10 in the second half, topping his combined nine points in two previous games vs. Evansville.

**Evansville:** The Aces' Ryan Taylor, the MVC's top scorer with 22 ppg, did not score in the first half, but Duane Gibson, who missed the two earlier games vs. UNI, scored 12 in the first half after totaling just 10 in his two previous games. UE came into tonight leading MVC in three-point percentage (.419) and missed all five of its long range tries the first half. Taylor got his first basket of the game early in the second half. Coming into the game with 997 points as a Purple Ace, Taylor hit 1 of 13 from the floor and scored two points in the game, his lowest career game at UE. His previous low this season was 10 and first game below double digit scoring since 2/25/17. With just two three-pointers, this ties the fewest threes UE has had in MVC Tourney play.

The Purple Aces fall to 17-15 on the season, and 9-24 all-time at the MVC Tourney. They also remain winless against UNI at the MVC Tourney, now 0-4. Evansville split the regular season games with UNI, and now finish 1-2 against the Panthers for the year. Evansville falls to 1-3 as the #8 seed at the MVC Tourney.

Dru Smith enjoyed his fourth 20-point scoring games, including 14 in the first half. He's only played in 21 games coming into tonight's matchup.

**First Half:** UNI jumped ahead 7-2 at the outset and pushed its lead to 15-8 by the second media break, hitting three of five three-point tries while UE was scoreless from long range. UNI fashioned its 31-24 halftime edge with 5 (of 12) threes while Evansville missed all five its long-range tries. Duane Gibson scored 12 for UE in the half. The Panthers biggest first half lead was nine and UE got the intermission gap back to seven with a basket by Dru Smith with 2.3 seconds left. UNI has led at the half in its last four games (including tonight) and Panthers are 13-6 when leading at halftime. Team shooting in the first half nearly even with UNI 11 of 27 and UE 11 of 26

**Second Half:** UNI got the game's first double-digit lead at 34-24 as Evansville went nearly four minutes after intermission without scoring. Austin Phyfe hit a driving layup with 12:12 to play to give UNI a 40-28 edge. Dru Smith hit Evansville's first trey with 8:53 left in the game. UNI's 57-43 lead with 1:15 left was its biggest margin of the game.