

Rocket women sweep against EMU and WMU

This past week, the University of Toledo women's basketball team defeated Eastern Michigan by a score of 65-57 on Wednesday and Western Michigan by a score of 75-67 on Saturday for their Senior Day. The wins improve the Rocket record to 19-8 overall and 10-6 in Mid-American Conference play.

"We're excited to get the win tonight," head coach Tricia Cullop said. "I thought we did a much better job of crashing the boards tonight. We knew we had a size advantage of not only rebounding but pounding the ball inside."

Second-year center Kaayla McIntyre paced UT with 15 points, followed closely by second-year guard Mikaela Boyd with 14, along with fourth-year forward Janice Monakana and second-year Halee Printz, who both had 12.

As a team, Toledo shot 39.3 percent (24-of-61) from the field and a sizzling 83.3 percent (15-of-18) from the free throw line to sweep the regular season series against its MAC West Division rival.

The Rockets dominated in the paint and posted a decisive 42-24 edge in points in the paint and a sizable 43-34 rebounding advantage

The Rockets ended the first quarter with an 18-14 lead after the opening 10 minutes. Five different players tallied points over the final five-plus minutes to give the home team a two-possession advantage at the end of the quarter.

UT remained on target scoring the ball in the second period, tallying 13 of the first 15 points to extend its lead to 30-21 at the intermission. Printz sparked the run with seven points, draining a pair of free throws, a triple from the corner and a two-point field goal to create a nine-point cushion at the break.

After a huge EMU run, the Rockets needed to swing the momentum back in their favor. They pounded the ball inside and received

three straight layups from third-year forward Michaela Rasmussen, Monakana and McIntyre to start a game-sealing 14-1 run to open a 49-31 advantage with 35 seconds remaining in the quarter.

The Rocket lead was not threatened over the last quarter and the team took the game 65-57.

Against WMU, Boyd led UT with 23 points, a career high, while also grabbing nine boards and three steals, shooting 8-of-13 from the field and 7-of-8 from the free throw line. Monakana and McIntyre were also in double figures for Toledo with 13 and 12 points, respectively.

As a team, the Rockets shot a season-high 55.1 percent (27-of-49) from the floor, including an impressive 50.0 percent (5-of-10) from three-point range and 69.6 percent (16-of-23) from the free throw line to secure their seventh straight victory over the Broncos (16-11, 7-9 MAC).

McIntyre helped Toledo get out to a good start, knocking down her first four shots from the field to give UT a 19-16 lead at the end of the first period. The second-year Rocket converted all of the field-goal attempts within five feet to make it a three-point difference at the conclusion of the opening 10 minutes.

The teams exchanged the lead on a couple occasions in the second quarter before WMU utilized a late 9-2 burst to take a 37-35 advantage into the intermission. WMU tallied all of their points in the paint during the late rally with five from third-year WMU guard Aneisha Carlisle to create a two-point margin at the break.

The teams battled back and forth over the next three-plus minutes before Toledo ended the period on a 12-3 run to build a 54-48 lead heading into the final 10 minutes. Printz triggered the pivotal rally with five points, while Bravo-Harriott hit a three-pointer and Boyd converted a layup to give the home team an advantage they would not surrender.

In the fourth period, Toledo benefited from a pair of three-point baskets by Monakana to make its advantage 66-58 with 4:52 remaining in regulation. Monakana made a pair of long-

range shots from the wing to extend a three-possession lead just over the midway point in the final quarter.

“They brought so much to the program, so we just wanted to send them out on a good note,” Boyd said about the seniors. “They contribute so much to this team. Just to be able to send them out with a win here at home is amazing.”

The Rockets return to action on Wednesday, March 1 when they travel to MAC West Division rival Northern Illinois (19-8, 12-4 MAC). The opening tip versus the Huskies is scheduled for 8 p.m. (CT) in the Convocation Center and will be televised on the American Sports Network and streamed on ESPN3.